

Garden Valley Fire Protection District Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting Minutes

Where: Main Fire Station on Middlefork Rd in Crouch

When: Tuesday, 14th April 2026 @ 2 PM



- 1 **Call to Order** : Meeting called to order at 2 pm
- 2 **Commissioner(s)/Chief Role Call**: Phil Palmiotto Comissoner; present, Mike Van Dyk Comissoner; Present, Mike Dolan Comissoner; Present, Chief Cleaveland; Present, Captain Austin Fields; Present.
- 3 **Amendments to this Agenda**
 - 3.1 **Motions to amend this agenda.** Motion to add; set a budget date hearing, new business 10.1.
Phil Palmiottos motioned, Mike Dolan seconded, all voted in favor to amend agenda.
- 4 **Consent Agenda Items** - Consent Agenda Items will be enacted upon by one motion. There will be no separate discussion on items unless a Board Member, Staff, or member of the public request's removal of the item for separate action.
 - 4.1 **Minutes: Review/Amend/Approve Previous Month's Meeting Minutes.**
 - 4.2 **Expenditures: Review/Amend/Approve Expenditures.**
 - 4.2.1 Phil motioned to approve minutes and expenditures, Mike Dolan seconded all voted in favor to approve.
- 5 **Correspondence**
 - 5.1 **Staff / Commissioners will review relevant correspondence.**
 - 5.1.1 Chief advised that the County wildfire mitigation crew will be doing mitigation in Garden Valley starting soon. Chief also advised that the Lowman Ranger Station will be doing a pack test at the GV school and GVFD will standby with an ambulance at that test.
- 6 **Public Participation**
 - 6.1 **Members of the public may comment on an agenda before action is taken and after the Board has discussed the item. Any member of the public making a public comment shall state their name and address for the record prior to addressing the Board. We allow 3 minutes per speaker.**
 - 6.1.1 Mike Dolan asked if a response to the letter from Jason Sawin / GVCC from the previous meeting. He will respond to the letter to the GVCC not privately, Jason Sawin.
- 7 **Public Comment**
 - 7.1 **This part of the meeting is reserved for people wishing to address the Board on any matter not on the agenda. Name and address shall be stated for the record prior to addressing the Board. Any matter that requires Board action will be referred to staff (or a Board member) for a report and action at a subsequent Board meeting.**
 - 7.1.1 Mike Van Dyk asked if GVCC was formed as an official committee. They are not an official committee
 - 7.1.2 Jason Sawin 21 Schoolhouse Gulch Rd. - read a letter from the GVCC.
 - 7.1.3 Eva Polizzi - Running for County clerk and wanted to introduce herself says that she is married to a professional and volunteer FF. She is here to answer questions any may have.
- 8 **Old/Ongoing Business**

ASTERISK (*) ITEMS ARE ALL SUBJECT TO POSSIBLE ACTION BY THE GVFPD BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS.
The GVFPD Board of Commissioners Reserves the Right to Change the Agenda Prior to the Meeting.

- 8.1 (*) Fee schedule update: Chief is still working on the schedule with the legal dept. He will have an update soon.
- 8.2 (*) Requested Apparatus report update: A document has been presented to the commissioners. Also, our Engine and pumping tender are currently undergoing pump tests.

9 Chief & Staff Reports...

- 9.1 (*) Calls in March: 18
- 9.2 (*) Training in March: OBGYN, Hose Advancements, Fire Evolutions, Ropes and Knots, Optional Modules. Wildland Refresher class
- 9.3 (*) Department on-call staffing & Response times update: 15
- 9.4 (*) Staffing Update : none
- 9.5 (*) Equipment Update: Engine and pumping tender are currently undergoing pump tests.
- 9.6 (*) Station updates: Firehawk Helicopters would like to rent out station 2 again. Commissioners agreed that was a good source of income and they would like to move forward with working on a contract with Firehawk.

10 New Business

- 10.1 Phil motioned budget hearing for FY2027 on August 11th at 1:00PM. Mike Dolan seconded, all voted in favor.

11 Request for Future Agenda Items

- 11.1 No motions for future agenda items.

12 (*) Adjournment

- 12.1 Adjourn at 2:18 pm. Phil motioned and Mike Dolan seconded, all voted in favor.

The next Regular GVFPD Board Meeting will be on Tuesday, 05/12/2026, @ 2:00 PM @ the Main Station above Crouch.



GVFD Commissioners Regular Meeting April 14, 2026

The Garden Valley Citizens Committee is an informal, volunteer community group currently focused on researching and discussing fire protection and emergency medical service issues within the Garden Valley Fire Protection District (GVFPD) service area. At the November and December meetings, I shared GVCC's commitment to offering help. Even though we have not been given an opportunity to participate in the discussions, we have continued our work and have made our findings available to the public.

Staffing in the fire service over the last 20+ years has been on the decline, for both volunteer and career departments. There are many reasons that could contribute to this, but there are also some solutions to combat this nationwide issue.

The NFPA provided the fire service with an update in 2024, NFPA 1010, Chapter 5, Supportive Members. Supportive members can simply be defined as members of a volunteer fire department who are not required to don an SCBA and go inside a hazardous situation such as a house fire. The requirements are not nearly as strenuous as those for a regular firefighter, which allows more people to volunteer and serve their community. NFPA 1010 Chapter 5 is a short read. Just Google it.

Many small volunteer fire departments have basically operated this way for their entire existence, so it is nothing new. In fact, GVFD operated this way until recently. To the best of my understanding, to be a member of GVFD each member must become a firefighter within a certain amount of time.

If the minimum requirement for training at the current level is attending 50% of all scheduled trainings and fire training every Wednesday night with additional sessions on Saturdays or other days, that can be very difficult for many people to commit to. NFPA 1010 Chapter 5 can reduce this training requirement and allow many additional potential volunteers to participate.

My question to GVFD is this:

If a recently retired EMT-B with a career in emergency medicine behind them wants to become a member of GVFD only to serve as an EMT-B on the ambulance and not be a firefighter, are they welcome?

While reviewing previous GVFD commissioners meetings, I found two occasions where the Chief's update stated they lost members and asked members to resign due to not committing to the time requirement. Maybe these members could still be active if the requirements were reduced under NFPA 1010 Chapter 5. I know of at least four people who could potentially still be volunteers. These individuals have given several years of service to their community.

Below are the meeting minutes references:

November 14, 2023 regular meeting

9.3 Some members were dismissed on good terms. They just couldn't make the time commitments.

9.6 The Chief stated there are 30 members and he is working on retention. The hiring process is closed for the year.

March 11, 2024 regular meeting

9.4.2 Chief stated the department has lost some members.

GVFD has set a very high standard for a rural and remote volunteer fire department. Some people can meet these standards, but the question is whether there are enough people who can.

With a roster ranging between 20 and 30 members, and after reviewing previous years' financials and members' paychecks for the paid-on-call and paid-per-call programs, it is clear that most of the work is being carried by fewer than 10 members.

Some of these members are "Boise area recruits," and they make up over 40% of GVFD. With the current membership (not including the Chief or the Captain), there are 26 members. I understand that at least two are currently out on medical leave. If more than 40% are from out of town, this leaves roughly 15 people who are Garden Valley residents.

Of the out-of-town members (roughly 11), there are times when none of them are in Garden Valley. With the recent spike in gas prices and the reduced paid-on-call program pay, I doubt as many are signing up. **Could there be two Boise area recruits at any given time in Garden Valley?** There are also other members who may work out of town, cannot leave their jobs, or are not available to respond 24/7. Adding additional Boise area recruits is not a viable long-term solution since only those signed up are available at any given time.

The point of these numbers is to show that GVFD is likely operating with between 10 and 15 members available most of the time. With an average of less than one call per day, there are not enough members to sustain long-term response consistency without adding more volunteers. Even volunteers who receive paid-per-call and paid-on-call stipends need breaks. At some point burnout will occur, and retention will suffer. As mentioned in the meeting minutes above, retention appears to be a constant challenge.

If GVFD adopts and implements NFPA 1010 Chapter 5 and provides a clear plan moving forward, the total number of volunteers could potentially increase, perhaps even to 40 members. These new members will need to be outfitted with gear, but if they choose not to become firefighters trained to enter hazardous environments, their safety gear would not need to include full structural turnout gear. Their equipment could consist of lighter gear similar to wildland fire gear.

Roughly 80% of all fire department calls across the USA are medical in nature. GVFD falls directly in line with these statistics.

Shouldn't GVFD focus heavily on EMS?

GVFD has stated in recent town halls that swift water rescue and rope rescue services may not be available. There are questions about why these services could go away if the levy fails, but NFPA 1010 Chapter 5 could provide additional volunteers who have specialized skills in these areas.

GVFD has also stated they will rely more on mutual aid if the levy fails. Mutual aid can include Boise County Search and Rescue, Horseshoe Bend Fire, Lowman Fire, and potentially ambulance service from the Boise area. Both Lowman and Horseshoe Bend currently have low volunteer numbers. I doubt either Horseshoe Bend Fire or Lowman Fire holds their volunteers to the same training standards as GVFD. Many of their members may fall under NFPA 1010 Chapter 5 standards.

Mutual aid is, at best, 45 minutes away, if not one hour or more. NFPA 1010 Chapter 5, combined with an increase in GVFD membership, could reduce the need for mutual aid and provide more manpower during that critical first hour of a major incident.

We haven't seen a recruitment notice for the bootcamp since the summer of 2025. After a winter of record low snowpack, the summer fire season is shaping up to be very busy across the western United States. Even though Garden Valley has had ample moisture in recent weeks, which may slow the start of the fire season here, when it does begin this summer, national resources might be stretched thin.

GVFD needs to be able to respond rapidly to new wildfire starts within the district this year to prevent fires from spreading.

Isn't springtime a good time to recruit new firefighters so they can be trained in time for the wildfire threat?

Jason Sawin

GVCC