

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

**Meeting Minutes of the Estes Valley Fire Protection District
April 27, 2026, 3:00 pm (Work Session); 4:30 pm (Board Meeting)
Dannels Fire Station, 901 N. St. Vrain Ave., Estes Park, CO 80517**

Board: Sandra Smith, Scott Dorman, Ryan Leahy, Jon Smith, Jeff Robbins

Staff: Chief Warren Jones, Captain Stacey Sutherland, Division Chief Jon Landkamer,
Division Chief Justin Kearney, Logan Lasley, Marinda Baxter, Rebecca Gelsinger

Also Attending: Dot Dorman, Michael Barnhouse, Diana Ver Der Ploeg, Nathan Meulener, Patti Brown, Mayor Gary Hall, Chief Ian Stewart, Travis Machalek, Ben Archer-Clowes

Absent: None.

Sandra Smith called the work session to order at 3:00 pm.

Interim Chief Warren Jones led the Pledge of Allegiance

Rebecca Gelsinger performed roll call – All present

STUDY SESSION

Chief Warren Jones led a discussion concerning EVFPD's financial independence. Chief Ian Stewart and Travis Machalek joined the discussion and spoke about the Public Safety Building.

Study session adjourned at 4:26 pm.

Sandra Smith called the regularly scheduled board meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Jon Smith and seconded by Ryan Leahy to approve the agenda, modified to note that the study session is "adjourned" and to call the regularly scheduled meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Ryan Leahy and seconded by Jeff Robbins to approve the meeting minutes from the 03/23/26 board meeting with a modification to remove the word draft from the header.

Motion carried unanimously.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Financial Matters

Treasurer's Report

Board member Ryan Leahy and District accountant Ben Archer-Clowes presented the monthly and year-to-date financials. A question was raised about high legal fees, and it was stated that this was due to policy and bylaws review, as well as the Chief search. Those costs are expected to decrease.

March Paid Bills

Board Treasurer Ryan Leahy presented the March paid bills. The Board reviewed the paid bills included in the meeting packet. Members discussed concerns about the limited descriptions for some transactions and requested clearer details, such as brief memo notes that identify the purpose of expenditures. Staff explained the internal controls in place through Bill.com, including multi-level approval processes and fund transfers between accounts to cover expenses and payroll. The Board expressed interest in improving transparency and discussed the option of

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granting Board members, particularly Budget Committee members, access to the system to review invoice details directly.

Moved by Jeff Robbins and seconded by Jon Smith to approve the transactions listed on the Treasurer's report provided at the April 27, 2026, meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

Fire Chief Finalist

The Board discussed whether to reimburse travel expenses for Fire Chief finalist candidates and their partner. Staff explained that, while prior recruitments covered limited expenses, the District's current consultant recommends reimbursing airfare, lodging, and rental car costs for finalists and their spouses. Estimated total costs range from \$7,500 to \$12,500, depending on the number of candidates and travel needs. Board members noted that covering such expenses is standard practice and supported including spouses, particularly allowing them to visit and become familiar with the community if relocation is required.

Moved by Jon Smith and seconded by Scott Dorman to approve paying the costs of coach airfare, lodging, and a reasonably priced rental car for finalist candidates, and spouses or partners for the Fire Chief

Motion carried unanimously.

Financial Independence

The Board discussed whether to provide direction to staff regarding pursuing financial independence and the potential for placing the matter on the November 2026 election ballot. Board members expressed interest in obtaining input from a consultant to evaluate the feasibility, timing, and overall advisability of participating in a November 2026 election. Staff requested authorization to conduct a streamlined RFP process to retain a consultant on an expedited timeline. The Board discussed timing considerations, budget impacts, and potential cost savings associated with pursuing financial independence in a November election. Consensus supported moving forward with seeking consultant input, and the Board agreed to authorize up to \$10,000 in staff spending authority for this purpose, with the possibility of a special meeting to review findings if needed.

Moved by Ryan Leahy and seconded by Jeff Robbins to instruct the staff to put out an RFP to various consultants, to advise the Board on the feasibility of pursuing financial independence in a November 2026 election.

Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Scott Dorman and seconded by Jon Smith to extend the Chief's spending authority in connection solely with the November election RFP process to \$10,000 from his current spending limits.

Motion carried unanimously.

Wildfire Accounting Plan

The Board discussed establishing a separate fund for wildfire risk reduction revenues and expenditures, including funds from 1A and grants. Staff and the Budget Committee recommended creating a dedicated fund to improve transparency, ensure proper tracking, and allow year-to-year carryover without commingling with the general fund. The Board discussed benefits, including clearer financial reporting, enhanced managerial control, and the ability to better allocate costs. Staff noted that implementation would require identifying and transferring existing applicable funds and may involve minor additional staff and consultant time. The Board also discussed administrative details, including reporting structure and management of accounts payable. Consensus supported establishing the separate Wildfire Risk Reduction Fund, with directions to staff to proceed and incorporate appropriate accounting and reporting practices.

Moved by Jon Smith and seconded by Ryan Leahy to approve the budget committee recommendation to establish a separate fund for dedicated wildfire risk reduction revenue and expenditures, and management of that fund by the District's accounting firm

Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

Community Risk Reduction Division

Prevention Division:

- Wildland Fire Risk Reduction Educator, Lasley, has completed 42 home assessments & 8 neighborhood assessments YTD.
- Attended the CO Wildland Fire Conference two weeks ago, as well going through the Community Wildfire Mitigation Best Practices course.
- Formally partnered with the Estes Land Stewardship Association (ELSA) and the Estes Valley Watershed Coalition to have joint drop-off days throughout the summer. Last year we did one event, and this year we will be doing three. Folks can bring by pine needles and pinecones, as well as noxious weeds (separated from the needles/cones) in paper bags.
 - o July 18
 - o August 15
 - o September 19 (all days will be 9:00am – noon)
- Having ongoing discussions with Larimer County OEM (Josh Roberts) about a partnership with EVFPD and them – specifically for EVFPD to provide financial support for already existing or proposed projects in our District with 1A funds. Details are being worked out, and we will present the proposal at the next board meeting with Josh present as well.
- Captain Sutherland is working on plan review experience with our new plan reviewer Whitney, providing comments for multiple projects coming up, such as the Stanley Hotel projects, new development plans, new Short-term rentals
- Captain Sutherland is coordinating multiple special events including the Elementary School Career Fair and the Safety Fair.
- Captain Sutherland is continuing inspections as needed, mostly on new construction and special events.
- Captain Sutherland provided training for auxiliary members for inspections on special events and tents. beginning ride a long training. The next event is this weekend, The Duck Race.
- Captain Sutherland will be teaching a fire safety class for EVIC's friends and family childcare program.
- Captain Sutherland is also working on multiple special event permit reviews.
- DC Landkamer is working on finalizing agreements between all parties to get the CWDG Thunder Mountain project started. Working with Larimer County Sheriff's Department/Emergency Services to get work done on the CWDG project along the boundary with RMNP. Will be working on an RFP for the larger portion of the project next along with EVWC.
- DC Landkamer is working on grant implementation and management for the 2023 COSWAP, 2022 FR-WRM, and 2023 CWDG Thunder Mountain, and 2025 COSWAP.
- DC Landkamer attended the Fire Adapted Colorado Conference in Ft. Collins. Many good presentations on wildfire and urban conflagration. Most interesting was Dr. Jack Cohen's presentation.
- DC Landkamer has posted both the Wildfire Risk Reduction Project Specialist and the Fire Code Inspector I. We will be interviewing soon for the WFRR Project Specialist and then the Fire Code Inspector I after it closes in a few weeks.
- DC Landkamer continues to attend partner meetings when possible, including CWDG, BTWHP, NCFE, FACO, EVWC, Larimer County Woody Biomass Stakeholders, and TOEP Water Master Plan.
- Larimer County will be hosting a 50-year commemoration of the Big Thompson Flood on July 31, 2026. I will keep the district notified of this event so we can attend.
- **Facilities**
 - o New counter tops and faucets are going in the restrooms this week.

Operations & Training Division

Training:

- We've had 3 successful weeks of Firefighter training (Man Vs. Machine, FF rescue and survival)
- We have 1 new member that is now released to run calls and one additional member that is making good progress in the task book
- Lyons and Hygiene fire used the training center on Sunday for some live burn training.

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- 12 swimmers have completed the Watermanship test which is required yearly to re-certify or obtain the Swiftwater certification This is a 500 yd swim, 800 yd snorkel swim, 100 yd buddy tow, 15 minutes of treading water and a dive down to 9 feet

Operations:

- Starlink proposal is moving forward
- Operations meeting with mutual aid departments coming up in May
- Chief Jones and I went to the Larimer County All Hazards summit in Ft Collins. Good refresher on evacuation polygons, evacuations process, Fire weather update and projections from Nation Weather Service out of boulder, networking with our county, state and federal agencies.
- Training with local PD expected in the next month on local evacuations
- 4th of July planning meeting scheduled for this week

Chief's Report

Chief Jones reported that work is underway to review first-quarter expenses, with a more detailed analysis expected after the second quarter to identify potential cost savings and upcoming expenditures. The Budget Committee will receive an updated report at its June meeting. An update was also given on the Fire Chief recruitment process, including ongoing advertising efforts and scheduling of candidate interviews on June 17–18, with a community meet-and-greet planned for June 17. Additionally, Chief highlighted significant ongoing focus on wildfire risk reduction, emergency response, and preparedness planning, including coordination with partner agencies.

UNFINISHED OR OLD BUSINESS -- None

NEW BUSINESS

Board member Scott Dorman proposed planning a celebration for the Fire Department's upcoming 120th anniversary next year, including budgeting for the event and potentially inviting past volunteer firefighters to participate. The Board expressed support for the idea and discussed the possibility of holding similar celebrations every five years. Staff was directed to place the item on the agenda for future consideration to further develop plans and consider its inclusion in the upcoming budget.

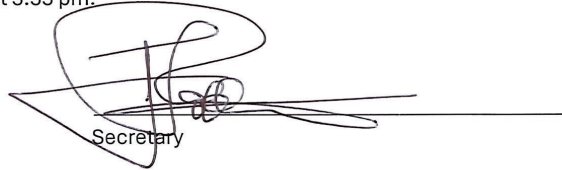
ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next board meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 1, 2026, at 4:30 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

*Moved by Jon Smith and seconded by Jeff Robbins to adjourn the meeting.
Motion carried unanimously.*

The meeting adjourned at 5:55 pm.



Secretary

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.”