

Aspen Fire Protection District



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Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes June 9th, 2026

The Board of Directors of the Aspen Fire Protection District met for their regular meeting. The meeting was open to the public in person and virtually via Zoom.

Meeting called to order by Wabs at 5:01pm.

Roll Call:

- Board of Directors Present: Dave “Wabs” Walbert, Charles Cunniffe, Jennifer Goldfarb, Emily Taylor (online), Parker Lathrop (arrived at 5:15pm)
- Staff/Volunteers Present: Jake Andersen, Nikki Lapin, Jan Legersky, Jan Schubert, Amanda Perusse, Ben Smith (online), Max Lyall (online).
- Public/Others: Aaron Bern (legal council), Chris Bendon

MOTION: Motion made by Charles Cunniffe to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting on May 12th, 2026.

Second: Jennifer Goldfarb

Discussion: None

Vote: All approved

Public Comment:

Chris Bendon — proposed Green Creek Racetrack development.

Presented information regarding a planned mixed-use redevelopment that, if approved through the county review process, would include affordable housing units designated for emergency response organizations, including fire, law enforcement, ambulance, and emergency communications personnel.

Emphasized that:

- They were not seeking formal endorsement of the development from AFD.
- The project could provide future employee housing opportunities for emergency service organizations.
- Additional potential benefits could include access to training facilities and community resources associated with the development.
- County hearings are anticipated in July 2026.

Board members expressed interest in learning more about the housing opportunities while maintaining a neutral position regarding the development application itself. The Board indicated a willingness to continue discussions if the project advances and opportunities prove beneficial to the District.

AVFD Inc.: None.

Financials – Provided in the board packet

District leadership reviewed the May financial statements and budget status.

Discussion included:

- Ongoing monitoring of newly implemented sales tax revenue collections.
- Confirmation that projected sales tax revenues were developed using available historical data and conservative assumptions.
- Current collections continue to trend favorably, though revenues remain variable month-to-month due to seasonal economic activity.
- Clarification regarding dispatch service billing schedules and utility-related expenses, including waste and contracted services associated with District facilities.

No formal action was taken. The Board accepted the financial report as presented.

Board member comments/action items:

A. Purchase of 415 Pacific Avenue Condominium

Chief Andersen presented an opportunity to purchase a free-market condominium unit located at **415 Pacific Avenue** for employee housing purposes.

Key discussion points included:

- The unit is a one-bedroom condominium located within the District and near existing fire facilities.
- The opportunity became available through a time-sensitive pocket listing.
- Staff evaluated the property as a potential addition to the District's employee housing inventory.
- Funding would be provided through existing housing fund allocations and available General Fund reserves.
- The purchase contract includes inspection, title review, HOA review, and other due diligence contingencies.
- Board members discussed ongoing ownership costs, HOA obligations, maintenance considerations, and future rental rate structures.

Board members agreed the property represented a strategic employee housing opportunity and a long-term asset for the District.

MOTION: Motion made by Jennifer Goldfarb to approve the contract as written to purchase 415 Pacific Avenue.

Second: Parker Lathrop

Vote: All approved

B. Mindbloom Mental Health Program

Staff presented information regarding a proposed partnership with Mindbloom, a provider of ketamine-assisted mental health treatment programs.

Discussion focused on:

- Program structure and participant confidentiality.
- Potential use as an additional mental health resource for District personnel.
- Contract review requirements.
- Liability considerations and administrative structure.

- Possible alternatives utilizing existing employee assistance or health benefit frameworks.

As the contract was received immediately prior to the meeting and additional legal review is required, no action was taken.

The Board directed staff to provide additional information regarding program efficacy, contract structure, confidentiality protections, and legal considerations before further consideration.

Staff Report:

Staff reports were reviewed as provided in the board packet. Highlights included:

Fire Marshal Report - Reviewed by Fire Marshal Jan Legersky

- Continued cross-training efforts among prevention personnel.
- Fire extinguisher training programs conducted within the community.
- Wildfire origin and cause investigation training completed by staff.
- Participation in state-level efforts to establish a Colorado Fire Investigation Certification process.
- Upcoming special event inspections associated with the Food & Wine Classic and other seasonal activities.

Staff also reported a substantial increase in wildfire assessment requests and ongoing efforts to expand capacity to meet community demand.

Operations Report - Reviewed by Deputy Chief Ken Josselyn

Operations reported **145 incidents during May**, including:

- 3 fire-related incidents
- 12 emergency medical rescue calls
- 7 hazardous condition incidents

Grant Cabin Fire - A significant structure fire occurred at the historic Grant Cabin near Aspen.

Highlights included:

- Approximately 30 personnel and 13 apparatus responded.
- Mutual aid partners included Aspen Ambulance, Pitkin County Sheriff's Office, Aspen Police Department, BLM, Roaring Fork Fire Rescue, and SkiCo personnel.
- The cabin was determined to be a total loss.
- Crews successfully prevented fire spread into surrounding wildland fuels.
- Fire cause remains under investigation.

Operations leadership commended responding personnel for their effective management of a challenging incident in difficult terrain and credited strong interagency coordination for the successful containment effort.

Training Update - Information provided by Division Chief of Training Scott Arthur, reviewed by Chief Jake Andersen

Training activities during May included:

- Swiftwater rescue training and competency evaluations.
- Solar and photovoltaic roof operations training.
- Aircraft rescue and firefighting exercises with Aspen/Pitkin County Airport.
- Wildland firefighter onboarding and field training.
- Annual live-fire and aircraft emergency response exercises.

Staff also highlighted a notable example of organizational culture when Firefighter Will Hardenberg contacted an instructor following a family emergency. The instructor later contacted the District to express appreciation for the gesture, citing it as an example of the District's commitment to its core value of caring for people.

Wildfire Mitigation and Preparedness - Information provided by WCAF Director, Ali Hammond, reviewed by Chief Andersen.

- Castle Creek mitigation projects involving HOA, municipal, and private landowner partnerships.
 - Ongoing use of targeted grazing and vegetation management projects.
 - Community education events, including wildfire preparedness forums and outreach programs.
 - Partnerships with ACES, Aspen Public Radio, Rotary Club, YPO, and other community organizations.
 - Progress on Shadow Mountain, Smuggler Mountain, and other strategic mitigation initiatives.
 - Continued efforts to address increasing demand for wildfire risk assessments.
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Human Resources Report - Reviewed by Human Resources Director Nikki Lapin

- Completion of the Wildland Lieutenant Assessment Center.
- Promotion of Charlie Curtis to Battalion Chief.
- Promotion of Drew Barr to Lieutenant.
- Advancement of Connor Dodge to Firefighter position.
- Successful onboarding of seven seasonal wildland firefighters.
- Continued recruitment and succession planning efforts.

Staff highlighted the strength of internal candidates and ongoing leadership development initiatives throughout the organization.

CEO / Fire Chief Report - Presented by Fire Chief Jake Andersen

Sales Tax Revenue

- Sales tax collections continue to exceed initial projections.
- Revenues remain variable due to seasonal economic activity.
- Current collections are trending significantly above baseline historical figures.

UAS / Seneca Drone Program

- FAA approvals continue progressing for the District's drone program.
- Seneca drone delivery remains anticipated in early July.
- Staff are developing operational manuals, training protocols, and regulatory compliance documentation required for deployment.

Wildfire Conditions

- Pitkin County will enter Stage 1 Fire Restrictions effective June 11, 2026.
- Neighboring counties and BLM agencies implemented similar restrictions.
- Staff continue coordinating regional wildfire preparedness and public information efforts.

Upcoming Events

- Insurance Summit the week of June 8th
- Independence Day operations and community events
- Foundation fundraising activities
 - AWF Embers and Elegance Annual Fund Raiser – July 24th
 - Mayor's Cup charitable golf tournament benefiting wildfire preparedness initiatives - August 9th

Chief Andersen thanked the Board for its continued support and responsiveness regarding time-sensitive strategic opportunities.

Old Business None

New Business None

MOTION: **Motion made by Parker Lathrop to adjourn.**

Second: **Jennifer Goldfarb**

Discussion: **None**

Vote: **All approved**

Adjourned at 6:24pm

***** A board packet of this meeting can be requested by contacting the Executive Administrative Assistant at eliza.robison@aspenfire.com or by calling 970-925-5532.**