

Lower Valley Fire Protection District

February 12, 2026

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The regular board meeting of the Board of Directors with the Lower Valley Fire Protection District is called to order by Board President Cullen Purser. Advance public notice of this meeting is posted in three separate public spaces, and online at www.lowervalleyfire.com. In attendance are the following board of directors: Cullen Purser, Mark Bonella, Cliff Gray, and Jesse Mease. Others in attendance: Fire Chief Matt Katzenberger, Deputy Fire Chief Gary Mulkey, Diana Manzanares, Fire Marshal Travis Holder, Firefighter Derek Campbell, Captain Anthony Padilla, and Engineer Kaden Fife.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Kaden Fife led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CITIZENS COMMENTS/REQUESTS

None.

DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Jesse Mease motioned to accept the regular board meeting minutes from 01/08/2026; seconded by **Mark Bonella**. **Motion** was passed with four votes.

APPROVAL OF EXPENSES

Diana rendered the information reporting the expenses from January 1, 2026, through January 31, 2026, totaled \$176,868.64.

Jesse Mease made a **motion** to accept the bills for January 2026; seconded by **Cliff Gray**. **Motion** was passed with four votes.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORTS

Diana reports that the total balance in our bank accounts, including cash on hand as of January 31, 2026, is \$3,443,813.42. The interest accrued for the month of January 2026 is \$11,416.48. The YTD interest accrued is \$11,416.48. The Mesa County Statement of Collections for the month of January 2026 totaled \$56,624.24.

Mark Bonella made a **motion** to accept the financial statements for January 2026; seconded by **Cliff Gray**. **Motion** was passed with four votes.

Lower Valley Fire Protection District

February 12, 2026

APPROVAL OF AMBULANCE BILLING RESOLUTIONS

In **Mahea's** absence tonight, **Chief Matt Katzenberger** reports that the billing write-offs for January 2026 totaled \$139,198.39. There were 7 accounts sent to collections in January 2026, which totaled \$11,683.00.

Cliff Gray made a **motion** to approve the resolutions and write-offs for January 2026; seconded by **Jesse Mease**. **Motion** was passed with four votes.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

In **Mahea's** absence tonight, **Chief Matt Katzenberger** reports that the ambulance income received in January 2026 totaled \$84,315.76. The board was informed that insurance income may be slightly reduced in Q1 due to deductibles being reset at the top of the year. All direct deposit payers have successfully transitioned and are now depositing into the new account. No further activity is expected in the previous checking account. Her report also informed the Board that she met with the QA team to review report-writing data collected in 2025. Several common themes were identified and have since been addressed. **Captain Adam Compton** has also met individually with crew members to provide feedback, all with the goal of increasing revenue through billable reports. Lastly, there are no updates regarding the CMS audit from April 2025.

Diana informs the board the employee W-2's were electronically distributed on 01/23/2026. Next, **Diana** reports that fourth quarter payroll has been completed. She's currently working with **Shannon Currier** to prepare for the audits with **Paul Miller**. He has provided a checklist, and she will begin reviewing emails and documentation. If necessary, Shannon will make a trip to Fruita to assist in completing the required items. Lastly, **Diana** informs the board that Grand Valley Bank (GVB) conducted an additional audit and requested updated signature cards reflecting each signer's full legal name, including middle name. Signatures do not need to include the middle name and may be signed or written as usual.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT

Chief Matt Katzenberger begins with apparatus updates. The Type III is still at 50% completed in the production process as of 02/09/2026. They have continued providing bi-weekly updates. During the process, a fabrication error was identified that did not meet the specifications we had outlined. This temporarily delayed assembly, as the unit had to return to fabrication for correction. Specifically, the pump housing area had been fabricated incorrectly and would not accommodate the hose beds as specified. Because the issue required cutting and replacing metal, the unit had to be refabricated and

Lower Valley Fire Protection District

February 12, 2026

repainted before work could continue. Communication over the past couple of months has improved significantly. We now have a clear understanding of the unit's status and the reasons for any delays. Part of this change is due to the passing of our sales representative; his supervisors have since stepped in and have been more proactive in ensuring communication and support. The manufacturer is still projecting completion by the end of the first quarter, though the fabrication correction created an approximate two-week delay. Regarding the Water Tender, **Chief Matt Katzenberger** states that it remains on track and is currently in the paint phase following completion of fabrication. Caleb, the manufacturer's representative, informed us that approximately 70% of their shop staff are currently out with the flu, which may cause a delay of about one week; however, communication has remained consistent. **Engineer Jesse Stocking** also identified that ground lights had not been included in the original specifications. Four lights, two on each side, will be added to illuminate the ground when the apparatus is placed in park for safety and scene visibility. These will be installed after the unit returns from painting, prior to final testing and inspection. Regarding the ambulance, there are no additional updates regarding the ambulance after receipt of the chassis.

Next, **Chief Matt Katzenberger** reports to the board some general updates. The Colorado DFPC Firefighter Health and Wellness Grant has been submitted. **Captain Compton** completed the application this year, following prior successful awards secured by **Captain Smalls**. If awarded, the \$20,000 grant will be applied toward the TechGen gear included in the budget, covering approximately half of the cost and creating potential budget savings. The EMS Provider Grant has also been submitted to support the purchase of critical care equipment, including ventilators and additional mechanical CPR devices. We should hear back on that grant by June 2026.

Lastly, **Chief Matt Katzenberger** provides his annual report and presented the draft of the department's Annual Report to the Board. The intent is for the report to be made available to the public on the department's website. It summarizes key achievements from the past year, provides call volume data, and outlines some of the department's directions for the coming year. The report is primarily informational and focuses on data rather than narrative or photos. The report highlights several areas of the agency, including operations and changes in call volume, department-wide training hours and training direction, EMS and fire operations, and fire prevention and community engagement activities. **Travis** contributed a section outlining fire prevention efforts and community outreach. Additional sections address recruitment and retention. Billing information was also included to provide transparency. Transport volume increased by 227 compared to 2024, resulting in a

Lower Valley Fire Protection District

February 12, 2026

corresponding increase in billable reports. The department's collection ratio increased by 3% from 2024 to 2025, and the report also includes information on total revenue changes. The training section also references the high school academy program and its structure, which supports both training initiatives and recruitment and retention efforts. **Chief Matt Katzenberger** states the purpose of the report is to increase transparency with the community and help educate the public about the department's operations. Board members were encouraged to review the report and provide feedback to the Chief if there are additional items they would like to see included in future reports.

DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF REPORT

Deputy Chief Mulkey reports to the board that the last Strategic Planning Meeting is on 02/23/2026. We will be reviewing the document and anticipate presenting it at the March board meeting, barring any major changes.

Next, **Deputy Chief Mulkey** reports on training updates. **Derek Campbell** completed his Fire Officer I certification, and the officer mentorship program. **Ben Gardner, Anthony Padilla, and Thomas Creel** started the Chief Officer Training Curriculum (COTC) course, which will be about a two-year program. Our January call volume is consistent with where it was at this time last year. **Chief Matt Katzenberger** states that in the past few weeks, we've had several instances of 4th and 5th call status, meaning four or five calls occurring simultaneously. We only needed mutual aid for a couple of those calls; the crews have done an excellent job managing resources to cover the demand. The board was updated on a call that we responded to today to a fire at the Golden Gate Petroleum facility at 21 Road. It was about as complex an incident as you can have, involving hazardous materials, fire, and the potential risk of explosions. Despite that, the incident went extremely well. Crews were able to mitigate the situation in about three and a half hours. The outcome was very positive, and it did receive a fair amount of media attention.

FIRE MARSHAL REPORT

Fire Marshal Travis Holder states that the year is starting off strong with building and construction activity. The Fire District anticipates several new subdivisions coming in from the Broadway area through the north desert. In addition, fire mitigation work will be starting soon. Through the Community Assistance Grant, we partnered with Two Rivers Wildfire and were awarded \$50,000 for this year. The project is expected to begin near Maple and extend back toward 18 Road along the Salt Wash. **Fire Marshal Travis Holder** recently met with representatives from Two Rivers and the committee is currently coordinating with Mesa County on fire mitigation efforts. **Chief Matt Katzenberger** states that as part of this work, there will be a resolution

Lower Valley Fire Protection District

February 12, 2026

presented at the next board meeting. **Chief** will send that out in advance, so everyone has time to review it. We are also mandated to adopt Colorado's WUI code, which was mentioned a few months ago. The code must be adopted by April 1 and implemented by July 1. Both **Chief** and **Travis** met with County Building, Planning, and Administration to discuss how the building and fire components will work together. It appears we have a good framework in place. The County currently has a resolution going to the commissioners, and once that is adopted, we will be able to use that language and align our policy with it. **Chief Matt Katzenberger** continues saying, everything will continue to run through Mesa County. For districts without a Fire Marshal, the County will enter into an MOU and assume responsibility for administering the code, with homeowners signing an affidavit of compliance as part of the building permit to help mitigate liability. Our arrangement with the County and the City of Grand Junction will be slightly different, as we plan to take a more proactive approach focused on education and guidance. While we do not have the resources to conduct annual inspections, we will remain involved when questions or issues arise, similar to our current role.

OFFICERS REPORT

None.

LOCAL 5265 - UNION REPORT

Union President **Kaden Fife** reports that he and **John Dawson** went to Denver to request a \$6,000 grant to match our \$6,000 from the campaign fund. Everyone in the room, mostly South Metro personnel, including battalion chiefs and other leaders, raised their hands in support, showing strong enthusiasm for our campaign. They've spent hours coordinating with their campaign manager at CPFF. Currently, they are finalizing flyer designs and working with their contact at IFF. Additionally, he submitted the last of our legal documents yesterday to the legal team. The Union is wrapping up a few final items, and shortly our teams will begin active street presence - boots on the ground.

Next, **Kaden Fife** states that the annual surveys have been delayed due to campaign priorities, but they will be distributed shortly. The surveys will have the same questions as in previous years.

Finally, the crews are making regular use of the Fruita Rec Center and appreciate the available space and equipment to get in their physical fitness.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

Lower Valley Fire Protection District

February 12, 2026

OLD BUSINESS

Chief Matt Katzenberger begins with Future Funding Initiatives. Regarding the sales tax initiative, the public comment period for the city has concluded. Yesterday, **Chief** met with the City Manager, **Shannon**, who noted that only one person submitted comments. **Shannon** hasn't reviewed the content yet, but compared to previous tax initiatives, public response has been minimal. He will update us if any additional input is received. The city's statement of facts and pro/con statement has cleared legal review, and **Chief** shared it with the union last week for informational purposes. We will also add a blurb on our website directing people to the city's website for the statement of facts to avoid confusion, since this is a municipal election. Lower Valley and the City of Fruita are gaining recognition across the state as word spreads about this type of municipal partnership. Many districts are reaching out to understand how we made it work. **Chief** has received several emails and phone calls, and last week, when he was at National Fire Academy Week assisting with classes, he fielded numerous questions from Front Range chiefs. This initiative is drawing positive attention from both municipalities and fire districts. Lastly, the State Chiefs Association reached out to **Chief Matt Katzenberger** two weeks ago, and he joined a Zoom call with them. They are planning a potential ballot initiative for this November aimed at providing funding across the state. The proposal involves assessing a fee on second homes with an insured value over \$4 million. The discussion focused on ensuring that multiple initiatives don't conflict or interfere with one another. Their plan would place the funds into a dedicated account with an oversight board to manage usage. While the plan is still in its early stages, he informed them that we will proceed with our current plans and, once theirs is more solidified, he will evaluate whether to participate. It's possible this initiative could move forward at the state level soon.

Next, **Chief Matt Katzenberger** discusses the Loma Hall. He reached out to **Chief Frank Cavalier** after learning Mike Herdy was back at work. We had avoided contacting **Chief Cavalier** during his initial diagnosis and surgery. **Chief Cavalier** reviewed the request and emailed yesterday to decline the bid. Part of his concern was assessing the ceiling due to its height and the need for a lift, for which neither he nor his staff are currently certified. However, he offered to provide guidance, advice, or contractor recommendations if needed. We will follow up with the one company that has responded so far and reach out to another potential contractor to schedule the assessment.

Lastly, **Chief Matt Katzenberger** informs the Board that the surplus bid ended today. Several items met the minimum bid, especially the higher-value items, which will be removed as planned. However, many smaller items, such as tables, old chairs, and bed frames, did not receive bids. Over the next couple of

Lower Valley Fire Protection District

February 12, 2026

weeks, **Chief** and the staff will determine the best way to distribute these items. For example, the bed frames, particularly the good ones, could be offered through Facebook Marketplace or donated to local organizations like Fruita Thrift Store, homeless shelters, or the Catholic Outreach, giving them a second life rather than scrapping them. Some items may still end up being discarded if no other option is available. **Chief Matt Katzenberger** will also follow up on specific items, like the Hotsy pressure washer, to determine next steps. The Hotsy received a \$750 bid, which we are happy to accept.

ADJOURNMENT

Cullen Purser made a **motion** to adjourn the Regular Board Meeting.
All in favor with four affirmative votes.








