

Aspen Fire Protection District



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Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes February 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, Jennifer Goldfarb, Emily Taylor, Parker Lathrop (arrived at 5:04pm)
- Staff/Volunteers Present: Jake Andersen, Nikki Lapin, Scott Arthur, Jan Legersky, Jan Schubert, Amanda Perusse, Arnold Nimmo
- Public/Others: Aaron Bern (legal council)

MOTION: Motion made by Charles to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting on January 13th, 2026.

Second: Jennifer

Discussion: None

Vote: All approved.

Public Comment: None

AVFD Inc.: None

Financials – Provided in the board packet

No discussion

Board member comments/action items: None

Parker Lathrop arrived at 5:04pm

Staff Report:

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

a. Fire Marshal Report – reviewed by Fire Marshal, Jan Legersky

- a. Fire Marshal report was unable to be completed in time for inclusion in the board packet.
- b. Jan reported that all three Prevention Division staff members recently attended training focused on fire investigation interviews and report writing. The training was led by an instructor with over 20 years of industry experience at the state level and was described as very beneficial.

- c. Wildfire Resiliency Code Adoption - Jan provided an update regarding the proposed Wildfire Resiliency Code:
 - i. Prevention agencies are preparing resolutions to present to their respective boards.
 - ii. Pitkin County has a draft resolution prepared.
 - iii. The District needs to meet with the City to determine the direction they intend to take.
 - iv. The District will draft a resolution consistent with the approach adopted by the City and County.
 - v. Staff will meet with legal counsel to review the resolution, with the goal of presenting it at the March meeting and implementing it effective April 1, 2026.
- d. Jan also reported that the division remains busy. Ben is finalizing several fire investigation reports, and Zach is currently attending a Fire Inspector class.
- e. Jan noted that the January and February Prevention reports will be combined and presented at the March Board meeting.

b. Operations Report – reviewed by Deputy Fire Chief, Ken Josselyn

- a. Discussion on photo showing a lithium-ion battery charger fire.
 - i. Staff discussed the challenges associated with lithium-ion battery and electric vehicle (EV) fires, noting significant suppression and environmental concerns. Large EV fires can require substantial water for extinguishment—studies indicate up to 40,000 gallons—which creates runoff and hazardous material considerations. While the District has not yet experienced a major EV or battery bank fire, staff advised such an incident is likely.
 - ii. Response guidance continues to evolve nationally. Additional concerns include EV fires in below-grade garages, structures with vehicle lifts, and large battery energy storage systems (ESS). Although current code requires fire-rated enclosures for larger ESS installations, older systems may not meet present standards. Staff emphasized that life safety and responder safety remain the District’s primary priorities.
- b. Staff reviewed a recent carbon monoxide (CO) incident involving an improperly modified boiler vent pipe that allowed CO to enter a residence.
- c. Photos were reviewed from a structure fire response on Cooper Avenue, determined to have been caused by operating a fireplace with the flue closed. Staff noted appropriate apparatus placement and readiness for escalation had the fire extended.
- d. A mutual aid response in Snowmass at the Viewline property highlighted continued strong interagency coordination and rapid resource deployment for structure fires.
- e. A rollover motor vehicle accident on McLain Flats was also reviewed. Staff reported effective stabilization and response. Incident frequency has been lower due to limited snow conditions but may increase with changing weather.
- f. The report concluded with brief updates on station activities and quality-of-life improvements, including replacement of bunk room mattresses for on-duty personnel.

c. Training Report – Reviewed by Division Chief of Training, Scott Arthur

- a. January training activities:
 - i. Fire training focused on chimney, attic, and concealed space fires. The District partnered with Roaring Fork Fire to utilize a chimney and fireplace training prop, allowing crews to simulate chimney stack and firebox fires. Crews also trained on roof operations and deployment of fog nails, a high-pressure, low-volume nozzle designed for confined space fire suppression. The training provided hands-on experience and was well received by personnel.
 - ii. Medical training for the month covered altered levels of consciousness and associated causes.
- b. Recruit class 2025 update: One additional firefighter from the Class of 2025 was recently badged, with one remaining candidate expected to complete requirements next month. A small number of recruits remain on hold due to personal matters and are expected to return when appropriate.

- c. Recruit class 2026 update: Progressing well. Two near-lateral members are completing remaining certifications and task books and are expected to come online later this year. Seven academy recruits are performing well and progressing through Fire Academy, wildland training, EMT certification, and task book requirements, with anticipated completion in early 2027.
 - d. Several members are participating in wildland training courses in preparation for the upcoming fire season.
- d. Wildfire Mitigation and Preparedness – Reviewed by Fire Chief, Jake Andersen**
- a. Priority fuels reduction and wildfire mitigation projects are being advanced for the upcoming season. Shovel-ready or near-ready areas include Castle Creek (near the bridge and evacuation route), Red Butte and Slaughterhouse, North 40 near the wastewater treatment plant, Burlingame/Deerhill, and Shadow Mountain. These represent five of approximately twenty projects under development for potential implementation this summer. Treatment prescriptions are being developed based on site-specific fuel types, including both brush and timber.
 - b. Coordination continues with the City of Aspen, Pitkin County, SkiCo, and other stakeholders to implement cross-boundary projects. SkiCo has committed crew time to assist with work on Shadow Mountain, and discussions are ongoing regarding additional collaboration, including potential wildland qualifications for partner personnel.
 - c. The Shadow Mountain project is progressing with stakeholder coordination and development of a formal prescription. Environmental reviews, including soils and archaeological assessments, have largely been completed, allowing for limited additional review.
 - d. Wildfire behavior modeling tools are being evaluated to assist with prioritizing treatment areas. Pathway modeling will help identify likely fire spread patterns, and peer-reviewed built-environment modeling is being considered to assess fire movement through developed neighborhoods. Initial priority projects are based on known risk factors and proximity to infrastructure and evacuation routes; modeling will inform future work beyond 2026.
 - e. Organizational development of the wildfire division is underway. Recruitment for leadership positions is in progress, and operational planning includes equipment acquisition, resource staging, and facility reconfiguration. Station 64 is being cleared and reorganized to support wildfire operations.
 - f. Regional coordination continues regarding evacuation planning and fire restriction messaging. Updated evacuation mapping and notification tools are being implemented to improve real-time response capability.
 - g. A project map was reviewed outlining proposed treatment areas. Many high-priority lands are owned by local stakeholders, including the City, County, ACES, AVL, and SkiCo, allowing for coordinated mitigation efforts. Private landowner engagement remains a key component of overall risk reduction.
- e. Human Resources Report – Reviewed by Human Resources Director, Nikki Lapin**
- a. Current open positions include the Deputy Chief of Administration and the Executive Administrative Assistant. The Executive Administrative Assistant position is being filled to replace Amanda Perusse, who has accepted the HR Assistant role.
 - b. The Deputy Chief assessment center is tentatively scheduled for March 3rd, subject to candidate availability. Board members were invited to participate in the assessment process.
 - c. Additional recruitment for wildfire leadership, seasonal personnel, and a communications position is forthcoming, with the goal of having key roles filled by May 1st.
 - d. Policy and handbook updates are in progress and are anticipated to be presented at the next Board meeting following internal review and coordination with legal counsel.

- a. Seneca drone program update: Contract negotiations are nearing completion, with ongoing collaboration between the District, legal counsel, and Seneca to address operational, legal, and regulatory considerations. As this program represents a first-of-its-kind effort in Colorado, additional due diligence has been required. While significant progress has been made, final execution of the agreement is still pending.
- b. Finance support update: A local firm has submitted an hourly proposal to assist with payroll and financial functions. The firm also offers additional services, including long-range financial planning. Engagement is expected to begin with payroll support, with future scope to be evaluated as needed.
- c. 2026 wildfire outlook discussion: Current drought conditions place much of Pitkin County in severe to exceptional drought, with the region among the highest risk areas in the state. Preparations are underway to ensure operational readiness regardless of seasonal variability.
- d. Wildfire modeling efforts were reviewed. The District is considering participation in a regional modeling program administered through the Collaborative. Estimated total project cost is approximately \$250,000, including structure data collection (estimated at \$75,000) and modeling components utilizing both pathway modeling and peer-reviewed built-environment modeling tools. Funding options include support from the Aspen Wildfire Foundation or allocation of previously designated sales tax revenue. The Board expressed interest in first determining whether the Wildfire Foundation is willing to fund the effort.
- e. Organizational development initiatives were discussed, including a proposal to hold a Board policy workshop or retreat with the Special District Association. The purpose would be to review governance procedures, board policies, and meeting processes. Potential scheduling options will be evaluated.
- f. Discussion was held regarding the Fire Chief's six-month performance review. The Board agreed to conduct the review in executive session at an upcoming meeting and expressed interest in gathering structured feedback from a cross-section of department personnel. Existing anonymous survey tools may be utilized to assist in collecting input.

Old Business None

New Business None

Charles Cunniffe left at 5:49pm

MOTION: Motion made by Parker to adjourn.
Second: Emily
Discussion: None
Vote: All approved

Adjourned at pm 5:50pm

***** 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.**