

Garden Valley Fire Protection District Board of

Commissioners

Regular Meeting Minutes

Where: Main Fire Station on Middlefork Rd in Crouch

When: 11 November 2025 2 PM



1 Call to Order - 2:02PM

- 2 **Commissioner(s)/Chief Role Call:** Bill Klevenberg; Commissioner-Present, Mike Van Dyk; Commissioner-Present, Phil Palmiotto; Commissioner-Present, Chief Cleaveland-Present, Captain A. Fields-Present, Heather Sipple; Stenographer-Present.

2.1 Acknowledge Veterans Day and thank Vets for their service and support!

3 Amendments to this Agenda

- 3.1 Motions to amend this agenda. Bill Klevenberg motions for amendment to the agenda, Phil Palmiotto seconds, all in favor.

4 Public Participation

- 4.1 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. With the crowd today we are going to allow 3 minutes per speaker.

- 5 **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.

5.1 Minutes: Review/Amend/Approve Previous Month's Meeting Minutes.

5.2 Expenditures: Review/Amend/Approve Expenditures. Bill Klevenberg made a motion to approve previous months minutes and expenditures, Phil Palmiotto seconds, all in favor.

6 Correspondence

- 6.1 Staff / Commissioners will review relevant correspondence.

Read Commissioners Statement and letters -Bill Klevenberg reads the statement from the Commissioners and Chief Cleaveland, addressing levy concerns and levy questions. Bill Klevenberg addresses that the commissioners were advised by the Fire Districts attorney to not comment or engage on social media posts.

Heather Sipple-read BC Jordan Jones L.O.R. support letter
Heather Sipple-read BC prosecuting attorney Alex Sosa support letter
Heather Sipple-read BC Sheriff Scott Turner support letter
Heather Sipple-read Rick Fraser support email

(see attached correspondence letters and emails)

- 7 (*) Levy update - Pass/Fail – next steps

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.

729 total voters and 424 were against and 305 were for. Bill Klevenberg states this is the first time the commissioners have met since the results from the levy were known. Will need more time and further discussion for next step plans.

Paid on call budget for FY26 will be reviewed.

Grant options and timing. Bill Klevenberg states that once the government is re-opened, commissioners will be able to investigate more grant options moving forward. Mike Van Dyk and Phil Palmitto both agree that we must just move forward with the budget we have.

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.

-Phillip Desilet, 39 Upper Fitches PT. - Addressed the board of commissioners on Chief Cleaveland's integrity. He worked directly with Chief to attain donated equipment for GVFD from his department in Boise. Phillip stated Chief did an excellent job with his correspondence and due diligence to attain the equipment. Phillip commented on the high level of training Chief has Implemented at GVFD and believes he's raising the bar hire for the department.

-Christina Morgan, 122 Banks Lowman Rd. - Thanks the commissioners and chief for their dedication to the community. Spoke to her appreciation for the training and professionalism of responders to an emergency that she had.

-Dennis Ross, 25 Tamarack Court. Brought and read a letter from former commissioner Rick Knigge

-Jane Stone, 15 Bevan Lane-Thanks for the firefighters and the service that is provided. She says that the commissioners have let down the community with their lack of transparency. She appreciated the budget and numbers but would've appreciated historical numbers during the levy campaign. States that the levy should be about the service that will be provided not about firefighters and staffing.

-Kevin Jeffries, 7 Arena Rd. Kevin states he wouldn't want to be in the commissioner's shoes but wants to offer help as a citizen and resident with many years of experience in the fire service.

-Jason Sawin, 21 Schoolhouse Gulch- Served as a volunteer for GVFD for about 3 years, has experience with steamboat springs and other departments. Steamboat springs had to go to a levy to transition from volunteer to professional staffing. Says that he feels that voters missed out on information due to the late information campaign. He has gathered four retired firefighters that would like to assist the department and hopes to be added to next month's meeting agenda.

-Austin Howell, 3 Middle Fork Rd, Owns H5 wedding venue, wants to convey his experience with their ranch H5 event venue and the Chief. He says that Chief Cleaveland helped finalize the process with their business. He wanted to thank Chief Cleaveland for his work and express how his contributions are positive for this community.

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-Linda Van Vleck, 3 North Trail- Linda was happy to hear that the commissioners are looking into SAFER grant for staffing. She feels that people don't understand that most grants don't allow paying for employees / staffing. Linda believes more town hall meetings about the Levy should have been held to educate the community and stay transparent. She thanked the department after her husband used the EMS services recently and was grateful for the quick response time of Captain Fields.

-Sheryl Phillips- 28 River Ranch Road. Provides free tax services for members at the Senior Center. She sees firsthand that these people can't afford the tax increase due to their budgets just not allowing it. They need and appreciate the services but bottom line many would have to relocate with this tax increase.

-Donnie Adams, 83 Scriver Creek- Donnie has served as an EMT since 1985, spoke to the professionalism of Chief Cleaveland. States chief is very professional and cares about the community. Donna states how much training has improved and asks the community to not go to social media to put him down.

-Andrew Anderson, 20 Slippery Gulch- Really doesn't want to be here. Doesn't know the commissioners view on government. We can't run the government blindly, when the rest of the world is going crazy. Volunteered with the dept. During the transition between Chief Delvalle to Chief Cleaveland and doesn't have issues with Chief Cleaveland directly. Wouldn't be totally opposed to a levy in the future but wants to see more transparency.

-Bob Yardley, 38 Cross Timber Loop- States he is a fundraiser by trade and believes he can help raise 50,000 in our community. He comments about perspective and the word divert.

-Dylan Stocker, Lowman- He states there are two ways to talk and work with the community. He is hoping to get more communication from the commissioners even at the county level. The growth is happening, and EMS must stay at a number one priority.

Bill Klevenberg thanks all the public for their comments and encourages people to get and stay active and send emails with questions and concerns to keep communication moving forward.

8 Old/Ongoing Business

- 8.1 (*) [Impact Fee totals and collection update](#)- Bill Klevenberg states that we are still waiting for Boise County to pay out all our impact fees. City of Crouch has not paid out any fees, and we believe there has only been one pending application.

9 Chief & Staff Reports...

- 9.1 (*) [Calls in October, 21 calls](#),
- 9.2 (*) [Training in October](#)
- 9.3 (*) [Department on-call staffing & Response times update](#)- 13 min
- 9.4 (*) [Staffing Update](#)- 13 new recruits and up and going attending training and talking shifts.
- 9.5 (*) [Equipment Update](#)- No Equipment update
- 9.6 (*) [Station updates](#)- No Stations updates

10 New Business

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10.1 (*) Commissioner Terms discussion

Mike Van Dyk

Subdistrict: 1

Term Expires: Dec 31, 2027

Phil Palmiotto

Subdistrict: 2

Term Expires: Dec 31, 2027

Bill Klevenberg

Subdistrict: 3

Term Expires: Dec 31, 2025

Bill Klevenberg states that the terms were incorrect on the GVFD website and those have been updated. He Announced his resignation as commissioner for subdistrict 3 after the 1st of the year.

11 Request for Future Agenda Items- none

12 Executive Session - Idaho Code § 74-20 – To discuss personnel matters

Commissioners and Chief only

Bill Klevenberg made a motion to go into executive session at 3:17pm.

13 (*) Adjournment

At 5:12pm, No Motions were made after executive session.

The next Regular GVFPD Board Meeting will be on Tuesday, 12/09/2025, @ 2:00 PM @ the Main Station above Crouch.



Statement to be read into the meeting minutes 11/11/2025.

This statement has been approved by the Commissioners and Chief Cleaveland

We wanted to take this opportunity to address several issues that were brought up during the Levy process.

Under advisement of the departments attorney, Commissioners do not engage on social media.

The levy was a surprise and should have been brought up sooner:

The timing and discussions around the Levy started in our February 2025 meeting and it was on the Agenda and in the minutes of every meeting thereafter. All of us involved were talking to community members about it throughout the year. Members of the Department and Auxiliary were made aware when we announced it at a training in August as well.

The goal of the Commissioners and the Chief was to prove out that by implementing improvements in training, SOG's, and accountability coupled with a Paid-on call program that we could achieve highly reduced call times with even more professional, trained members showing up. It worked and the call times were cut in half.

The hope was that by demonstrating what could be done with the limited budget available, the need for increased taxes to fund the paid on call program and additional Full and part time staff to result in a blended environment that would provide a minimum of two trained professionals available 24/7/365, would be apparent. The only way to find that out was to put it to a vote, the community spoke by voting no, much like occurred in pretty much every Fire District in southern Idaho.

There was some discussion on trying again in May and that it wouldn't delay the funding, that is not the case. Any Levy passed in 2026 would not go into effect until 2027 (whether May or November) thus yielding funds in 2028.

References to "lifting the veil" or "threats" to stop EMS service if the Levy does not pass:

There were a few that said we were threatening or fear mongering (actually much worse was said, but in the interest of staying professional, I will leave it at that).

First thing to note is the statement in the original information sheet posted on September 4th:

What is the plan if this Levy does not pass?

Idaho fire districts face a challenging landscape when it comes to providing Emergency Medical Services (EMS). The state of Idaho does not currently classify EMS as an essential government service, which means there is no state mandate for its funding.

This means fire districts that currently provide EMS in Idaho could potentially cease to provide these services if they choose to do so. While this is not the route the Garden Valley Fire Protection District wants to take, it may be forced to do so if the current Levy and available budget remain the same.

As an example, our messaging and statements were very similar to what Valley County did in 2024 and were successful.

County commissioner Sherry Maupin wrote in an email “Valley County EMS will need to severely restrict the type of emergency services that will be available if this levy does not pass.”

East Boise County also passed in 2024 with more than 87% of the vote, that tax was also around \$40 per 100K and is on top of the Fire District Taxes those residents pay. Very similar to the amount this Levy was for.

There have been many questions around county wide EMS, that is something to take up with Boise County Commissioners, but when it was brought up in 2023, they stated it wasn't something they were actively looking at. Then in 2024 with the previously mentioned vote, East Boise County was re-formed as a standalone EMS district which would not have been supported by Boise County if they were looking at a County wide initiative.

References to the Chief not running calls:

The Chief does respond to calls. He responds to critical incidents and anytime our committed staffing levels are low, and responders are needed. Additionally, when he was first hired, he responded to every call in order to get to know every piece of apparatus, work side by side with the crew and see where training and operating guidelines needed to be improved.

The Commissioners operate per Idaho Statute and while we weigh in on staffing and operational decisions from time to time, the day-to-day operations of the Department are left up to the Chief. Seeing the results in reduced call times, a larger more trained staff and having Standard Operating guidelines per National Fire Codes and Standards is evidence to us that he is doing a pretty dang good job.

Reference to the Chiefs EMS License status. The Chief's 37 years of knowledge and experience in EMS is critical in him leading our department, but the transfer of his Michigan license or obtaining of an Idaho specific license was not a condition of his employment. His focus has been on building out a team that, with solid leadership, that can serve our community without the need for him to be by their side 24/7.

References to the Chiefs pay:

The Chiefs Salary for 2024-2025 was \$88K and was moved to \$90K per his contract just recently, while that may seem like a lot to some, there is a lot more to running a Fire and EMS Department than just running calls. For reference here are some published wages for positions within an hour of GV that someone with similar credentials could apply for.

Boise Fire

Battalion Chief (24 hr. shift) \$130,186.94

Sr. Captain - Logistics / Training / Prevention (40 hr) \$121,775.94

Cascade and Donnelly recently advertised for Firefighter/EMT's starting at \$78K based on experience.

Additionally, if the Chief is running all the calls, who is going to handle the rest of his duties, which are many, things like Fire Inspections, writing SOG's, interagency work with Idaho Department of Lands, State Fire Marshal, Boise County Sheriff's office, Boise County Emergency Management and Grant writing to just name a few.

Funding Sources:

Grants:

The Chief put together a Grant Assessment report that was made available on our Website in Early October. To summarize, we go after as many Grants as possible and will be taking a closer look at the possibility of a Safer Grant. Grants are not guaranteed and are only temporary making staffing commitments a challenge.

Federal Firefighting and equipment Contracts:

Some have said we should put a crew together to provide Water Tender services to the Fed's to raise money for the Department. Running an entire business unit using taxpayer funded equipment and services is not something we are going to do. It is far more complex than just sending a few guys and the tender out on Forest Fires. We need the staff, we need the money to pay them as well as all the required Insurance for the people and equipment to be deployed. That is a private business model, not something a taxing District should be getting into.

Hopefully this helps clear up at least some of the questions and concerns out there.



Boise County Sheriff

3851 Hwy 21 / PO Box 189

Idaho City, ID 83631

(208)392-4411/(208)392-4108 fax

Scott Turner – Sheriff

November 10, 2025

To: Garden Valley Fire District Board

I am writing this letter to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation for Chief Cleaveland and all the staff at the Garden Valley Fire Department. I have been in Law Enforcement for twenty seven years in Boise County and have seen all the fire departments struggle throughout the years. When I think of Garden Valley Fire, I think of professionalism, dedication, and most important resilient. Since becoming Sheriff I have made it a goal to help improve all emergency services throughout the county in any way I can. Just my office alone has seen numbers go from 3,300 calls in 2020 to over 10,000 now with no additional staff until this budget year where we gained one new deputy. GVFD has the highest call volume in Boise County both fire and medical. The community would suffer greatly without Chief Cleaveland and the staff to respond in the time of need. As Sheriff I have the great pleasure of working with all ten of the fire departments with in Boise County. Having had that honor I can say without a doubt GVFD is the most trained, responsive department in the county. This does not happen without great leadership and standard. I and all my staff are proud to be a part of a great community and family in Garden Valley. Times are changing and becoming harder. We all experience the growth and additional expenses it takes to do our jobs and do them safely. I remind all the Fire Chiefs that it's only going to get busier, calls are getting more technical, and accident scenes are getting more dangerous. We all must work together to support our communities in every way possible. Please accept this letter as accommodations for Chief Cleaveland and his staff for the amazing work they do with so little.

Scott Turner

Boise County Sheriff



BOISE COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

November 10, 2025

Chief Paul Cleaveland
Garden Valley Fire Protection District

Re: Letter of Support

Please take this correspondence as a letter of support. Since becoming the Boise County Prosecuting Attorney, I quickly identified Chief Paul Cleaveland as a community leader in the Garden Valley area. While there have been a myriad of times that I have interacted with Chief Cleaveland in a professional capacity, I would like to relay some experiences to show that he looks out for his immediate community of Garden Valley, as well as being a team player to help make Boise County a safer place.

Chief Cleaveland is not from Garden Valley, and our longtime residents of Garden Valley and Crouch hold their community near to their hearts. When the Chief was faced with an issue that restricted his first responder units from mobilizing from the primary fire station, Chief Cleaveland diligently researched the law and communicated with me about his legal authority to act. However, instead of using law to be punitive, Chief Cleaveland sought to build relationships by communicating freely and honestly to correct the issue in a positive manner. The Chief navigated this issue, which did cause change, but collaboratively stepped the community in a positive direction for improved response times.

Chief Cleaveland's leadership extends beyond the Fire Protection District. He has been instrumental in building relationships with the Boise County Sheriff's Office and my office, in order for our public safety offices to better execute our statutory duties to our community. Chief Cleaveland invites Boise County Sheriff's Deputies to utilize the Crouch fire station, whether that be to stage or to even get a hot bite to eat on a break, which in turn allows Deputies to spend more time in Garden Valley. Chief Cleaveland has allowed me to use it as a safe and confidential meeting space to victims of domestic violence or sexual abuse to limit the level of trauma that a criminal prosecution can bring on a victim. Without the Chief's actions on these types of needs, County public safety offices would be hard pressed at finding a workable location.

I wish this short letter helps to convey my support for Chief Paul Cleaveland. I can affirmatively state that the Chief's stabilizing leadership has made Garden Valley a safer place while striving to give due respect to stakeholders.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex F. Sosa", written over a horizontal line.

Alex F. Sosa
Boise County Prosecuting Attorney



Boise County Emergency Management

Garden Valley Fire Department
373 S Middlefork Road
Garden Valley, ID 83622

November 10th, 2025

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing this letter in support of Garden Valley Fire Department Chief Paul Cleaveland.

In 2024 Chief Cleaveland and I both new to our positions got the opportunity to work together during the Middle Fork Complex. He was always available and willing to help in any way. Attended many morning briefings, cooperater meetings, and community meetings in support of the community. During this time we worked together in coordination with the Incident Management Team to create the structured evacuation zones for Garden Valley that are still in place today.

Chief Cleaveland's dedication to the Garden Valley Fire Department, drive, and determination to support the Garden Valley Fire Department and the people they serve does not go unseen. He continually tries to better the department and have 24/7 coverage. The challenges the counties fire departments and EMS services are facing to have 24/7 coverage with the increased growth, recreation and call volume in Boise County is becoming critical. This coverage is crucial to support our citizens as well as tourists.

Chief Cleaveland's continually invites other fire and EMS jurisdictions to trainings. Also having the staffing he has continually worked so hard to obtain benefits other jurisdictions nearby during emergencies because it allows him to send mutual aid to other jurisdictions and still have coverage for Garden Valley and its residents.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Boise County Emergency Management, Jordan Jones

From: Greg Garlick <greg1876@msn.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 11, 2025 12:26 PM
To: Paul Cleaveland <chief@gvfdidaho.com>
Subject: Paul Cleaveland

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter in support of Paul Cleaveland. Paul has done a great job as fire chief. Paul's experience and planning have been much appreciated. He communicates with residents. I am confident he is doing a great job and I support him completely. Greg Garlick, 101 Windy River Rd., Garden Valley Id. 46 year resident

From: Riki Frastein <sbrik223@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 11, 2025 12:32 PM
To: Paul Cleaveland <chief@gvfdidaho.com>
Subject: Support

To all concerned officials: My name is Richard Fraser, I own and operate Higher Ground Ranch in Garden Valley. I whole heartedly support Chief Cleaveland and the Garden Valley Fire Department. On August 19, 2023, a lightning strike ignited a fire on a remote part of my ranch. This fire could have easily spread to all of the homes on Windy River road and the Pine Bar area. Because of Chief Cleaveland and his crew, the fire was contained and put out before causing any severe damage.

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for the outstanding service and dedication he and his underfunded crew provide to our community. Please realize that emergency costs have risen dramatically nationwide over the past five years. We need to support our fire chief and his staff for any emergency education and tools necessary to keep our community safe. Thank for your time.