



# DEER MOUNTAIN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

## REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

### 6181 COUNTY ROAD 28 - COTOPAXI, CO 81223

### February 18, 2026 at 6:00 PM

**CALL TO ORDER:** Miriam Andolini

**PRAYER:** Laurie McKay

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Miriam Andolini

**ROLL CALL:** Anita Gregg, Recording Secretary

**DIRECTORS PRESENT:** Miriam Andolini, Laurie McKay, Nancy Mickelson, JR Niblett (via phone) and Forrest Nichols  
A quorum of the Board was noted.

**PUBLIC INPUT SIGN UP:** M. Andolini directed community members in attendance to sign up if they would like to comment.

**MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Motion** by M. Andolini to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2026 Regular Board Meeting. Second by L. McKay. Discussion: None. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.

**TREASURERS REPORT:** Nancy Mickelson

- January Treasurer's Report:

Month deposits	\$ 18,069.21
Expenses to date	\$ 32,785.21
Total checking account funds	\$ 78,264.86
Total funds available – including reserves (1/31/2026)	\$ 715,194.66

Bills Paid Report:

Bills paid through February 18, 2026 \$ 26,085.75

**Motion** by N. Mickelson to approve the Treasurer's Report and the Bills Paid Report. Second by M. Andolini. Discussion: Treasurer's Report reflects the entire calendar month of January. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.

- **Audit Update:** The financial bottom line is decreasing. The District has not yet realized the Fremont County Treasurer's funds. Tax income to DMFPD is generally front-loaded. **ACTION ITEM** for N. Mickelson to review with the county. Audit work will be compiled electronically by the March 15, 2026 deadline and sent to auditors.
- **Station Sign Content:** Suggested that informative information be provided such as Fire Danger and/or Volunteers Needed. Brightness is a concern for neighbors and road travelers. **ACTION ITEM** for Marcus Widener to research software upgrades for a timer and color contrast/light intensity control so that the sign's functionality is more effective.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Miriam Andolini

- **SDA Leadership Academy for 2026:** M. Andolini has been accepted to the Academy. Only three fire districts are included in this year's Academy. The first meeting of the SDA Leadership Fellowship is next week in Denver.
- **Grant updates:**
  - The additional information for the AFG (Assistance to Firefighters Grant) through FEMA has been compiled.
  - Another FEMA grant (opening in the same timeframe as AFG) titled, Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) will be pursued for DMFD staffing and payroll. **ACTION ITEM** for M. Andolini. Two additional FEMA grants are also available for consideration. The Fire & Prevention Safety (FP&S) Grant for gear and the Preparedness Grant for mitigation projects.
  - An application for a Colorado Firefighter's Safety and Disease Prevention Fund Grant has been made. The grant is for gear and awards announced at the end of March 2026. Fire Department leadership was thanked for gathering specific information to assist in the application.
  - The Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance Fund (EIAF) available through Fremont County would be for sleeping quarters for EMS. Until the future of EMS is determined, this will wait until the next application cycle.
- **2026 Service Plan:** M. Andolini has reviewed the available documentation. The only service plan on file was filed in 1984. In 2013, the Fremont County Commissioners approved adding specific Emergency Medical Services. However, in 2013 there was no Board Resolution to add EMS to the District. **ACTION ITEM** for M. Andolini and Chief Widener to draft an accurate 2026 Service Plan that matches the current 2026 Budget. A review by the DMFPD attorney will be requested prior to final Board Resolution for the new Service Plan and filing with the State of Colorado.
- **Service Plans for a mill levy increase and EMS services:** Three proposed staffing levels are defined as -
  - An all-volunteer staff
  - A part paid and part volunteer staff
  - All paid staff

The community will be presented with the options to determine what actual wants of the District's citizens. Information collected through surveys or polling of the citizens of the Deer Mountain must include four categories of electors -

residential, non-residential, full-time residents and part-time residents. A new polling company (specializing in special districts) will be evaluated on their cost; what and how they will poll the community; what services, what staffing, what mill levy could be considered; and where voter roll addresses and information would be gathered. Noted that it is the responsibility of the voter to update their ballot mailing information with the Fremont County Election Office. The polling company presentation will be held via Zoom on Monday, February 23, 2026.

- Mill Levy Committee Sign Up: Another mill levy increase ballot initiative has not yet been determined by the Board. The committee will evaluate the possibility. Interested community members should email [Board@dmfpd.org](mailto:Board@dmfpd.org) to sign up.
- Community Engagement: The Board seeks community input. Telephone surveys may be effective. SDA provides a wealth of good direction and is recommended.

**VICE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** JR Niblett

- Building A update: Proposals for plumbing contract bids should be submitted to [Board@dmfpd.org](mailto:Board@dmfpd.org). Material pricing for construction is being gathered.
- Annexing updates: Eagle Peak is requesting a subscription for EMS services. There is no prohibition to running services and to those not paying taxes. However, Commissioner McFalls advises not to make the run when called. Not responding to need is contrary to the honor and principles of firefighting/medical staff. Annexation into the DM will take 10 months to a year to meet requirements. ACTION ITEM for JR Niblett to follow up to meet these notification requirements. Chief Widener noted that a Sheriff **must** attend any call not within the District. Only after 12 hours of service can the District then charge for any aid provided.

**ASSISTANT TREASURER'S REPORT:** Laurie McKay

- CSLIP: The account is open and ready for funding. **Motion** by L. McKay to approve the transfer of \$200,000 from both the Emergency Reserve Fund and the Capital Improve Fund. Second by N. Mickelson. Discussion: Funds remaining in the Emergency Reserve Fund would be \$104,434 and in the Capital Improvement Fund there would remain \$124,839. Funds can be retrieved from the account in a day. Additionally, the Board is seeking some unclaimed funds through the county treasurer. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.
- Truck Finance: Financing paperwork is completed.
- Volunteer Meeting: The meeting is at 9:00 AM on Friday, February 20, 2026 to discuss volunteer options. Committed fire department volunteers must have a background check, a clean driving record, and pass a drug test. A volunteer application will be compiled and posted on the website and on Facebook.
- Community building rental fees and rules: The current rental agreement notes a \$15/hour use charge for the community hall, a \$25 fee to use the kitchen, and an additional and refundable \$50 cleaning fee. The agreement calls for leaving the facilities as they were found. The Board recommended a four-hour minimum charge and for any rental time to include set-up and clean-up. ACTION ITEM for L. McKay to finalize the agreement for approval at the next Board meeting.

**COMMUNICATION/CONSTRUCTION:** Forrest Nichols

- Facebook and social media policy: The policy was reviewed and includes - always have two+ Board members and the Fire Chief as Administrators; all posts will have no response capabilities due to CORA requests tracking; the page is for official and emergency announcements only; the community is directed to communicate via email to [Board@dmfpd.org](mailto:Board@dmfpd.org); page will be simple and ADA compliant. ACTION ITEMS for F. Nichols to provide a written policy, and to note on the page reasons for no comments/response and CORA. The FD Facebook page will remain and be administered by the fire department. Response to weekly and monthly reports about what is happening with the department has been successful. Coffee with the Chief and special guests has been positive. M. Andolini noted that ADA compliance with the DMFPD logo is needed.
- Mill levy communications and preparation: Building up communications to prepare for messaging.
- Building updates: Both F. Nichols and JR Niblett look forward to the Building A project.

**PUBLIC INPUT:**

1. Ginger Delker requested that F. Nichols share Facebook information with the DM Community Facebook page run by Kevin Smith. Suggested promotional material to hand out at events. Clean-up of Station 2 is planned in May. Donations are always welcome.

**STATION REPORTS:** Chief Marcus Widener

- Fire/EMS/Training/Runs – There were 76 hours of training, 47 calls in 2026, and 21 days accident free on Copper Gulch.
- Ambulance State Licensing – The ambulances have been clean and inventoried. The State of Colorado inspected, the DM ambulances passed and are licensed through 2028. Annual inspections will be conducted. Suggested that the new billing company rates for ALS1 would be \$1200 and for ALS2 is \$1500. Ambulances carry the minimum medications.
- EMS Council – Deer Mountain FD is on the Council with Fremont County.
- QMC Program for Southern Colorado – Program supports peer review of reports and calls for improvement purposes.
- Community – The apple tree along Copper Gulch was cut down by road crews causing community outrage. The fire department would like to plant a new, donated tree on Earth Day and begin a small orchard along the fenceline near the helipad as a goodwill community gesture and outreach.  
A request from Dawn White for a cornhole game site (45' by 45') on department grounds has been made. The site would be installed by those requesting and viewed as a property improvement and a potential for fundraising tournaments and

youth activity. A finalized preparation plan will be presented in March. ACTION ITEM for N. Mickelson to review insurance liability.

DMFPD is accepting bids for DM ground maintenance. L. McKay is the point of contact for proposals for work at both stations. A notice will be posted on the website.

- **Personnel: Hiring, Volunteers, and Training**

- No new hires this month.
- Red card certification refresher on Saturday, February 21 provided by Wet Mountain FD. Pack Test again on Sunday, February 22. Three firefighters were certified at the last Pack Test opportunity.
- A DMFD truck is up and listed for wildland fire deployment thanks to Mat Brown. An engine boss and two Type 2 firefighters are ready to go. A community send-off is requested when the call comes to deploy.
- M. Widener will attend the ICS300 class next week in Westcliffe. In March, he will attend the ICS400 class. Mat Brown will participate in these classes in the future.
- Team Recognition: Staff have been working hard. The medication room has been cleaned and inventoried. Also, Building C has been cleaned and organized.

**Motion** by L. McKay to dispose of expired gear as requested by the Fire Chief. Second by M. Andolini.

Discussion: A list of any replacement equipment needed will be provided to the Board. Tours are available of both areas that have now been set in order. The Fire Chief thanked all those who keep this positive momentum moving forward. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.

Additionally, Jason Hilterbran, a Fremont County Commissioner candidate, is available after the meeting to answer any questions.

**OLD OR UNFINISHED BUSINESS: N/A**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS: Miriam Andolini**

- Monthly Board Meeting on March 18, 2026 at 6:00 PM at Station 1.
- DMFS Events Update – Ginger Delker  
The Italian Feast is coming up on February 28. DMFS is always looking for volunteers. A Pancake Breakfast Rewind next month with Olympic-style events is planned on March 28. The Plant Sale will be held on April 25, 2026.

**VOTE TO ADJOURN: Miriam Andolini**

- **Motion** by M. Andolini to adjourn the meeting. Second by N. Mickelson. Discussion: None. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anita Gregg

**Supporting documentation:**  
*Profit & Loss Budget Performance*  
*Bills Paid Report*  
*Sign in Sheet*