

Aspen Fire Protection District



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Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes March 10th, 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 5:00pm.

Roll Call:

- Board of Directors Present: Dave “Wabs” Walbert, Charles Cunniffe, Emily Taylor, Parker Lathrop, Jennifer Goldfarb (online).
- Staff/Volunteers Present: Jake Andersen, Ken Josselyn, Nikki Lapin, Scott Arthur, Jan Legersky, Jan Schubert, Amanda Perusse, Ali Hammond (online), Ben Smith (online), Zach Abley (online)
- Public/Others: Aaron Bern (legal council), Eliza Robison (public)

MOTION: Motion made by Charles to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting on February 10th, 2026.

Second: Emily

Discussion: None

Vote: All approved.

Public Comment: None

AVFD Inc.: None

Financials – Provided in the board packet

- The Board reviewed the February 2026 financials and the FPPA fourth quarter report. FPPA reported approximately a 13% return year-to-date and for the one-year period.

Board member comments/action items: None

Resolution 2026-03-01 – Adoption of Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code (by referral). Fire Marshal,

- Jan Legersky provided an overview of the statewide Wildfire Resiliency Code adoption process. The code is being adopted by referral and aligns with municipal and county amendments. Coordination meetings have occurred among fire districts, municipalities, the county, and the State of Colorado.
 - The resolution must be adopted by April 1, 2026, with implementation effective July 1, 2026.
 - A minor clerical correction was noted in the resolution document.

MOTION: Motion made by Charles Cunniffe to accept Resolution 2026-03-01, adopting the Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code by referral, with noted clerical correction of CRWC to CWRC.

Second: Parker Lathrop

Discussion: None

Vote: All approved.

Approval of PTO Policy Revisions

- Human Resources Director, Nikki Lapin, summarized the proposed updates to the PTO policy, previously discussed by the Board.
 - Revisions include front-loading PTO during an employee's first year of service, with provisions addressing repayment if employment ends prior to accrual completion.
 - Minor typographical corrections were noted.

MOTION: Motion made by Emily Taylor to approve the recommended PTO policy revisions as presented.

Second: Charles Cunniffe

Discussion: None

Vote: All approved.

Funding Authorization – Wildfire Modeling

- Chief Andersen presented a proposal to allocate funds from the Wildfire Community Action Fund to support wildfire modeling efforts through the Wildfire Collaborative. Funding would support:
 - Updated curbside structure assessments district-wide
 - Urban built environment modeling (Dr. Mahmoud)
 - XyloPlan fire pathway modeling
 - The data collected will inform community wildfire risk analysis throughout the Upper Valley.
- Board discussion included:
 - Funding structure
 - Invoicing process
 - Documentation of the decision
 - Recommendation for a simple Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Wildfire Collaborative
 - Establishing a monetary cap

MOTION: Motion made by Charles Cunniffe to authorize a contribution of funds from the Wildfire Community Action Fund to the Wildfire Collaborative in an amount not to exceed \$250,000 to support wildfire modeling efforts, with the understanding that an MOU will be executed.

Second: Emily Taylor

Vote: All approved

Staff Report:

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

- **Fire Marshal Report – reviewed by Fire Marshal, Jan Legersky**
 - Ben Smith completed state approval requirements toward Certified Fire Investigator status and is preparing for the IAAI examination.
 - The Sundeck fire remains under investigation.
 - A recent electrical outlet fire at Home Team BBQ revealed significant internal damage; county coordination is ongoing.
 - Upcoming code amendment update will address 2024 IFC Chapter 12 (solar and energy storage systems).
 - Continued monitoring of evolving battery storage and solar installation standards.
- **Operations Report – reviewed by Deputy Fire Chief, Ken Josselyn**

- 171 calls for service in February
- 3 major fires
- 20 high-acuity (Delta/Echo) EMS calls
- 16 hazard responses

Notable Incidents:

- Sundeck structure fire: coordinated response with Ski Patrol and partner agencies; after-action review completed.
- Ongoing review of remote facility pre-planning, water supply reliability, and potential secured equipment caches.
- Dumpster fire caused by improper ash disposal.
- Ice water dog rescue.
- Citizen assists and medical intervention (diabetic emergency identified by Firefighter Gottlieb).

Increased emphasis will be placed on:

- Pre-planning for remote structures
- Knox Box compliance and key access updates
- Hydrant and water supply mapping validation

- **Training Report – Reviewed by Division Chief of Training, Scott Arthur**

- February training included:
 - Annual SCBA recertification and mask fit testing
 - Confidence course under high exertion conditions
 - Medical training: shortness of breath and respiratory distress
 - Ongoing Fire Academy live burn evolutions
 - Expansion of technical rescue and target hazard walkthrough training
 - ISO documentation preparation
- Upcoming training includes elevator rescue procedures and pediatric medical/trauma response.

- **Wildfire Mitigation and Preparedness – Reviewed by WCAF director, Ali Hammond**

- Wildfire Resiliency Division activity remains high, including:
 - Increased demand for mitigation assessments
 - Growing mitigation waitlist
 - Shadow Mountain beetle kill mitigation planning
 - Collaboration with Aspen Skiing Company, Open Space, and City of Aspen
 - Upcoming hiring of Community Engagement Coordinator
 - Planning for June wildfire outreach event aligned with Farmers Market reopening

- **Human Resources Report – Reviewed by Human Resources Director, Nikki Lapin**

- Recent and upcoming hiring activity:
 - Deputy Chief: Andy Fisher selected; start date March 23, 2026
 - Executive Administrative Assistant interviews underway 3/11/26
 - Community Engagement Coordinator interviews scheduled 3/18/26
 - Wildfire Battalion Chief, Wildfire Lieutenant, and 4–6 seasonal wildfire positions to be posted by the end of this week
 - Approximately 8–9 total new hires anticipated (including Deputy Chief)
- Significant staff involvement in assessment centers and hiring processes was noted.

CEO / Fire Chief – Jake Andersen

Chief Andersen provided updates on:

- **Community & Leadership Engagement**
 - Exploring membership in YPO (Young Presidents' Organization) as a means of strengthening connections with a broader segment of the business and executive community. While the District meets eligibility thresholds based on organizational size, the membership cost structure is designed for private-sector executives and may not align with public-sector compensation levels. In discussion with the organization regarding potential government or nonprofit rate options.
 - The intent of participation would be to build relationships within a sector of the community where the District currently has limited direct engagement, particularly among business and organizational leaders involved in large-scale projects and regional initiatives.
- **Regional & Strategic Partnerships**
 - Continued coordination with regional partners on wildfire mitigation, modeling, and resiliency initiatives. He emphasized the importance of maintaining strong interagency relationships across municipal, county, and special district partners, particularly as wildfire preparedness and modeling efforts expand.
 - Reiterated the District's commitment to proactive planning in response to the Sundeck incident, including:
 - Increased emphasis on pre-planning for remote and difficult-access structures
 - Evaluation of water supply reliability at remote facilities
 - Consideration of secured equipment caches where appropriate
 - Strengthening coordination with ski area operations and partner agencies

These efforts are intended to improve response readiness for complex or high-elevation incidents.

- **Organizational Growth & Capacity**
 - Highlighted the significant hiring and organizational restructuring currently underway, particularly within wildfire resiliency and operational leadership. With multiple new positions being filled, the District is focused on:
 - Clear role definition
 - Proper onboarding
 - Maintaining operational continuity during transition
 - Ensuring new staff are positioned for long-term success

He noted that the level of hiring activity represents a substantial expansion of District capacity and will require careful integration over the coming months.

- **ISO Preparation & Training Emphasis**
 - Reinforced the District's commitment to ISO readiness and documentation. Expanded training efforts, target hazard walkthroughs, and technical rescue drills are being structured not only to meet ISO criteria but to strengthen operational readiness across all divisions.

Executive Session

The Board entered into Executive Session @ 6:28pm, pursuant to §24-6-402(4)(f), C.R.S., concerning personnel matters relating to Fire Chief Jake Andersen.

The Board returned from Executive Session @ 6:50pm

Chief Performance Review Summary

The Board discussed the Fire Chief's performance review, which included a summary of anonymous feedback gathered from personnel interviews along with board discussion.

Feedback highlighted several leadership strengths, including the Chief's humility, self-awareness, and collaborative leadership style. Respondents noted the Chief's ability to empower others within the organization, build supportive systems, and foster trust and shared ownership among staff. The Chief was also recognized for maintaining a positive organizational culture characterized by openness, mutual respect, and strong morale.

The review also noted progress across multiple areas of the department, including training and professional development, operational response improvements, administrative and staffing support, and strengthened

wildfire preparedness capabilities. The Chief's leadership was further described as authentic, emotionally intelligent, and calm in challenging situations.

Survey responses indicated strong support for the Chief's leadership. The majority of respondents stated that the Chief communicates expectations and strategic direction clearly, and most reported that he provides the leadership support necessary for them to succeed in their roles.

Areas identified for continued development focused primarily on supporting long-term organizational growth. Suggestions included continuing to refine organizational roles and responsibilities as the department expands, maintaining clear expectations and timelines for initiatives, and encouraging delegation and sustainable workload balance to support long-term leadership effectiveness. Additional feedback suggested maintaining visible accessibility to staff and continuing to encourage open dialogue and collaborative communication, particularly during high-pressure situations.

Board members expressed strong support for the Chief's leadership and performance. Individual board members noted that feedback received from both career and volunteer personnel had been overwhelmingly positive. Board members also commended the Chief for the positive direction of the organization.

Jennifer Goldfarb stated that she was pleased to be part of the team and commended the Chief for doing a phenomenal job.

The Chief thanked the Board for the feedback and acknowledged the positive comments as well as the areas identified for growth. He noted that the past several months have been a period of significant activity for the organization, including ballot initiatives, budget revisions, and continued organizational development. The Chief shared that he is pursuing additional professional development, including leadership and communications training, and emphasized his commitment to continued growth in the role.

Strategic Planning Discussion

The Board and Chief briefly discussed the importance of revisiting the District's strategic plan. A revised plan had previously been developed but was not formally adopted due to organizational changes and other priorities. The Chief noted that the existing framework continues to be used internally and suggested revisiting the planning process once additional leadership positions are in place and organizational capacity allows. The Board discussed the possibility of engaging outside facilitation for a future strategic planning process.

Old Business None

New Business None

MOTION: Motion made by Parker Lathrop to adjourn.

Second: Charles Cunniffe

Discussion: None

Vote: All approved

Adjourned at 7:07pm

***** A board packet of this meeting can be requested by contacting the Human Resources Assistant at amanda.perusse@aspensfire.com or by calling 970-925-5532.**