REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
DE BEQUE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

DE BEQUE FIRE STATION
JULY 13, 2026

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER:
Pursuant to notice, the regular board meeting of the De Beque Fire Protection District (DFPD) was called to order by Board President Tanner at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, July 13, 2026.

OPEN WITH PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO FLAG: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. A time of silence was held for the fallen firefighters who lost their lives battling fires in our area so far this summer.

ROLL CALL/ESTABLISH QUORUM:
Cynthia Farris, Present; Dustin Koehler, Present; John "Dick" Latham, Present; Rebecca "Maria" Ramthun, Present; Michael Tanner, Present. A quorum was present and the meeting, having been duly convened, was ready to proceed.

OTHERS PRESENT:
Forest Matis, De Beque District Fire Chief; Captain Triston Quigley; District Office/Finance Manager Kim Latham.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA:
A correction to the Agenda was made – to change the Finance Report to include January – May (the Agenda had through April) 2026. Motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda as amended. Motion passed.

MINUTES:
Minutes were presented to the BOD for consideration for the regular board meeting of June 8, 2026. Motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes for June 8, 2026 as presented. Motion passed.

FINANCE REPORTS
Financial Reports were presented to the BOD for January through May, 2026. Discussion ensued regarding where the District is in regard to anticipated end-of-the-year percentages, payroll, EMS billing, WMS write downs, EMS write offs, and how those items will affect the budget. It was noted that the EMS billing company we had been utilizing prior to May 2026 was not billing self-pay, most hospice, and most Veteran's hospital clients, although they had the account balances in their accounts receivable report they sent to the District each month. This resulted in major write-off of those debts, which are too far in the past to try to collect at this date, and which will affect both May and June accounting figures. This was discovered as we moved from that billing company to the new billing company that took over billing in May. The BOD directed Finance Manager Latham to check with the District attorney to see if there are grounds to recover some loss from the prior EMS billing company. Motion was made and seconded to approve the finance reports for January through May 2026 as presented. Motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (Non-Agenda Items) - None

OLD BUSINESS:

1) Adopt the Mesa County five-year Hazard Mitigation Plan – Resolution 2026-13
    a. Discussion ensued regarding the State requirements for a Hazard Mitigation plan, the plan presented by Mesa County, and our need to adopt the plan for the portion of our District that is in Mesa County.
    b. Public Comments – None
    c. Motion was made and seconded to approve Resolution 2026-13 to adopt the five-year Mesa County Hazard Mitigation Plan for the portion of our District that is included in Mesa County. Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS:

1) EMS Billing Guidelines
    a. It was noted that 100% of the EMS bills for Medicaid clients are generally written off by the government; in addition, insurance companies write off between 40-60% of the EMS run bills. However, there is usually no discount for self-pay and/or cash-pay clients, who are the ones who can generally least afford to pay the bills. Discussion ensued regarding consideration of reducing the self-pay and/or cash-pay clients' EMS run bills. The Board of Directors (BOD) directed Chief Matis and Finance Manager Latham to contact the attorney for legalities on implementing a discount program for self-pay and/or cash-pay clients and to follow up with plans of action for the BOD to consider at the next Board meeting. After consultation with the District attorney, two plans will be presented to the BOD for consideration, one for a flat rate and one for a percentage deduction.
    b. Public Comments - None
    c. No motion, this subject will be revisited at the Board meeting in August.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT:

1) The District has pulled out of the California fire assignment due to a change in their policy on calling for assignments. The District will be called back, but newly implemented policy dictates there to be at least a two-week break in between assignments (the District had previously been asked to be there continuously from June through end of season in October). Within two days of getting home from California, the District was called to an assignment in North Dakota. The engine and a crew were sent to North Dakota to cover that assignment. The change in California policy will change how the District deploys this summer, but it is anticipated that the new policy will not affect the number of assignments to which the District will be called to respond, and it should not affect anticipated 2026 budgetary income for fire deployments.
2) Chief Matis attended a CO Fire meeting, organized to help fire agencies with income loss from legislation that has affected districts negatively. Chief Matis made two recommendations to the committee which were favorably received, but time will tell if any of the participant suggestions are actually considered by the government committees.
3) SAM registration is complete and has been validated by the government, resulting in the go ahead to be able to utilize services offered by SAM.
4) Chief Matis attended the regional Fire Chiefs' meeting.
5) Captain Quigly will participate in the dunk tank fund raiser at the Wild Horse Days celebration. It is anticipated the funds will go toward the De Beque School's sports programs.
6) Chief Matis has a meeting scheduled with the school regarding the EOP.
7) The District received a $5,000 PPE grant, initiated by Firefighter Heym.

8) The District has passed the annual fire alarm system check.
9) County fire restrictions remain at level 2 for now; though needed rain is anticipated, rain also brings complications of lightning fires, especially since everything is extremely dry. The District will continue to be vigilant regarding anticipatory fire situations.
10) The recent tragic loss of lives of firefighters has affected all the area districts. The teams at DFPD are cognizant of the new employees added to the roster and the District is stressing that safety is of the upmost importance.
11) Chief Matis' ankle injury is healing well and rehabilitation is good. He has been released to go on EMS runs and it is anticipated he will be fully released as early as August.
12) Chief Matis reminded the BOD that the District will receive estimates in August regarding funding for next year, which will dictate how the District budget will look and whether or not there needs to be a Plan B for funding. Plan B could include expanding wildland fire assignments, which would include applying for grants to help with payroll expenses for that expansion. Board Secretary Ramthun asked if there were any monies anticipated through two programs that have been anticipated that have not seen fruition in funding: 1) PILT monies that the county is supped to send on to the fire Districts; 2) Anticipated government reimbursement funds for Medicaid EMS trips. It was noted that: 1) It is still anticipated that we will receive $10,000 in PILT money at some point, but a solid date for that has not been determined by the County; and 2) the EMS billing company we have been utilizing did not do the necessary paperwork to receive monies from Medicaid, so no monies will come in at this time for Medicaid reimbursement; however, the new EMS billing company seems to have addressed this issue and the District anticipates reimbursement funding next year.

OTHER COMMENTS: None

BOARD COMMENTS: None

ADJOURNMENT:
Motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Next regular meeting: Monday, August 10, 2026.

Approved by the De Beque Fire Protection Board of Directors on August 10, 2026.

Board of Directors:
Board President Michael Tanner
Board Vice-President Dustin Koehler
Board Secretary Maria (Rebecca) Ramthun
Board Member Cynthia Farris
Board Member Dick (John R) Latham

It is noted that Board Member Cynthia Farris is also on the Board of Directors for the Town of De Beque. It is noted that the dual Board positions might be considered a conflict of interest in the event of interaction between the De Beque Fire Protection District and the Town of De Beque.

It is noted that due to technical issues, the recorder shut down about halfway through the meeting. Meeting notes have been filed with the other meeting documents.

This is an informational document designed to be accessible on our web site. Please contact the District office if you desire a copy of the signed document.

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