

**ESTES VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING – ZOOM ONLY**

May 15, 2026  
Friday, 4:00 pm

**AGENDA**

1. CALL TO ORDER – President Sandi Smith
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE- Chief Jones
3. ROLL CALL- Rebecca Gelsinger
4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
5. PUBLIC COMMENT \* Public comments are limited to 3 minutes per person.
6. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
  - a. Discussion/Action re: Reconsider direction to seek RFPs for consulting & services, including a survey for a possible November 2026 sales tax election.
  - b. Sole source consultant for a possible November 2026 sales tax election.
7. ADJOURNMENT

The Mission of the Estes Valley Fire Protection District is to provide the citizens of and visitors to the Estes Valley with superior fire prevention, fire protection, and emergency services in a safe and efficient manner.”

“The Mission of the Board of Directors of the Estes Valley Fire Protection District is to establish policy, goals, strategies, and financial leadership that are the foundation for the long-term sustainability of the District.”

# ESTES VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

## Agenda Statement – May 15, 2026

### Agenda Item #4

**Agenda Title:**

Discussion/action re: Agenda

**Submitted by:**

Sandra Smith, Board President

**Background Information:**

**Attachments:**

- |  |                                   |                                 |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda | <input type="checkbox"/> Minutes  | <input type="checkbox"/> Report |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution        | <input type="checkbox"/> Contract | <input type="checkbox"/> Map    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letter            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other    |                                 |

**Board Action Needed**

A motion to (approve, deny, or modify) the Agenda for the May 15, 2026, Special Board Meeting.

Sandra Smith	Yes	No
Scott Dorman	Yes	No
Ryan Leahy	Yes	No
Jeff Robbins	Yes	No
Jon Smith	Yes	No

# ESTES VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

## Agenda Statement – May 15, 2026

### Agenda Item #6a

**Agenda Title:**

Discussion/action re: Reconsider direction to seek RFPs for consulting & services for a possible November 2026 sales tax election.

**Submitted by:**

Warren Jones, Interim Chief

**Background Information:**

At the May 11 special meeting the Board directed staff to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for election consulting services including a survey.

I request that you reconsider this direction to seek a consultant under our current purchasing policy and ask that you consider a single proposal as a sole source. Policy 190 provides the following wording.

*“In certain circumstances, it is impossible or impracticable to obtain multiple quotes or bids (i.e., when there is an emergency, or when there is a sole source contractor). Every effort should be made to ensure the District is receiving the best product at the best possible value. These circumstances and the efforts made are expected to be documented and retained by District staff.”*

The reason I am asking for this reconsideration is time. We have already discussed the time constraints for preparing for the November election. The process we have put in motion essentially compresses what should be a year’s process into four months. Even under an expediated RFP process, it’s unlikely that we will have survey data before the end of June and probably later

I have asked the consultant that has indicated that he can meet our needs to provide a proposal. This is the subject of Agenda Item 6b.

If you decide to stay with the original direction to stay with the standard RFP process it will be issued Monday, May 18. It is attached.

**Attachments:**

- |                                     |   |                                 |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agenda     | <input type="checkbox"/> Minutes          | <input type="checkbox"/> Report |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution | <input type="checkbox"/> Contract         | <input type="checkbox"/> Map    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letter     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other |                                 |

**Board Action Needed**

A motion to (approve, deny, or modify) Reconsider direction to seek RFPs for consulting & services for a possible November 2026 sales tax election.

Sandra Smith	Yes	No
Scott Dorman	Yes	No
Ryan Leahy	Yes	No
Jeff Robbins	Yes	No
Jon Smith	Yes	No

**Request for Proposal for a Consultant to assist the District  
in planning and conducting a sales tax election in November 2026.**



**Proposal Due Date: May 26, 2026**

**Estes Valley Fire Protection District  
901 N Saint Vrain Ave  
Estes Park, CO 80517**

**Request for Proposals for Consultant to  
assist the District in planning and  
conducting a sales tax election in  
November 2026**

**Issued May 18, 2025**

**Proposals due at 5 pm MST May 26, 2026**

**Summary:** The Estes Valley Fire Protection District (EVFPD) is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) for consulting services to assist in planning and conducting a sales tax election in November 2026. The consultant shall assist the EVFPD Board of Directors and staff in planning and conducting a coordinated election with Larimer County in November 2026 for the purpose of establishing a District sales tax in accordance with Colorado law. The services requested are described below.

**Background:** The Estes Valley Fire Protection District covers 77 square miles, including the Town of Estes Park and surrounding areas in unincorporated Larimer County. The District protects a mix of urban municipalities, suburban neighborhoods, rural homesteads, and forests. This includes critical infrastructure for the Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service, and U.S. Forest Service. The region had been protected since 1907 by the Estes Park Volunteer Fire Department. Once incorporated in 1917, the Town of Estes Park brought this organization on as a Town department. In 2009, voters approved the formation of the Special District, and in 2010, the Estes Valley Fire Protection District began. The district is considered a “combination,” currently served by 10 full-time employees and approximately 50 volunteer firefighters and auxiliary members. Per 2020 Census data, our community includes 11,504 full-time residents, up nearly 2,000 people in the past 10 years. These residents are almost evenly split between the Town of Estes Park and the unincorporated areas outside of the town. Summer visitors can bring as many as 40,000 overnight guests and up to 80,000 daytime visitors.

**Sales tax need:** The Board of Directors of the District have determined that a sales tax is needed to:

- Replace sales tax shared by the Town of Estes Park through an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA)
- Develop an apparatus, vehicle, and major equipment program
- Improve the support and growth of the District's volunteer response system
- Improve the District's training center, improve fire prevention, and wildfire response
- Improve preventive maintenance of District facilities
- Participate in and coordinate with Town and County emergency management and disaster preparedness programs.

A District sales tax may also provide funds for renovation, expansion, or replacement of the District's main fire station and upgrading or replacement of an existing second fire station.

**Current revenue:** The District's 2026 budget includes \$3,110,980 in revenue. This includes a portion of the Town's sales tax through the IGA (\$1.3 million), district property tax of 2.069 mills (\$1.1 million), specific ownership tax (\$81,000), and impact fees of \$60,000. Non-tax revenue is \$204,404. The District also receives a portion of a special sales tax designated specifically for wildfire mitigation. This special revenue source is not part of this project.

**Services Requested:** The EVFPD Board of Directors is seeking proposals from qualified firms or consultants to assist in the planning and conduct of an election to establish a District sales tax in accordance with Colorado law. It is anticipated that the selected firm or consultant shall perform the following work efforts during this process:

1. Develop and assist in the implementation of a public information system.
2. Develop a timeline of proposed project activities.
3. Production of printed, mail, internet, and similar information materials.
4. Conduct, as a consultant or through a subcontractor, a survey of district residents and property owners to determine knowledge of District services, current funding, and tolerance for a sales tax and amount.
5. Provide an estimate of potential sales tax revenue for the sources allowed by Colorado law.
6. Assist the District in developing and implementing an election campaign and ballot materials within the constraints of Colorado law.

### **RFP Selection Process Timeline**

Proposals are due May 26, 2025, at 5 pm MST.

### **RFP Submission Requirements**

Proposals should be no more than 15 pages, not including references, and cover the following:

1. Organization Description: Brief history and summary of your firm and expertise.
2. Deliverables: Delineate how success will be measured throughout the process.
3. Proposed Timeline: Estimate the start and end dates for each phase of the project.
4. Cost: Proposed cost for the consultant, subcontractor(s) if used, material, and other expenses
5. References: Provide three references for successful elections of local government clients, including at least one fire district.

**Proposals must be sent electronically in a single PDF file to:** [info@estesvalleyfire.org](mailto:info@estesvalleyfire.org) *Subject Line:* *Election Consultant RFP*. By submitting a proposal, the firm authorizes Estes Valley Fire Protection District to contact references to evaluate the firm's qualifications for this project.

**Evaluation Criteria:** All proposals will be evaluated based on the following key criteria:

1. Performance capability — the extent to which the proposal demonstrates the firm's ability to provide the depth and breadth of experience, skills, knowledge, and creativity generally required by this project.
2. Demonstrated experience with similar-sized combination fire districts with large volunteer programs.
3. Completeness and quality of response, including clear deliverables and a reasonable approach.
4. Proposed cost and timeline.
5. References.

While the order of these factors does not generally denote relative importance, EVFPD acknowledges that selecting best value providers primarily requires a balanced combination of (1) reasonable rates, (2) strong experience and demonstrated expertise in providing election consulting services, and (3) a demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusion through ownership or existing collaborative relationships.

**Disclaimer:** This RFP does not commit EVFPD to select any firm, award any work order, pay any costs incurred in preparing a response, or procure or contract for any services or supplies. EVFPD reserves the right to accept or reject any or all submittals received, cancel or modify the RFP in part or in its entirety, or change the RFP guidelines, when it is in the best interests of the EVFPD to do so.

# ESTES VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

## Agenda Statement – May 15, 2026

### Agenda Item #6b

**Agenda Title:**

Discussion/action re: Sole source consultant for a possible November 2026 sales tax election.

**Submitted by:**

Warren Jones, Interim Chief

**Background Information:**

I request that you consider awarding a sole source contract for election consulting services, including a survey and public education and communications program under the following section of Policy 190. This consultant would be The Welchert Company. This firm is recommended by our attorney and by Don Lombardi who worked with them on similar elections when he was fire chief at West Metro Fire District. This proposal is attached. Steve Welchert will be available on our Zoom meeting today to discuss his proposal and answer questions.

*“In certain circumstances, it is impossible or impracticable to obtain multiple quotes or bids (i.e., when there is an emergency, or when there is a sole source contractor). Every effort should be made to ensure the District is receiving the best product at the best possible value. These circumstances and the efforts made are expected to be documented and retained by District staff.”*

The reason I am asking for this reconsideration is time. We have already discussed the time constraints in preparing for the November election. The process we have put in motion essentially compresses what should be a year’s process into four months.

In recent weeks we have had contact with several consultants, and none have indicated that can provide these services under the timeline we need for the November 2026 election. While a full RFP process may identify other consultants it is unlikely they will be able to meet our timelines.

If you approve this sole source agreement, I’ll work with our attorney to finalize a contract document and execute it as soon as possible.

## Identified funding

I've reviewed our 2026 budget, and there are two sources of funds that could potentially be available for this project. We have \$30,000 budgeted for elections and \$145,675 budgeted as a contribution to our capital reserves. Neither have expenditure planned now in our approved 2026 budget.

## Attachments:

- |                                     |   |                                 |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agenda     | <input type="checkbox"/> Minutes          | <input type="checkbox"/> Report |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution | <input type="checkbox"/> Contract         | <input type="checkbox"/> Map    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letter     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other |                                 |

## Board Action Needed

A motion to (approve, deny, or modify) sole source consultant The Welchert Company as shown on the attached proposal for a possible November 2026 sales tax election.

Sandra Smith	Yes	No
Scott Dorman	Yes	No
Ryan Leahy	Yes	No
Jeff Robbins	Yes	No
Jon Smith	Yes	No

**COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLIC  
ENGAGEMENT PROPOSAL**

**FOR**

**ESTES VALLEY  
FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

**FROM**



# INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

It was a pleasure talking with you and learning about EVFPD's needs and plans. The opportunity to provide critical funding for fire protection services in a tourism and recreation hub like Estes Park is one of the most vital public policy decisions we can be involved in. Our job--my job--is to help the public understand both the importance and urgency of the task at hand.

## Background

Through proper research and strategic communications, we have been able to help communities make the critical capital and operating investments they need to deliver vital public services.

We have provided communication services to clients in the corporate, non-profit and government sectors ranging from the Rose Community Foundation to Coca-Cola and the Irish Ambassador to the United States, among others. First responders took note and asked TWC to pass revenue measures for Police and Fire Fighters in Westminster, Wheat Ridge, Arvada, West Metro Fire, Evans, Basalt, La Plata, North Washington and Ft. Lupton.

Along the way The Welchert Company has won seventeen Pollie Awards (the Oscar of politics), eleven national Communicator Awards and been cited by *Campaigns and Elections* magazine as one of the most successful political consulting firms in the nation.

**Since the passage of Tabor in 1992, we have secured over \$5 billion for schools and local governments through ballot questions with strong experience on smaller local questions.**

You have taken the first step by agreeing to conduct community research that will provide an initial roadmap for our efforts moving forward. From that research we will develop a plan in coordination with you that will provide an appropriate public engagement, earned media and public education campaign about the needs you face now and in the future. We envision robust paid digital communications (+Twitter, Instagram and Facebook boosts), direct mail and perhaps Tele-Town-Hall opportunities coming from the district.

Specifically, we propose a public engagement campaign that commences July 1 and runs through fall 2026. (*Many district communications are legal and permissible into the fall but MUST be paid for before the Board calls the question.*)

One of our credo's is to Plan the Work and Work the Plan:

May-June

- Meet with the Board and senior staff.
- Conduct an internal communications assessment with staff to help plan our work moving forward.
- Facilitate meetings with the pollster and District to fully understand the questions we need to ask and gather the data we and you need to proceed with research.
- Review the needs program and sales tax finance assessments.
- Oversee the research and present results and findings to the Board.
- Meet with area leaders/influencers as needed to develop recommendations.

July-August

- Write a strategic plan for our efforts through the fall education campaign.
- Work with legal counsel to draft the ballot question and Tabor Notice.
- Craft a Pro Statement(s) for community submittal to Election Official.
- Implement and adjust the plan as needed.

September-October

- Continue public engagement.

## **BUDGET**

We are strongly encouraged that EVFPD understands the need to conduct a robust community-wide education program. After the research is completed we will work together with you to finalize the plan and budget moving forward.

Below is a DRAFT budget based on current population/voter counts.

EVFPD population: 5334 voters/3379 households Expected turnout 70%/3780  
Mail Ballots: October 13-14

• Scientific Survey Research (June 300 sample)	\$20,000
• Public Education & Communications Program	\$80,000
○ Collateral material	\$5,000
○ Digital/online communications	\$25,000
○ Direct mail x3-4	\$20,000
○ General Consultant/Management (10k/mo)	\$30,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>

Thank you.  
We genuinely look forward to working with the EVFPD team.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve Welchert". The signature is fluid and includes a long, sweeping underline.

Steve Welchert

**[Steve@WelchertCo.com](mailto:Steve@WelchertCo.com)/303-829-9495/[www.WelchertCo.com](http://www.WelchertCo.com)**

*“Aggressive fighting for the right is the noblest sport the world affords.”*

--Teddy Roosevelt