

# Aspen Fire Protection District



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## Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes August 12th, 2025

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 John Ward at 5:02pm.**

**John Ward mentioned that this was Rick Balentine's 151<sup>st</sup> board packet and his last one.**

### Roll Call:

- Board of Directors Present: John Ward, Parker Lathrop, Dave "Wabs" Walbert, Charles Cunniffe
- Board of Directors Absent: Emily Taylor, arrived at 5:13pm via zoom.
- Staff/Volunteers Present: Jake Andersen, Ken Josselyn, Nikki Lapin, Amanda Perusse, Jan Legersky, Jan Schubert, Ryan Warren (zoom), Ben Smith (Zoom)
- Public/Others: Lawrence Bond (zoom), Thomas Peltz (zoom)

**MOTION: Motion made by Charles to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting on July 8th, 2025 and the Special Meeting held July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025.**

**Second: Wabs**

**Discussion: None**

**Vote: All approved.**

**Public Comment:** None

**AVFD Inc.:** None

### Financials – Provided in the board packet

- The board requested for the FPPA funds to be moved into the account with the better interest rates.
- Discussion on administrative costs:
  - Jan Schubert explained that all the credit card charges were lumped into the administrative costs as a hold until she can review them and relocate to their proper place in the budget.
- Request from the board for the preliminary 2026 budget to be presented at the October board regular meeting.

### Board member comments/action items:

#### Comments:

- **Wabs:** Discussion on staff vehicles;
  - Current wildfire vehicles are 2 x Type 3 and 2 x Type 6. Starwood has Engine 65, which is a Type 1/Type 3 interface
  - New Iturri vehicle is a Type 3 that we are finalizing the outfitting for to suit our needs best and then it will be fully operational and in service.

Charles: None  
Parker: None  
John: Welcome to Jake Andersen to his first Board meeting as Chief. The board is looking forward to his leadership and direction.

**Action item: Review and approve Resolution 2025-08-01 to enact a sales tax in the Aspen Fire and Protection District for the purpose of maintaining adequate levels of fire and emergency services to the community.**

- **Discussion:** Review by legal counsel of the memo provided in the board packet on the resolution as to the exemptions on the proposed sales tax initiative for Aspen Fire Protection District.
  - **Key Exemptions include:** food for domestic home consumption (groceries), prescription drugs, diapers and feminine hygiene products, sales to charitable organizations, electricity, gas, fuel and heat for residential use, certain agricultural, manufacturing and medical supplies and school-related activities and purchase as defined in statute.

**Emily Taylor joined the meeting via zoom at 5:13pm**

**MOTION: Motion made by John Ward to approve Resolution 2025-08-01 TO ENACT A SALES TAX IN THE ASPEN FIRE AND PROTECTION DISTRICT FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAINTAINING ADEQUATE LEVELS OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES TO THE COMMUNITY.**

**Second: Wabs**

**Discussion:**

**Vote: All approved**

**Staff Report:**

**Fire Marshal Report** - Fire Marshal, Jan Legersky, reviewed the information that was provided in the Board packet.

- STAGE 2 Fire Ban - Issuing hot works permits with exceptions, must apply for permit and before it is approved, a site inspection is required and they have to have safeties in place. Website has been updated to reflect this info.
- Kudos to city on their mix and mingle event, great event to see what everyone does and meet the faces behind the phones.

Fire Chief, Jake Andersen, introduced Ken Josselyn as the new Deputy Chief of Operations for Aspen Fire Protection District. He will be slowly transitioning into the role and continue in his duties as Battalion Chief until that position has been filled. The assessment for this position is currently scheduled to take place on August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

**Operational Report** provided in the board packet, reviewed by Deputy Chief Ken Josselyn

- Ken expressed his appreciation to the board for the opportunity to serve as the Deputy Chief of Operations and shared that he is looking forward to working together in this new capacity.
- July proved to be an exceptionally busy month, with numerous events, trainings, and 271 calls — averaging roughly nine calls per day.
- He noted that the valley is currently in a drought, with brush already going dormant and changing colors — conditions not seen since 2020, the year of the Troublesome Fire, which burned 100,000 acres overnight and maintained that pace for several days.
- A new aerial response protocol for confirmed wildland fire starts will soon be implemented. The standard order will include two SEATS (single engine air tankers), one large air tanker, one heavy helicopter, and 1 airtac.
- The department recently partnered with Firecat to test our LDH hose. This collaboration allowed the testing to be completed in a single day, and we plan to engage them for full hose testing in the future.
- Pano AI continues to perform well in detecting smoke early, enabling crews to quickly extinguish potential threats before they escalate into larger incidents.

**Training report** –A training report was not included in this month’s packet as the Division Chief of Training, Scott Arthur, was out of the country. Next month’s report will include any missing items from this board packet.

**Recruitment report** - Recruitment was reviewed by Human Resources Director, Nikki Lapin

- Badged in Brandon Potter at 8/06 operations meeting. He was a volunteer for Aspen Fire before and is excited to be back with us. He will be doing 48-hour shifts for us every month.
- Other 2025 recruits are finalizing their tasks books and hope to badge more the next few months.
- Informational meeting for new recruits will be end of August, beginning of September with the goal to have them onboard by the end of October.

**Wildfire Community Action Fund (WCAF) and Aspen Wildfire Foundation (AWF)** - Information was provided in the board packet and reviewed by Project Manager for Wildfire Community, Shannon “Shaggy” Fink

- **Fuels:** Following discussions with UCR, the primary concern in the coming days is the red flag warning and the potential for lightning strikes to ignite fires.
- **Drought:** Models are now showing extreme drought conditions moving up the pass, mirroring the pattern seen in 2020.
- **Evacuation Planning:** Progress continues on key evacuation corridors, including work on the Castle Creek Bridge.
- **Wildfire Risk Assessments:** 66 assessments have been completed, with more than 70 still in the queue. The recent smoke in the air has prompted a wave of re-requests, some involving condominiums. Shaggy will be focusing on this portion of the work over the next few weeks.
- **Foundation Activity:** July was a very busy month for the Foundation, marked by multiple fundraising events and significant donations.

#### **Human Resources Update**

- Battalion Chief Assessment will take place on 8/19/25
- Lieutenant position interviews will be coming up in September. Date TBD

#### **CEO/Fire Chief and Good of the District:**

##### **Beyond Your Base Update**

- Services have been completed and payment issued. No further action at this time. Potential collaboration with a future Citizen Coalition is possible. Board members were reminded of statutory restrictions on urging voters to vote a certain way in their official capacity.
- Guidance from Bond Counsel (Tom) will be forwarded to board members.
- Members may share personal opinions as private citizens but should avoid representing the board’s stance unless formally authorized.

##### **Financial & Administrative Capacity**

- Currently only one staff member manages district finances. Exploring contract support with Marchetti & Weaver, specialists in special district financial management, to improve redundancy and resilience.
- This service would be separate from the audit firm.
- Budget process will remain consistent for 2025, with potential structural changes proposed for 2026.
- Special Districts Association (SDA) will assist with board policy, charter development, and governance best practices.

##### **Capital & Budget Planning**

- Identified need to integrate Capital Asset Plan (CAP) items into the annual budget.
- Immediate need for \$150,000 in turnout gear replacements due to NFPA 10-year expiration requirement.
- Additional unfunded facilities and equipment needs identified (e.g., exhaust system, boiler replacement).
- Recommendation to use supplemental budgeting for urgent mid-year capital needs.
- Emphasis on forecasting and tracking replacement cycles for all time-sensitive equipment.

##### **Drought & Fuels Conditions**

- Valley is experiencing substantial drought; vegetation is prematurely dormant.
- Red flag warnings for wind (next 2 days) followed by lightning (subsequent 2–3 days).

- Observations of ashfall in local forests indicate regional wildfire activity.

**Aviation & Initial Attack Protocol**

- Larger incidents may warrant Very Large Air Tankers (VLATs) or additional resources.
- Mutual aid aircraft support covered for first 24–48 hours; potential costs if incident is extended or primarily on private land.
- Coulter Creek Fire cited as recent success due to early aggressive aerial response and favorable conditions.

**Revenue Outlook**

- Preliminary figures suggest a \$100M decrease in taxable value, translating to an estimated \$700K revenue loss compared to two years ago.
- Legislative changes remain the primary cause despite rising assessed values.
- Retaining mill levy and pursuing a potential sales tax remain under consideration to offset revenue reductions.
- School district is also pursuing a sales tax, but structures differ—Aspen Fire’s proposal includes certain exemptions.

**Budget Schedule**

- Preliminary budget expected in early October (historically targeted for September).
- Two budget scenarios will be prepared:
  1. Status quo with decreased revenue
  2. Adjusted scenario if additional funding measures succeed.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** None

**MOTION:** Motion made by John Ward to adjourn.

**Second:** Parker

**Discussion:** None

**Vote:** All approved

**Adjourned at 6:08 pm**

**\*\*\* A board packet of this meeting can be requested by contacting the Executive Administrative Assistant at [amanda.perusse@aspensfire.com](mailto:amanda.perusse@aspensfire.com) or by calling 970-925-5532.**