



DEER MOUNTAIN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

6181 COUNTY ROAD 28 - COTOPAXI, CO 81223

June 17 2026 at 6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER: Miriam Andolini called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

PRAYER: Laurie McKay

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Miriam Andolini

ROLL CALL: Anita Gregg, Recording Secretary

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Miriam Andolini, Laurie McKay, Nancy Mickelson, JR Niblett and Forrest Nichols (via phone)

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 May 20, 2026 Regular Board Meeting. Second by JR Niblett. Discussion: None. Unanimous; motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Nancy Mickelson - *supporting documentation*

May Treasurer's Report:

Month deposits	\$ 48,074.75
Expenses to date	\$ 71,271.75
Total funds available – includes all accounts (5/31/2026)	\$ 763,687.05

Bills Paid Report:

Bills paid through June 17, 2026	\$ 86,445.87
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Motion by N. Mickelson to approve the Treasurer's Report and the Bills Paid Report. Second by L. McKay. Discussion: Interest income on investments and banking is being realized. The Type 3 Engine #432 lease is paid off. Capital improvement spending continues. Wildland fire crews are deployed. The survey has been paid. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.

- The DMFPD 2025 Audit is underway. The target date for presentation to the Board is likely the August 2026 meeting.

ASSISTANT TREASURER'S REPORT: Laurie McKay

- Housekeeping – The event volunteers and staff have been doing the housekeeping at Station 1. There is a budget line of \$1200 for cleaning expenses. ACTION ITEM for L. McKay to compile an advertisement to hire a cleaning service once a month. The ad will be placed on Facebook and on the website.
- The wildland crew has received high ratings on the last evaluation following deployment to Oklahoma and Kansas. The crew has requested an advance on pay of \$1000/week while on extended deployment of three weeks or more. The request was viewed as reasonable and will be provided.
- The driveway at Station 1 needs work. Rocky Mountain Excavating Inc can provide road base at no charge. However, the culvert is clogged and fire department staff have been working to clear it, so material does not wash away. Investigating the installation of a culvert elbow to correct the drainage. Thank you to RME.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Miriam Andolini - *supporting documentation*

- Board communications - Suggests reduced surprise discussions and improved decision making by allowing proper time for review of information. Following Fremont County's acceptance of the new Service Plan, material modifications will be needed including updated By-Laws and Employee Handbook. Sustainability, staffing models, service levels, revenue stability, and long-range planning will all need to be considered. Safe use of email is essential. A notation label of *discussion item*, *action item* or *information only* in correspondence is helpful. Simple acknowledgement of the receipts of emails is effective and efficient. Importantly, the Board must speak with **one** voice. As specified in the By-Laws, the Fire Chief is directed by the Board, not by an individual Board member. All Board members should be aware of all community input and responses. A volunteer incentive program is still a work in progress to help in staff recruitment and retention.
- **Motion** by M. Andolini to open an attorney matter for compliance questions regarding the use of the District's tax-exempt license. Second by N. Mickelson. Discussion: Clarification is needed. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.
- The Magellan Strategies encouraging survey results were reviewed and discussed at length. The key takeaways of the 261 respondents are that 83% of those surveyed approve of fire services; 73% agree that wildfire risks will increase; 54% agree there is a lack of funding; and there is 73% support after learning the facts. Most responses came as a result of text messages to phone numbers. The full survey results are on the website. Challenges include increased property taxes, Glen Vista legal problems, and negative community commenters about spending, trust, leadership and board turnover etc. The specific tasks of a mill levy committee must be outlined by the Board. Election expenses are considerable. There are 1949 total registered voters. The upcoming election is weighted in favor of the District with expected good voter turnout. ACTION ITEM for M. Andolini to send the election form to Fremont County by July 30 naming the Designated Election Official. Deadlines to draft the resolution and ballot language will be determined and met. SDA has advised the district to seek out legal guidance and not rely solely on the county for information. A mill levy campaign goal is to provide accurate information to the community using official communication tools.

- **Motion** by M. Andolini to move forward with a ballot measure for a mill levy increase on the 2026 November ballot. Second by JR Niblett. Discussion: Nothing further. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.
- **Motion** by M. Andolini to use attorney Kim Crawford to draft the resolution and ballot language at a cost not to exceed \$2000. Second by N. Mickelson. Discussion: Nothing further. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.

VICE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: JR Niblett - *supporting documentation*

- The Board and Fire Department received an email about Deer Mountain EMS mutual aid to Custer County EMS. To date, DMFD has responded to 26 calls and they have sent aid only three times. The department has been stood down eight times; and there have been seven transports and seven refusals. DMFD gets payment for transports and refusals. Custer County EMS has twice the call volume. DMFD must give mutual aid to AVAD (Arkansas Valley) and Custer County per the 2013 ambulance licensing approval because they can provide ALS (Advanced Life Support).
- Annexation has a significant cost. Fremont County Commissioners indicate that if a property does not pay taxes to DMFPD, then DMFD should not respond. Therefore, DMFPD should not provide mutual aid to FC when they do not reciprocate. The Fire Chief suggests that the properties within DMFPD should be those close to and between the fire stations, and not beyond. Lengthy response time must be considered. ACTION ITEM for M. Andolini to contact Magellan about a survey of property owners about annexation. ACTION ITEM for N. Mickelson to draft a letter to the attorney for Fremont County Commissioners about compensation for services and their liability for not providing services.
- Thank you for support during recent health issues.

COMMUNICATION/CONSTRUCTION: Forrest Nichols

- Social Media Update – (*not discussed*)
- New signs are being researched that will represent the Fire District as more polished and professional. One option is a 44" by 34" aluminum/PVC sign that is light but strong. The cost is \$434.76 for four signs. In addition, posts and concrete are needed. The project cost of \$550 to print four signs and install two signs is the most cost effective. Sign locations are yet to be determined. Funds to come from Repairs & Maintenance budget line.
Motion by L. McKay to move forward with the layout of DMFPD signs at a cost not-to-exceed \$550 and to print four signs and install two signs. Second by F. Nichols. Discussion: Four or five sign options will be drafted for Board review and approval. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.
- The survey will remain open. Building community trust with the results will help tremendously.

STATION REPORTS: Fire Chief Marcus Widener

- Fire/EMS/Training/Runs: There were 118 training hours last month that included the demonstrations at the Open House. Two new wildland firefighters, Jessica and Brandon have volunteered. The department can run two wildland crews if needed. Good feedback from the community about the Open House.
- Job descriptions are being reviewed. ACTION ITEM for M. Widener to develop an incentive program for volunteers. An advertisement to hire EMS staff is being drafted for posting.
- 179 calls to date. Trending 20-25% increase in calls annually. Budget concerns for increased fuel, maintenance, supplies, etc.
- 100% Burn Ban in effect. No open flames of any kind.
- Reviewing grants for 20,000-gallon water tanks (previously used in fracking) to be staged throughout the district.

OLD OR UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- Good progress on the office construction project at Station 1 Building A. Plumbing and concrete complete. Broken-up concrete hauled away or used to mitigate erosion. Demolition will continue on the ceiling and walls. Electrical work and framing will follow.
- M. Andolini spoke with the Fremont County lawyer regarding the 2026 Service Plan and government budgets. The DM auditor will be consulted. The Fremont County BOCC presentation, vote and resolution is scheduled for July 14, 2026. The DMFPD Budget Amendment was discussed for the October/November 2026. A Fremont County Resolution will be drafted for the services DMFD has been providing for some time. The DMFPD Service Plan will be submitted annually to Fremont County. Any material service modification to the service plan will require presentation to the commissioners.
- 2026 Budget, Wildland and Amendment – (*already discussed*)
- Wendy Steineck and Jeffrey Shipp/Robert Fraiser properties have already been voted by the Board for inclusion in the District. ACTION ITEM for M. Andolini to follow up with the attorney about the annexation process moving forward.

PUBLIC INPUT: None

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Miriam Andolini

- Next monthly Board Meeting on July 15, 2026 at 6:00 PM.

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 8:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Anita Gregg

Supporting documentation:
Profit & Loss Budget Performance
Bills Paid Report
White Paper on Annexing Properties
Magellan Strategies Survey Results