

# Aspen Fire Protection District



420 E Hopkins Avenue ▪ Aspen, CO 81611 ▪ 970-925-5532 ▪ [www.aspenfire.com](http://www.aspenfire.com)

## Board of Directors Regular Meeting January 21, 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 5:05pm**

### Roll Call:

- Board of Directors Present: John Ward, Parker Lathrop, Dave “Wabs” Walbert, Emily Taylor, Charles Cunniffe
- Staff/Volunteers Present: Rick Balentine, Jake Andersen, Nikki Lapin, Jan Schubert, Ali Hammond, Amanda Perusse, Scott Arthur, Ryan Warren, Sandy Schiff, Adam Cohen, Ken Josselyn, Arnold Nimmo, Kevin Smiddy, Max Lyall, Michael Brands, Zac Zachary, Noah Johnson, Jack Orsi, Michael Holmes, Jacob Arywitz, Elijah Olmert, Will Hardenbergh, Mike Haisfield, Drew Barr
- Staff/Volunteers online: Zach Abley, Mike Haman, Ben Smith, Jake Spaulding, Shaggy Fink, Fabi Brovelli, Chris Lougeay
- Public/Others: Richard Peterson

**MOTION: Motion made by Charles Cunniffe to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting on December 10th, 2024.**

**Second: Parker Lathrop**

**Discussion: None**

**Vote: All approved.**

### Public Comment:

- Volunteer Representative, Ryan Warren, reviewed a petition that was created by the 3 Volunteer Representatives and the 3 Battalion Chiefs in support of Deputy Chief Jake Andersen’s candidacy for the next Chief of the Aspen Fire Protection District.
  - Those who signed the petition in support of Deputy Chief Jake Andersen’s candidacy for the next Chief of the Aspen Fire Protection District.
    - All but one AFD Volunteer Firefighter
    - All but two AFD career Firefighters
    - All but 1 staff member of the AFD, who abstained, as well as the current Chief, who was not approached about it.
  - Each board member was given a copy of this petition in support of Deputy Chief Jake Andersen’s candidacy for the next Chief of the Aspen Fire Protection District as well as the signatures of those listed above.
- Several members who were present spoke as to their support for Deputy Chief Jake Andersen’s candidacy for the next Chief of the Aspen Fire Protection District.
- The Board agreed to schedule a work session to discuss the search process for the next Aspen Fire Chief, which must adhere to Colorado State law. The work session is scheduled for February 7<sup>th</sup> at 12:00pm.

**AVFD Inc.:** None

**Financials**

- December Monthly Financials were provided in the board packet
  - Discussion on difference in budget. Attributed to adjustments made to reflect more accurate spending and income. Final numbers might change due to pending invoices and adjustments.

**Board member comments/action items:**

Emily Taylor – none

Parker Lathrop - none

Wabs - none

John Ward – had the opportunity to sit next to City Council and the County Commissioners to discuss the District’s safety concerns regarding large-scale evacuations in Aspen. I emphasized the importance of considering not just Aspen but also the down-valley communities, as our constituents extend to Basalt and Carbondale. Given the regional impact of such events, it might be appropriate to arrange a joint work session with representatives from these communities. This would allow us to collaboratively address the concerns and propose efficient, inclusive solutions that prioritize public safety and the common good.

Charles Cunniffe – Great to see the firefighter turn out in support of Deputy Chief Jake Andersen’s candidacy for the next Chief of the Aspen Fire Protection District like they did. It’s great to see that kind of sense of camaraderie already exists.

Review of the following resolutions:

Resolution 2025-01-01: to Establish the Public Places for Posting Notice.

Resolution 2025-01-02: Mail Ballot Election

Resolution 2025-01-03: Appointing of Designated Election Official and Authorizing Designated Election Official to Cancel Election.

**Motion:**            **Motion made by John Ward to approve the following resolutions:**

**Resolution 2025-01-01: to Establish the Public Places for Posting Notice.**

**Resolution 2025-01-02: Mail Ballot Election**

**Resolution 2025-01-03: Appointing of Designated Election Official and Authorizing Designated Election Official to Cancel Election.**

**Second:**            **Charles Cunniffe**

**Discussion:**       **Board members up for reelection are Parker Lathrop, Emily Taylor and Dave “ Wabs” Walbert. Please fix the website link on Resolution 2025-01-01 before signatures.**

**Vote:**                **All approved**

**Staff Report for September:**

**Fire Marshal Report** - provided in the board packet. Reviewed by Fire Marshal, Jan Legersky.

- Plan reviews were 20% more than this same time last year. Due to being involved with different types of reviews, mostly solar.

**Operational Report** provided in the board packet, reviewed by Deputy Chief Jake Andersen

- Ken Josselyn provided an overview of 2 CO incidents that took place in December

**Training and Recruitment report** –provided in the board packet, reviewed by the Division Chief of Training, Scott Arthur

- Pitkin County continues to be extraordinarily high in CPR saves, not just due to fire service, but to law enforcement partners carrying AEDS as well. There are several publicly owned AED devices in Aspen and Pitkin County. If 911 receives a call that CPR is in progress, they can direct people to the nearest AED unit. Not unique to Pitkin County but we are on the forefront in the United States.

**Wildfire Community Action Fund (WCAF) and Aspen Wildfire Foundation (AWF)** –provided in the board packet, reviewed by Ali Hammond

- Organizing either a virtual or in-person Town Hall event to address community questions about wildfire preparedness in response to the LA Fires.
- We need to rebuild the conversation around the critical importance of evacuation during emergencies, as it's essential to saving lives and ensuring people can safely get out of town. However, it's equally important to focus on the bigger picture—ensuring that Aspen remains resilient and prepared to endure and recover from such situations.
- By investing in building a more hardened and resilient community, we can better safeguard our town's infrastructure, economy, and overall well-being, so that when the immediate danger passes, there's a strong foundation to return to. This approach balances life safety with long-term sustainability, ensuring our town is not just prepared to evacuate but also equipped to recover and thrive afterward.
- Shaggy is continuing to work on integrating the FireAside program, getting the whole valley on the same software for the Chipper program and working with the county on the Genesys Evacuation system as well as completed some drone certifications and attending GIS software classes.

**Human Resources** – amendments to Employee Handbook reviewed by Human Resources Director, Nikki Lapin

- Changed Emergency Reporting system, replaced with BambooHR
- Added Fire Inspector position to Fire Prevention
- Updated Organization chart to include Fire Inspector and Wildfire Resilience Project Coordinator
- Added Pay Philosophy – included in board packet
- Added definition for “comp time” and “flex time”
  - Request from the board to be clear on the look-back period to ensure that flex time is noted as being flexible within your work week, and not paid out at OT
- Added Director of Community Wildfire Resilience to the Executive Team
- Updated Volun “tier” program to include new Reserve Tier and added “approval by Deputy Chief if it is for medical accommodation” to the end of Tier III.
  - Tier IV – Reserve Firefighter
  - Tier V – Trainee Firefighter
  - Tier VI – Auxiliary Volunteer
- Took out 40 hours and replaced with “as budgeted and approved” for outside training
- Updated and added clarification on basic life insurance coverage and voluntary life insurance coverage
- Added “Comp time”
- Changed Volunteer Representative term from 1-year to 2-year.
- Other small grammatical and formatting changes have been made that do not change or affect policy.

**MOTION:**      **Motion made by John Ward to approve the changes and addition, as amended by the above suggestions.**

**Second:**      **Parker Lathrop**

**Discussion: None**  
**Vote: All approved**

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

- We kindly request that you share your birthdays with the Executive Administrative Assistant. This will allow the District to recognize and celebrate your special day appropriately.
- WRCB update – going to be on a couple of panels next week as well as an insurance panel, via zoom. He can share the zoom link with the board if requested.
- Insurance Summit Meeting
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Week of June at Aspen Institute
  - Around 30 participants, mostly insurance executives
  - Clark Woodward from Risk Strategies (LA) will be attending.
- LA Fire Donations
  - Working with Aspen Thrift store to collect needed donations for victims of the LA Fires.
  - Rick Balentine and Tim Cottrell will drive the donations out California to arrive on 1/27/25
- Peter Taylor, who was instrumental in the Katrina donations drive, has purchased a brand new mobile home to give to a firefighter who lost his home in the LA Fires. Chief Balentine will reach out to the LA Fire Chiefs to see who would be best to receive this gift.
- Possible that we might receive a donation of a new Type 3 engine

**Old Business: None**

**New Business:**

- Chief is meeting with Paul about Sales Tax funding options in Colorado. Will bring this information to the next board meeting.
- Board decided to keep the next regularly scheduled meeting on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

**MOTION: Motion made by Parker Lathrop to adjourn.**  
**Second: Wabs**  
**Discussion: None**  
**Vote: All approved**

**Adjourned at 6:41 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.**