

CRESTED BUTTE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
MINUTES OF WORK SESSION MEETING
Mt. Crested Butte Fire Station 2
Tuesday, October 7, 2025
Approved: November 11, 2025

Attendance

Board Members Present: Jack Dietrich, Eric Tunkey, Ken Lodovico, Matt Halvorson
Staff, Volunteers and Public: Sean Caffrey, Annie Tunkey, Rob Weisbaum, Jeff Duke

Changes to the Agenda

Meeting called to order at 2:32 pm by Board Vice Chairman Ken Lodovico.
No changes to the agenda.

Staffing Presentation

CEO Caffrey facilitated a staffing presentation included in the work session packet, focusing on operational staff hiring, classification, and step progression. Future discussions will address promotional tracks for Lieutenant, Captain, and Chief positions. The proposed framework allows members to move fluidly through the five identified operational positions, with opportunities for all personnel to become fully qualified Engineers, Firefighters, and Paramedics, should they choose. Caffrey explained that one of the primary barriers to career progression has been inconsistency across the fire service regarding the definition and role of an Engineer. The proposed model addresses this by allowing employees who meet the Engineer qualifications to receive the corresponding certification and compensation, regardless of whether they are formally assigned as an Engineer. This change is expected to increase overall district capacity and operational flexibility.

The District has transitioned to a seven-step progression matrix, featuring smaller but more frequent pay increments to encourage annual advancement.

- **Grade 1:** Entry-level; candidates must meet minimum qualifications for employment. Employees have up to three years to achieve Grade 2 status but may advance sooner based on performance and qualifications.
- **Grade 2:** Represents full qualification
- **Grades 3–6:** Advancement based on time in grade and satisfactory performance.
- **Grade 7:** Advancement to this grade requires completion of a professional development plan.

The policy is anticipated to take effect in January 2026. CEO Caffrey also presented the bonus amounts in connection with the pay matrix.

2026 Draft Budget Review

CEO Caffrey presented the 2026 Draft Budget for Board review. He noted that the 2026 and 2027 assessment cycles will remain consistent, with the exception of any new growth in the assessed valuation base. The District's maximum mill levy is 10.08 and he anticipates 2026 will increase the mill rebate to 1.5 mills. Caffrey explained that maintaining a mill rebate provides downside protection in the event of an economic downturn and demonstrates good faith with taxpayers. The long-term goal is to increase the rebate to 2 mills. The bond fund will remain at 1.5 mills to allow for bond repayment.

Key points discussed:

- 2025 revenue is trending above projections.
- 2026 revenue and expenditure assumptions were reviewed in detail.
- The District continues to pursue a net-zero budget, emphasizing stewardship of taxpayer funds.
- Reserves: The District maintains a TABOR reserve of 3% and an operating reserve of approximately 31%
- Capital Plan: Significant capital purchases are planned for 2026, including lease-purchase agreement for the quint, member housing construction, and SCBA

Caffrey noted that all employees will receive a wage increase in 2026, with the exception of one employee currently at the top of their pay range. Board Member Tunkey raised a question regarding future health care costs, asking whether the District may need to implement a "grandfather" clause to sustain current benefits for existing

employees while modifying benefits for new hires. Caffrey acknowledged that while health care premiums continue to rise, maintaining 100% coverage remains an important and competitive benefit in the Upper Valley. Chairman Lodovico added that members are very appreciative of this benefit. The Board also reviewed Special Response Team (SRT) funding. Caffrey states the budget will be further reviewed at strategic planning in November and will be publicly noticed and finalized in December.

Motion to adjourn at 4:55 pm by Lodovico, seconded by Tunkey. Motion passes unanimously.