

Ridgway Fire Protection District
Regular Meeting
May 19th, 2025

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Meeting called to order at 5:04 PM by Board Chair Christen Williams at the Ridgway Fire Department located at 251 N. Railroad Street, Ridgway, Colorado. Also in attendance were board members Pam Kraft, Terry Schuyler, and Barthold Lichtenbelt; ex-officio board member Chris Bolane; Legal Counsel Bo Nerlin; Chief Chris Miller; and District Administrator Katy LaSala.

ADMINISTRATION OF BOARD MEMBER OATHS

Newly elected and re-elected board members were officially sworn in with the oath of office administered by Board Chair Christen Williams.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA INCLUDING ADDITIONS & DELETIONS

No changes were made to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

❖ MOTION by Schuyler to approve the minutes of the 5/5/25 special meeting as presented. SECOND by Lichtenbelt. ALL IN FAVOR.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT

Financials were reviewed by the board. LaSala noted that reimbursement from a recent wildland deployment was submitted, totaling over \$25,000 in revenue from the engine. Additionally, a \$2,500 donation from Black Hills Energy will be given, earmarked for the Training Tower at the Training Grounds. Lastly, board members requested clearer memo details and simplified formatting on future financial reports.

❖ MOTION by Kraft to approve financials as presented. SECOND by Schuyler. ALL IN FAVOR.

OLD BUSINESS

Chief's Evaluation Discussion

- **Summary of Chief's Evaluation** – Bolane presented the summary of the evaluation process for Chief Miller. The evaluation was compiled from survey results and conversations with staff, volunteers, and members of other Ouray County emergency response agencies. Chief Miller was rated highly in leadership, training initiatives, interagency coordination, and public image. The main recommendation for improvement centered on follow-through regarding requests and internal communications. After speaking with Chief Miller, future goals were identified and included:
 - ✓ Enhancing use of administrative support
 - ✓ Delegating responsibilities and improving follow-up
 - ✓ Completing training facility projects and regional training expansion
 - ✓ Advancing the regional fire authority initiative
 - ✓ Lowering the ISO rating
 - ✓ Increasing volunteer and staff certifications
- **Update on Staff Evaluations** – While Chief Miller noted that he has completed a performance evaluation for the District Administrator, the remaining staff evaluations have not been completed, and all have yet to be reviewed by the board.

- **Discussion of Chief and District Administrator Compensation Increases** – Williams suggested delaying compensation discussions until evaluations are complete. Nerlin echoed the recommendation. These will be discussed in executive session at the June 16, 2025 meeting.

Discussion of the listed Trail Town Lots

Board members revisited the status of the Trail Town lots currently listed for sale. Kraft expressed concern over the high listing price and the property's lack of movement on the market. It was agreed that Realtor Charles Mueller would be asked to provide updated market analysis and comparables at the June meeting.

Update on RV Site Lease at the District Training and Maintenance Facility

The board reviewed the drafted terms of the temporary RV lease agreement between the RFPD and Mike Messer in exchange for plumbing labor as presented by Nerlin. The tenant will contribute at least 15 hours of plumbing labor per month, valued at \$1,875, in exchange for temporary site use through September 2025. It was suggested by Lichtenbelt to add a dollar amount to the lease agreement for liability insurance. Kraft also suggested adding that the tenant provides proof of business insurance. Nerlin will make the requested edits. No action was taken as the board president was authorized to negotiate a formal lease agreement on the board's behalf at the prior meeting.

Update on Authority Progress

Chief Miller and Legal Counsel Nerlin provided updates on recent and upcoming meetings related to the formation of a regional fire authority, noting that recent presentations by OCEMS Chief McCullough and Mr. Nerlin at the Ouray County BOCC Work Session were well received. Additional preliminary meetings and presentations to governing bodies are scheduled, including:

- June 10 – Meeting with Log Hill FPD at 1:00 pm
- June 16 – Ouray City Council meeting at 7:00 pm
- June 24 – Ouray County BOCC Meeting at 4:30 pm - Board members as well as RFD staff and volunteers are strongly encouraged to attend to show support.

CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Miller reported that the training yard improvements at the district's Training and Maintenance Facility have been completed, including the filling and leveling of the previously uneven 100 square foot area, creating a safer and more usable surface for future structural and wildland training activities. The site is now ready to host fire exercises and the upcoming multi-agency extrication training.

Chief Miller, along with other staff members, attended the annual Incident Command (IC) meeting in Montrose, which featured updates from the state fire forecaster. The forecast for the Western Slope region indicates a drier-than-average season but no extreme drought conditions at this time. Chief Miller emphasized the importance of ongoing coordination with BLM and USFS for resource sharing and readiness. He further reassured the board that local fire protection remains fully covered, even during out-of-district wildland deployments, with trained personnel and vehicles stationed locally.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Due to a conflict with the Ouray City Council meeting, the board agreed to move the June 16th meeting start time to 4:00 PM.

❖ MOTION by Kraft to Adjourn. Second by Schuyler. ALL IN FAVOR.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:13 pm.

Respectively Submitted,
-Katy LaSala