

Hotchkiss Fire District

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Date: July 13, 2026

Attendees: Dan Miller, Diane Walker, Kathy Welt, Ron Prosser, Zach Hotchkiss, Fire Chief Doug Fritz, Assistant Fire Chief David Prosser and Cally Gallegos Administrative Treasurer

Meeting Called to Order

- **Approval of Previous Minutes:** A motion was made by Diane Walker to approve the minutes of the last meeting. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report & Financials

The Treasurer presented the current financial standings across the district's primary funds.

Current Fund Balances

General Fund	\$136,253.54	
Special Projects Fund	\$18,335.82	Includes the recent \$12,000 transfer from the truck fund.
Fireman's Fund	\$7,640.92	

- **Accounts Payable:** \$14,840.44 (Bills to be paid, including credit card expenses).
- **Recent Disbursements/Checks:** \$49,993.67 (Includes the \$12,000 transfer to Special Projects).
- **Approval:** A motion was made by Zack Hotchkiss to approve the Treasurer's Report and accounts payable. The motion was second and carried unanimously.

Chief's Report & Operations

Equipment & Supplies (Fire Hose Replacements)

- The department deployed approximately 4,000 feet of hose during recent fire operations, resulting in several broken lines.
- Spare inventory has been successfully replenished. The department now holds roughly 3,200 feet of spare hose, balancing out the shortage of 1-inch lines. Total available hose stock is back to approximately 7,000 to 8,000 feet.
- A recent hose invoice of **\$5,200** from *Firehose Direct* was approved and will be categorized under *Firefighter Equipment*.

Wildland Fire Analysis (Lawhead Fire)

- **Total Cost:** While the final official billing is still being calculated, the Chief estimated the true operational cost of the Lawhead Fire—including state/federal air tankers, helicopters, hand crews, fuel, meals, and personnel—was approximately **\$1,000,000**.
- **District Exposure:** Fortunately, due to state coverage and strong local relationships with state officials, the direct cost to the district was virtually \$0 (except for approximately \$300 in meals and minor equipment wear).

- **Public Education & Tax Initiative:** The Board discussed making these figures public ahead of the upcoming election. The goal is to educate the community on what "free" mutual aid actually saves them, the value of volunteer firefighters, and the steep cost of keeping the department "response-ready" (maintenance, staging equipment, and training).
- **Volunteer Compensation:** The Board discussed the "slippery slope" of compensating volunteer firefighters for extended campaigns (e.g., multi-day wildland fires) versus short-duration calls to prevent personal financial loss for volunteers.

Incidents & Calls (8 Total)

- 2 Car Fires
- 2 False Reports of Smoke
- 1 Carbon Monoxide Alarm
- 2 Wildfires (including the Lawhead Fire and an unattended campfire on BLM land)
- 1 Miscellaneous call

Training & Community Outreach

- **Saw Class:** Run through *Thunder Mountain Fire Mitigation* (Mike Wilson's company), which coordinates and provides certified instructors for department training.
- **Evacuation Specialist Class:** Scheduled for **December 4th**. The department picked up sponsorship of this state-run course, which will be co-instructed by fire and law enforcement personnel.
- **Vegetation Management West (VM West):** The Chief hosted a training session for VM West with 7 attendees. VM West will be billed for the class, returning revenue to the district.
- **Community Risk Reduction & Analysis:** The department is currently in the data-gathering phase, working with the state to analyze call volumes, demographics, and localized risks. CDPHE's data splits the district into three zones (attaching portions to Paonia and Crawford), which slightly skews the wealth and age metrics, but progress is steady. The goal is completion prior to the election.
- **Tax Initiative Town Meetings:** Following a strong support turnout at the Redlands Mesa meeting and the Grange ice cream social, the Board is planning to schedule the next public informational meeting downtown. A campaign committee has been established, including volunteers

Intergovernmental Relations & Policy

- **Fireworks Restrictions:** In cooperation with the countywide Stage 2 fire restrictions, the town successfully revoked a local vendor's fireworks sales permit. Consequently, the district observed zero fireworks violations on the 4th of July.
- **Wildfire Resiliency Code:** The town has officially adopted the state's Wildfire Resiliency Code, integrating it into their building department. The state has sent a Google Form inquiry regarding the district's official adoption and any local modifications, due by the end of the month.

Personnel Changes

- **New Recruit:** Neighbor Craig Ullmann (a professional water engineer/hydrologist) has applied to join the department. The board expressed high confidence in his background.
- **Resignation/Departure:** Brandon Pearson has accepted a full-time career position with Colorado River Fire Rescue (Rifle Fire) starting in August.

- *Note:* Brandon must complete a rigorous 14-week fire academy. For his safety and success, leadership advised that he temporarily step back from local ambulance/EMS shifts during his training.

State Deployment Invoicing

- The department has had personnel and equipment deployed to nearly every major and minor fire across the state of Colorado.
- **Revenue Outlook:** Four state deployment invoices totaling nearly **\$50,000** are expected to be processed and paid shortly, with an additional 30 invoices currently in the billing pipeline.

Resolutions

- **Resolution 2026-02 Hotchkiss Fire District Special Election**
- A motion was made by Ron Prosser to approve Resolution 2026-02. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.
- Resolution 2026-03 Hotchkiss Fire District Safety Tax
- A motion was made by Ron Prosser to approve Resolution 2026-03. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.
- Resolution 2026-05 Regarding the Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code
- A motion was made by Diane Walker to approve Resolution 2026-03. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously

Pay for Firefighters

- Doug presented the pay for the firefighters
- A motion was made by Zack to approve pay to the firefighters for the extra time that they spent on the Lawhead fire. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Uniforms for firefighters

- **Doug would like to order 34 uniforms for the firefighters at \$200 each. For a total of \$6800.**
- A motion was made by Ron Prosser to approve the purchase. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

**Community meeting at the fire station will be held on July 28, 2026 at 6:30pm.
Everyone is welcome**

. Meeting Adjournment