

Ridgway Fire Protection District
Regular Meeting
September 15th, 2025

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

The regular meeting of the Ridgway Fire Protection District was called to order at 6:07 PM by Board Chair Christen Williams at the Ridgway Fire Department, 251 N. Railroad Street, Ridgway, Colorado.

In attendance were board members Christen Williams, Pam Kraft, Terry Schuyler, Adam Johnson, and Jamie Gomez; Fire Chief Chris Miller; Legal Counsel Bo Nerlin; and District Administrator Katy LaSala. Also present were Kari Girard and Michael Cox (Ponderosa Real Estate).

OATH ADMINISTRATION OF NEW BOARD MEMBER

Chair Williams administered the Oath of Office to newly appointed board member Jamie Gomez.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA INCLUDING ADDITIONS & DELETIONS

The board moved the *Training Center Easement Discussion with Kari Girard* to the beginning of the meeting.

Girard and Cox, on behalf of Dalwhinnie Farms, requested an easement on the District's recently purchased property at 22327 Highway 550 to support a subdivision under development. The easement was originally intended to be included in the property sale but was overlooked. The board expressed general support for the request and directed Cox and Girard to prepare paperwork for review at a future meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

❖ MOTION by Johnson to approve the minutes of the 8/18/25 regular meeting as presented. SECOND by Schuyler. ALL IN FAVOR.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT

LaSala presented the August 2025 financial report and included a year-to-date wildland revenue breakdown. She also recommended transferring \$300,000 from Alpine Checking to Alpine Savings, which the board approved.

❖ MOTION by Schuyler to approve the financial report as presented. SECOND by Gomez. ALL IN FAVOR.

OLD BUSINESS

Employee Compensation Adjustments

❖ MOTION by Kraft to approve a 3% COLA for the District Administrator retroactive to 1/1/25. SECOND by Johnson. ALL IN FAVOR.

- ❖ MOTION by Kraft to set the Fire Chief's annual salary at \$95,000 retroactive to 1/1/25. SECOND by Schuyler. ALL IN FAVOR.

Chief Miller also presented a proposal to restructure the District Administrator position in partnership with Ouray County EMS and to create a Wildland Coordinator role. No action was taken. The board will revisit this at the October meeting.

Update on Authority Progress

Nerlin reported that meetings in August were productive, with a target date of 1/1/27 for the Authority's launch. Monthly meetings will continue with participation from Ridgway Fire, Ouray Fire, Ouray County, and potentially Log Hill Fire.

Building Service Meter Discussion

LaSala explained that the district currently pays \$28 per month for SMPA's idle service fee. Canceling would cost \$2,000+ to reconnect. The board decided to continue paying the idle service fee.

Alternative Power Lease Agreement

The lease agreement was signed in July by Jesse LaSala and Chief Miller and is now fully executed.

CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Miller reported:

- Several extrication incidents occurred over the past month.
- Captains continue to respond as mutual aid to numerous EMS calls.
- Requested permission to allocate 2025 wildland revenue toward additional expenses and a down payment on a Type 3 wildland engine.

Chair Williams directed that 20% of wildland income be reserved for operating expenses and tasked Chief Miller with preparing a proposal and draft budget amendment for October.

NEW BUSINESS

2026 Budget Officer Appointment

- ❖ MOTION by Kraft to appoint LaSala as the 2026 Budget Officer. SECOND by Schuyler. ALL IN FAVOR.

LaSala presented a draft 2026 budget. No action was taken.

Wildland Expansion Proposal

Chief Miller and LaSala proposed:

- Hiring a full-time Wildland Coordinator (\$60,000–\$65,000 annual salary).
- Hiring a full-time Engine Captain (\$40,000 annual salary).
- Purchasing a Type 3 engine.

Both positions would support wildland deployments and provide local coverage on a 48/96 schedule. The Wildland Coordinator would also serve as a backup to the District Administrator. Gomez requested an organizational chart for the next meeting. No action was taken.

2026 Health Insurance Policy

LaSala reported:

- Premiums will increase by 18% in 2026.
- Administrative fees will be embedded in per-person costs (\$5/insured person in 2026, up from \$2 in 2025).
- The board agreed to maintain current coverage levels, allowing employees to choose plans up to \$940/month with dental and vision included.

Update on RUSA Property Owner's Meeting

Nerlin will provide an update at the October meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

- ❖ MOTION by Kraft to adjourn until the next regular meeting on 10/20/25, which will also include a Pension Board Meeting. SECOND by Johnson. ALL IN FAVOR.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

-Katy LaSala