

Ridgway Fire Protection District

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

August 31, 2026

Upstairs Common Room, Ridgway Firehouse, 251 N Railroad Street, Ridgway, Colorado

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Meeting called to order at 5:01PM by Board Chair Christen Williams. Board members in attendance Jamie Gomez, Adam Johnson, Pam Kraft, Terry Schuyler.

Also in attendance: RFPD Chief Miller, District Administrator Kayla Fairchild and Bo Nerlin (legal counsel), Ouray County Commissioner Jake Niece, OCEMS Chief Nate McCullough, and OCEMS Training Captain Ruth Stewart.

OLD BUSINESS

Authority Progress Update

- ❖ The Board discussed a revised path for regional fire and emergency medical services following the decision to pause the previously proposed authority model. The current concept would combine RFPD and Ouray County EMS operations through an intergovernmental agreement while preserving the option to develop a broader regional authority in the future.
- ❖ Chief Miller and Chief McCullough described the proposal as a way to improve response times, strengthen coordination between fire and EMS, maintain balanced leadership, and support the volunteer system as participation changes. They reported that OCEMS handled 155 calls between May 22 and August 18, including 16 instances in which surge capacity was reached. RFPD personnel responding to medical and trauma calls have helped keep additional ambulances available for simultaneous calls.
- ❖ Discussion focused on leadership and governance, public understanding, relationships with Ouray Fire and Log Hill, and whether the two-entity model could serve as a bridge to a future authority. Board members emphasized clear, in-person communication. A joint letter to Ouray Fire and Log Hill was suggested to keep the invitation open for future participation.
- ❖ The Board discussed funding, staffing, cost allocation, and the need to ensure that RFPD does not assume an unfair share of expenses or operate at a deficit. The Board requested three years of OCEMS financial information. Commissioner Niece confirmed that the County would provide the records while the parties develop mutually acceptable agreement terms.

The Board reached consensus to continue developing the RFPD and OCEMS integration model, subject to detailed financial review and approval of final agreement terms. No formal motion was recorded.

FOLLOW UP ITEMS

1. Ouray County will provide three years of OCEMS financial information for Board review.
2. RFPD and OCEMS leadership will continue developing the proposed budget, staffing plan, cost-sharing structure, and intergovernmental agreement.
3. The parties will consider coordinated public communication and outreach to Ouray Fire and Log Hill regarding the revised model and future participation.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

❖ MOTION by Kraft to Adjourn. SECOND by Johnson. ALL IN FAVOR

Meeting Adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

Respectively Submitted,
-Kayla Fairchild