



DEER MOUNTAIN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

6181 COUNTY ROAD 28 - COTOPAXI, CO 81223

August 19, 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. A quorum of the Board was noted.

CHANGES TO AGENDA: Miriam Andolini

This item will remain on the agenda as per the DMFPD bylaws. However, per CRS §24-6-402, this item "Changes to the Agenda" will no longer be included because of adherence to the 24-hour notice requirement for Open Meeting laws.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Motion** by L. McKay to approve the minutes of the July 15, 2026 Regular Board Meeting. Second by M. Andolini. Discussion: None. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.

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

PUBLIC INPUT:

1. Michael Croge commented on the annexation of Spruce Basin properties. A Meet & Greet was held with the residents and the fire department. 31 properties request annexation with another three probable. There are some owners who do not desire annexation.
2. Skip Moreau commented on his candidacy for Fremont County Sheriff. He indicated that he would support DMFPD with sheriff's department staffing in the area and vehicle patrol on Copper Gulch Road.

PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT REPORT: Andrew Wolf, auditor w/Garron, Ross & DeNardo presented in detail the draft 2025 DMFPD Financial Audit. Following Board approval, the final audit report will be sent to the State of Colorado before the September 30, 2026 deadline. The Board will provide the audit to the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) and post it on the website.

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

July Treasurer's Report:

Month deposits	\$ 277,100.23
Expenses to date	\$ 90,162.14
Total funds available – includes all accounts (7/31/2026)	\$ 744,222.21

Bills Paid Report:

Bills paid through August 19, 2026	\$ 74,967.43
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Motion by N. Mickelson to approve the Treasurer's Report and the Bills Paid Report. Second by L. McKay. Discussion: Note significant Wildland Fire income. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.

- 2026 Budget Amendment Update – Nancy Mickelson
Both our auditor and the SDA (Special District Association) have recommended that DMFPD wait until the end of the year to amend the budget.

ASSISTANT TREASURER'S REPORT: Laurie McKay

- No report. All items will be taken up under unfinished or new business.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Miriam Andolini

- The 2025 AFG (Assistance to Firefighters Grant) applicant notifications have not been published by FEMA. Note that there is \$281.6 million in grant funds available for approx. 1,800 grant awards.
- There is a difference between ad hoc and standing committees. Ad hoc committees dissolve after task completion. Standing committees continue to report back to the Board. With respect to a Mill Levy Committee, specific responsibilities and limitations need to be defined with adherence to Fair Campaign practices. Noted that there has been a community recommendation for an Open House for the department and Board to converse with the community rather than a classroom presentation of communication of a ballot initiative.
- Ballot language and TABOR notices have been drafted. The Fremont County assessments will be updated by the Assessor's Office on August 25, 2026. A Special Meeting of the Board will be held between August 25 and September 3 to finalize and approve.
- The ballot measure list must be verified. Researching with the Colorado Secretary of State in reference to who, (Board Chairman or Designated Election Official (DEO), can complete the required verification process.

VICE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: JR Niblett

- Residents can and do provide their own water tanks for use by the fire department.

- Commented that negativity and rumors still abound in the community about the mill levy and District spending. Suggested that the District must take care of the firefighters, or there will not be any firefighters.

COMMUNICATION/CONSTRUCTION REPORT: Forrest Nichols

- No report. All items are under unfinished business.

STATION REPORTS: Fire Chief Marcus Widener

- Fire/EMS/Training/Runs - There have been 280 calls so far this year. In 2025, the yearly total was 306. Likely more than 400 calls by year end. 138 training hours this month. Matt Brown is working with Howard FD and Wet Mountain FD on a Fire Fighter 1 Class in September. Nine DM volunteers will participate. State certification soon to follow.
- Personnel: Hiring, Volunteers, and Training - Three new volunteers (Brody Polly, Patty Carr and Alex Tottington).
- Wildland Report - The engine has returned from the Aspen Acres Fire after 30 total days. Another call-out is anticipated because many other wildfires are burning.
- Thank you to all who keep the Fire Department positively moving forward.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: All Board Members

- Station 1 Updates – JR Niblett and Laurie McKay
 - The \$20,000 quote for electrical work for the office project in Building A has been received by licensed electrician Thomas Copeland. - *supporting documentation*. **Motion** by L. McKay to research the cost of an alternative drawing and report back to the Board. Second by N. Mickelson. Discussion: Itemization in the billing is needed. An engineering report is required for exhaust fans. Fire Department leaders have put forward a plan/design for alternative use of the space. A shower is suggested for use by DMFD staff for cleanup and decontamination. A water filter is advised. Any project changes will result in the need for another Fremont County permit. A Fremont County Grant will be explored. Vote: Mickelson-YES; McKay-YES; Andolini-YES; Nichols-YES; Niblett-NO; motion carried.
 - The driveway drainage pipe has filled in again with recent rains. Perhaps this culvert along Copper Gulch Road is the responsibility of Fremont County. ACTION ITEM for M. Widener to resolve.
 - Due to an increased request in pay, the Board will hire another cleaning service for the community room to clean every two weeks for \$200 per month.
- Recent communications from the District's legal counsel referenced the lawful establishment of the Auxiliary as a nonprofit entity. The Board has oversight to ensure compliance. L. McKay has reviewed bank accounts that are in good standing and indicated that the tax-exempt status of 501(c)(3) expires in 2027. Noted that the Auxiliary is operating in good faith. **Motion** by N. Mickelson to inform, via email, the secretary of the Auxiliary to report back to the Board at the September 2026 Regular Board Meeting on the areas the Directors have oversight, so that events can be held on fire department property. Second by M. Andolini. Discussion: Nothing further. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.
- District Signs – Forrest Nichols and Laurie McKay
The design has been finalized by the fire department. Using this design, the District will purchase four square signs sized 36" by 36" at a cost of \$396.58 plus the cost of posts and materials (approx. \$120) for installation.
- Annexation Project for Inclusions – Nancy Mickelson
Following consultation with the District's attorney, annexation will move forward to include properties currently in out-of-service areas in accordance with CRS §32-1-4012-a-11. Notification, hearing, resolution and vote are needed as DMFPD works with Fremont County concerning annexation. The annexation will go through unless Fremont County has a written objection. **Motion** by N. Mickelson to move forward with a letter from counsel as prepared in draft form dated August 14, 2026 to initiate the annexation process. Second by M. Andolini. Discussion: The timing of annexation is dependent on the GIS mapping of boundaries and will likely be completed by the end of the year. M. Andolini is the point of contact for any contributions/donations for the expense put forth for annexation. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.
Motion by N. Mickelson to send a separate email to FC Commissioner McFall from M. Andolini on behalf of the Board about the pending annexation. Second by M. Andolini. Discussion: The annexation is based on outreach from the community. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS AND SPECIAL ORDERS: All Board Members

- 2025 Financial Audit – Nancy Mickelson
Motion by N. Mickelson to approve the 2025 Audit as presented by Andrew Wolf. Second by L. McKay. Discussion: Budget management this year has been exceptional. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.
- Insurance Coverage – Nancy Mickelson
Motion by N. Mickelson to renew the insurance coverage for auto, commercial and director liability with VFIS. Second by L. McKay. Discussion: No other insurance bids were sought because VFIS has been cost effective. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.
- Station Representative – Nancy Mickelson
Motion by N. Mickelson to identify Matt Brown as the Station Representative as required per the DMFPD Bylaws. Second by M. Andolini. Discussion: To act as another liaison between the Board and the community with respect to conflict resolution. M. Widener had no objections. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.
- 2026 Ballot Measure Actionable Items – Miriam Andolini

- **Motion** by M. Andolini to call a Special Meeting on August 27, 2026 at 2:00 PM in the Community Hall to approve Ballot Language, TABOR Notices, Resolutions that have the accurate county assessment as of August 25; and possible including an annexation agenda item, if information is available. Second by L. McKay. Discussion: Nothing further. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.
- **Motion** by M. Andolini to create an ad hoc Ballot Measure Information Committee that will disband on November 5, 2026. Second by F. Nichols. Discussion: Nothing further. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.
- **Motion** by M. Andolini to direct two Board members, L. McKay and M. Andolini, to work with Fire Chief M. Widener on financial and service outlook for 2027 to present to the Board. Second by L. McKay. Discussion: Planning services and budgets with and without a mill levy increase. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.
- Fire Chief Annual Review – Miriam Andolini
 - **Motion** by M. Andolini to conduct a performance review of M. Widener at the regular Board meeting in September 2026 in Executive Session. Second by L. McKay. Discussion: Contract with the Fire Chief was signed on September 1, 2025. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.
- SDA Conference – Miriam Andolini
 - **Motion** by L. McKay to allow M. Andolini to attend the SDA Conference held September 15-17, 2026. Second by N. Mickelson. Discussion: M. Andolini will call in to attend the DMFPD Board Meeting. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.
- The Station 1 building project has already been discussed. Clarification that fans can be placed on a timer.
- Wildland Communications – Laurie McKay
 - Motion** by L. McKay to purchase two Starlink Mini dishes for wildland and command trucks with installation costs of \$200 plus a \$50 monthly subscription with a 100GB use limitation. Second by N. Mickelson. Discussion: Improved communication identification and recommendation following recent deployments. Hard copy maps will still be utilized. Will inquire about a First Responder rate with Starlink. Two Starlink accounts needed with specific budget codes to be determined. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Miriam Andolini

Moved to Executive Session pursuant to §24-6-402(4)(F), CRS for discussion of department personnel matters at 8:32 PM. The items to be discussed is the compensation review for Chief Widener for his annual review as per his employment contract to be conducted at the Regular Board Meeting in September 2026 and discussion of a personnel matter involving Jerry St. John.

The Board came back into the regular Board meeting session at 9:24 PM.

NEW BUSINESS AND SPECIAL ORDERS: All Board Members

Motion by M. Andolini to earmark \$10,000 of wildland funds for the compensation of extraordinary work provided by executive staff. Second by L. McKay. Discussion: Nothing further. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Miriam Andolini

- The next monthly Board Meeting is scheduled on September 16, 2026 at 6:00 PM.

VOTE TO ADJOURN: Miriam Andolini

- **Motion** by M. Andolini to adjourn the meeting. Second by L. McKay. Discussion: None. Vote: Unanimous; motion carried. The meeting concluded at 9:26 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Anita Gregg

Supporting documentation:
Profit & Loss Budget Performance
Bills Paid Report
Sign-in sheet
Electrical Bid