



REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
DE BEQUE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

DE BEQUE FIRE STATION
APRIL 14, 2025

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER:

Pursuant to notice, the regular board meeting of the De Beque Fire Protection District (the District) was called to order by Board President Tanner at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, April 14, 2025.

OPEN WITH PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO FLAG: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ROLL CALL/ESTABLISH QUORUM:

Cynthia Farris, Present; Melanie Hansen, Present; Dustin Koehler, Present; Maria Ramthun, Present; Annette 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; Lieutenant Jesse Hughson; Captain Triston Quigley; Secretary Kim Latham; Jeff Koperek; Dick Latham.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Fire Chief Matis suggested moving New Business item #1: Scammer Information/Networks Unlimited Services Proposal up on the Agenda to under Public Comments and before Old Business. Motion was made by Board Vice-President Ramthun and seconded by Board Secretary Hansen to move New Business item #1: Scammer Information/Networks Unlimited Services Proposal up the Agenda to under Public Comments and before Old Business. Vote: Cynthia Farris, Aye; Melanie Hansen, Aye; Dustin Koehler, Aye; Maria Ramthun, Aye; Annette Tanner, Aye. Motion Passed. Motion was made by Board Vice-President Ramthun and seconded by Board Secretary Hansen to approve the Agenda as amended. Vote: Cynthia Farris, Aye; Melanie Hansen, Aye; Dustin Koehler, Aye; Maria Ramthun, Aye; Annette Tanner, Aye. Motion Passed.

MINUTES:

Minutes were presented to the BOD for consideration for the regular board meeting of March 10, 2025. Motion was made by Board President Tanner and seconded by Board Member Farris to approve the minutes for March 10, 2025 as presented. Vote: Cynthia Farris, Aye; Melanie Hansen, Aye; Dustin Koehler, Aye; Maria Ramthun, Aye; Annette Tanner, Aye. Motion Passed.

FINANCE REPORTS

Financial Reports were presented to the BOD for February 2025. Motion was made by Board President Tanner and seconded by Board Vice-President Ramthun to approve the finance reports for February 2025 as presented. Vote: Cynthia Farris, Aye; Melanie Hansen, Aye; Dustin Koehler, Aye; Maria Ramthun, Aye; Annette Tanner, Aye. Motion Passed.



Insurance Write-Downs/Write Offs in the amount of \$2,118.57 for February 2025 were presented to the board. Motion was made by Board Vice-President Ramthun and seconded by Board President Tanner to approve the insurance adjustment write-down/write-offs in the amount of \$2,118.57 for February 2025. Vote: Cynthia Farris, Aye; Melanie Hansen, Aye; Dustin Koehler, Aye; Maria Ramthun, Aye; Annette Tanner, Aye. Motion Passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1) Scammer Information/Networks Unlimited Services Proposal. The District found out in April that there were several District scamming incidents that have occurred due to infiltration of the District email accounts. Two occurred in January, one in February, and one in April. The February and April scams were caught and averted, saving a loss of \$300,000, but the January scams were not caught, resulting in a loss of just under \$45,000. The banks have been notified, the situation has been reported to law enforcement, and secret service will be investigating this issue. Jeff Koperek with Networks Unlimited presented a proposal to the BOD for consideration for IT security services. Motion was made by Board Vice-President Ramthun and seconded by Board Secretary Hansen to approve Networks Unlimited to provide IT security services up to \$12,000 for the remainder of this year. Vote: Cynthia Farris, Aye; Melanie Hansen, Aye; Dustin Koehler, Aye; Maria Ramthun, Aye; Annette Tanner, Aye. Motion Passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

- 1) Type 6 Engine Update/Resolution 2025-12 Purchase Approval \$300,000. Brush Engine 83 has been ordered and is being painted and outfitted. The BOD approved the purchase of the Type 6 Engine (Brush 83) at the May board meeting. Resolution 2025-12 is the resolution affirming that vote. Motion was made by Board Vice-President Ramthun and seconded by Board Secretary Hansen to approve Resolution 2025-12 in the amount of \$300,000 to include outfitting the engine. Vote: Cynthia Farris, Aye; Melanie Hansen, Aye; Dustin Koehler, Aye; Maria Ramthun, Aye; Annette Tanner, Aye. Motion Passed.
- 2) Apparatus Update
 - a. Ladder Truck. The Ladder Truck has been repaired and has been taken to Meeker's Fire District, where they are in the process of checking it out and presenting the purchase request to their board of directors.
 - b. Engine 81 is out of service for repairs and is awaiting a mechanic. No estimate at this time of the cost to complete the repairs.
 - c. Ambulance 82. Ambulance 82 went out of service while on a mutual aid call for Plateau Vally (a hub went out). Other issues, including oil leaks, were discovered while in for service repairs. We should begin to budget for a new ambulance in next year's budget.
- 3) Election Cancellation Update. The DEO for our May 2025 elections presented a resolution for the cancellation of the elections.



NEW BUSINESS (Continued):

- 1) Annual SDA Workshop Discussion. It is the time of the year to attend the annual SDA workshops. All board members are encouraged to attend, if possible, along with Chief Matis and District Secretary Latham. The workshop gives a lot of valuable information for special districts. The closest workshops are in Clifton and Vail. Board members will let Ms. Latham know if they can attend.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT:

- 1) The Fire Chief has attended several meetings. There is not much to report except there are plans for multi-hazard mitigation assessment projects in both Garfield and Mesa Counties. This is something we've never participated in with Garfield County even though 60% of our district is in Garfield County. We are getting involved with this assessment program.
- 2) The Fire Chief also attended the Colorado River Wildfire Collaborative meeting. They have us scheduled for some mitigation at Samson Mesa between Parachute and De Beque as well as possible mitigation up Roan Creek from Dry Fork down and an area near the Battlement/Spring Creek area and the De Beque Ridge area above Bass Lake.
- 3) With the purchase of the new Type 6 Brush Engine, we are looking at possibly hiring a seasonal fire crew up to three personnel specifically for Wildland Fire Assignments. This will keep our station fully staffed while supplementing our budget with the deployment assignments. The seasonal fire crew would be available for the fire mitigation programs we are getting involved with.
- 4) With our mill levy increase, we have been able to start replacing apparatus and fire equipment as well as being fully staffed 24/7. It is looking like the current state legislation will take us back into the figures of a few years ago before the mill levy increase, which will greatly impact our finances. The current laws are now tied to the previous two years' budgets/tax assessments, and can move down drastically based on one low year, but increases are limited and will not reflect current tax assessments. One option to fix this would be to ask the voters to set a specific hard set annual dollar amount in lieu of a mill levy decrease or increase, depending on the legislative constraints. This would also mean if any increase is needed at any time in the future, it would take an election vote to approve a higher amount. We would also become a fire and EMS District, providing EMS (ambulance) services free of charge for District residents. If we included all emergency EMS services for free, we could eliminate billing costs and bill directly from the District for non-emergent runs only (such as Hospice or other requested runs). The Board would like to have Chief Matis check with the attorney to discuss the possibilities and legalities of such a plan and come up with hard numbers for an annual amount for discussion at a later date. Chief Matis stressed this is only one suggested option and will take a lot of work to figure all the ins and outs to even see if it is a viable option. We will know more in August, when the District will get our tax assessment and see how the new legislation will affect our finances for the next budget year. Discussion ensued regarding being responsible and not over taxing the District constituents. Another option could be combining our District with another District. Comments were favorable in trying to become a Fire/EMS District, eliminating EMS services billing, especially since the insurance/Medicaid/Medicare write-down/write-offs take away most of the billing income anyway.
- 5) ROT 1-30 training went well, with practice burns including the town pile.
- 6) The new employees are fully onboard and working shifts.
- 7) PACK tests are completed except for one person.



8) CA Deployment for the Plumas National Forrest is a possibility for a permanent season-long deployment. Chief Matis will know more regarding this possibility at the end of April.

CREW UPDATES:

Nothing new reported other than topics already discussed.

OTHER COMMENTS:

BOARD COMMENTS: Thanks!

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion was made by Board Secretary Hansen and seconded by Board Member Farris to adjourn the meeting. Vote: Cynthia Farris, Aye; Melanie Hansen, Aye; Dustin Koehler, Aye; Maria Ramthun, Aye; Annette Tanner, Aye. Motion Passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Next regular meeting: Monday, May 12, 2025.

Approved by the De Beque Fire Protection Board of Directors on May 12, 2025.

Annette Tanner, President

Melanie Hansen, Secretary



Board of Directors:

- Board President Annette Tanner
- Board Vice President Maria Ramthun
- Board Secretary Melanie Hansen
- Board Member Cynthia Farris
- Board Member Dustin Koehler

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.