



# SOUTH ARKANSAS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

## MEETING MINUTES

**Date:** 4/27/2026

**Time:** 0900 Hours

**Location:** 611 Oak Street, Salida, CO 81201

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### **Board Members Present:**

- Harold Starbuck
- Art Hutchinson
- Sheldon Morgan
- Phillip Gamache

### **Board Members Excused:**

- Rich Edgington
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### **1. Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order by President Harold Starbuck at 0901 hours.

### **2. Approval of the Agenda:**

- Motion to accept the agenda as presented:
  - **Motion by:** Sheldon Morgan
  - **Second by:** Art Hutchinson
  - **Vote:** Passed unanimously

### **3. Approval of March Board Meeting Minutes:**

- Motion to accept the March Board Meeting Minutes:
  - **Motion By:** Sheldon Morgan
  - **Second By:** Phillip Gamache
  - **Vote:** Passed unanimously

4. **Open Session:** Mike Sugaski attended the open session and asked how SAFPD determines when to escalate to Stage II fire restrictions or lift Stage I restrictions, and how those decisions are communicated and coordinated with other agencies. Chief Jonke stated that restriction levels are based on fuel moisture conditions and are aligned with the Forest Service, neighboring counties, and the Sheriff's Office.

**5. Reports**

*Sarah Marques* of Walke and Associates provided an update on deposits and current balances.

*Laurie Todesco* reported on amounts received and outstanding for the current billing cycle and provided an update on asset ROI tracking.

**Financial Report:**

- **Motion to accept March financials:**
  - **Motion:** Art Hutchinson
  - **Second:** Phillip Gamache
  - **Vote:** Passed unanimously

**Fire Chief's Report:**

Chief Aaron Jonke presented the Fire Chief's Report, including the following items:

- **Fire Service Issues:**
  - Chief Jonke reported that Chaffee County Fire Protection District submitted a letter requesting to be excluded from the Fire Service Study. He said that discussions were in early stages and direction had not yet been finalized. He noted the importance of ensuring the study addresses community needs and supports effective fire protection planning. The Board discussed the item and agreed to reach out to the Chaffee County Fire Protection District Board to seek clarification, share perspectives, and identify opportunities for coordination moving forward.
  - The Board discussed a resolution passed by Chaffee County Fire Protection District regarding charging for emergency response. The Board expressed concern about potential impacts to automatic and mutual aid operations and emphasized the importance of maintaining strong interagency support within the community. The Board affirmed its intent to continue honoring existing aid agreements and to pursue ongoing communication with partner agencies to ensure community needs are met.

- **Department Administration:**
  - Interviews for the SAFPD Operations and Finance Coordinator position began on 4/23 and will continue through early May. Chief Jonke will provide an update at the next meeting regarding selection.
- **DFPC Audit:**
  - The DFPC audit is ongoing. Chief Jonke reported that all requested information has been provided to DFPC and he will update the Board as additional information becomes available.
- **Additional Equipment:**
  - Starlink equipment has been ordered and delivery is pending. The equipment will be installed in apparatus as soon as practicable following delivery.
- **124 E Street Appraisal:**
  - The appraisal for the 124 E Street station was received and the property was valued at approximately \$1.1 million. The Board discussed potential options, including retaining the former fire station for possible employee housing and to support community mitigation needs.

**Assistant Fire Chief Report:**

Chief Rohrich provided the Assistant Fire Chief's Report, including the following items:

- **DOLA:**
  - Volunteer state pension match was accepted – SAFPD will receive a check for \$5,224.00.
- **Benefits Package for Personnel:**
  - Chief Rohrich set up a Death and Disability Fund (AD&D) for SAFPD personnel that will be billed to fires that personnel are deployed on.

**Division Chief of Wildfire:**

Division Chief Bainbridge reported the following:

- **Deployments:**
  - Engine 112 – in South Dakota
  - Engine 311 – in Texas
- **Fire Conditions:**
  - SAFPD is currently under Stage I fire restrictions, while Fremont County is under Stage II. A Potentially Dangerous Situation (PDS) notice was issued on April 22 due to high winds and receptive fuels.
- **Grants:**
  - DOC SWIFT (COSWAP) – 8 acres in Pinon Ridge mitigated

- Common Ground – mitigation efforts continue with approximately 100 acres mitigated
- FRWRM – received Vermeer Chiper (fully insured) and Dodge Ram 3500 (fully insured)
  - Working on decals for rigs and mitigation signage

**6. New Business:**

- **Motion:** Motion by the South Arkansas Fire Protection District Board of Directors to approve the proposed AD&D insurance plan for personnel.
  - **Motion By:** Sheldon Morgan
  - **Second:** Art Hutchinson
  - **Vote:** Passed unanimously

**7. Adjournment:**

- **Motion to adjourn the meeting at 0948 hours**
  - **Motion to Adjourn:** Phillip Gamache
  - **Second:** Sheldon Morgan
  - **Vote:** Passed unanimously

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_



**Art Hutchinson, Secretary Treasurer**