



GOLDEN GATE

Fire Protection District

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www.goldengatefire.org

Golden Gate Fire Protection District
Meeting Minutes
19 May 2022

1. Preliminary
 - 1.1. Location/Call to order: Sheila Carlon called to order the regular meeting of the GGFPD Board at 7:00 pm at the Grange, 7185 Crawford Gulch Rd, Golden, CO.
 - 1.2. Welcome audience
 - 1.3. Pledge of Allegiance
 - 1.4. Roll call indicated a quorum was present with Sheila Carlon, Dannel Agar, Sam Patton, Dave Kinnard and Paul Trost. Chief DiFeo was present.
 - 1.5. Additions and Deletions to the Agenda: none
 - 1.6. Conflicts of interest: none
2. Minutes
 - 2.1. Approval of April 2022 Meeting Minutes: **Motion #1** by Sam Patton. 2nd by Dave Kinnard. Vote: 5 yes. **Motion passes.**
3. Reports
 - 3.1. Treasurer's Report
 - 3.1.1. See <https://www.goldengatefire.org/minutes-and-financials/> for financial reports.
 - 3.1.2. Open issues/summary of discussion:
 - 3.1.2.1. Reviewed numbers, explained reports.
 - 3.1.2.2. Dave asked about the Transaction List: \$600 charge for AutoX. This was extrication training. We sent one FF.
 - 3.1.2.3. Dave asked about line 480 Deployment Expense Income in the Budget vs. Actuals. It was listed as a negative, but this should be a positive revenue. Chief explained that we have not been paid by the state yet for the Marshall Fire. The expense is what we paid to the FF. District made about \$3K.
 - 3.1.2.4. Dave asked about LOSAP 530.4. Balance came out of the 2022 budget since it was paid in 2022.
 - 3.1.2.5. Paul called the bank about reversing the \$15 transaction fee.
 - 3.1.2.6. Dave asked about Line 686: Website Maintenance. We paid the second half (\$750) in May so it will not show in the April report.
 - 3.1.2.7. Sheila asked about 601.01 Operational Communication Expense. There's an actual not a budgeted amount. This is probably categorized wrong. \$759.50 was this for the repeater maintenance? Admin will look into this.
 - 3.1.2.8. Dave suggested we transfer to ColoTrust the excess in checking.
 - 3.1.2.9. Dave asked about account receivable: \$194K is our tax receipt plan for the year. He thought the plan was to decrease that over the year on a monthly basis. Paul explained that on the accounts receivable, the \$194K is how much we expect to get from the county to run this district. On the liabilities, our accountant had us take \$184K back out. We'll leave it as is for now.

- 3.1.2.10. Dave asked about line 140 prepaid expenses listed as \$7600. What is this? Insurance costs on budget vs, actual is 3700 so what is that for? What is the extra \$4K prepaid for? Admin will check on this.
 - 3.1.2.11. Paul explained the budget is prepared primarily by the Chief.
 - 3.1.2.12. Dave also noted Credit card 1607 is tabbed with \$6K for liability. We used to see the total charges as net liabilities as \$998. This is a different look than what we are used to.
 - 3.1.2.13. Sheila asked what is the credit card line for 106.7?
 - 3.1.2.14. Sheila thanked Paul for his service as this is his last board meeting as Treasurer.
- 3.2. Chief's Report
- 3.2.1. See <https://www.goldengatefire.org/minutes-and-financials/> for report.
 - 3.2.1.1. FF David Kinnard resigned. He was a great mentor, teacher and we are sad to see him go. [Standing ovation for his service.]
 - 3.2.1.2. Chief reviewed 2 calls (see Chief's report) to highlight the continuing lack of response in our district. 31% of calls are being responded to by GGFPD. He noted that the majority of calls are during the weekday when our volunteer FFs are at work, etc. (See report for list of reasons.) Chief explained all this for the benefit of the new board members. Chief asked the new board members to read the study group report since it's a board decision whether to move forward with TFPD. He reviewed previous years' minutes, previous chiefs, calling attention to this situation, reiterating again that it is not sustainable. Mutual aid is not guaranteed and depending on it is not a good business model.
 - 3.2.1.3. Dannel asked if the reverse 911 database was transferred. Yes. Chief noted that the system has various features that the user can select and recommends that everyone go in and check their settings.
 - 3.2.1.4. Sheila asked about the Baby Doe short term rental. Have they gone through the process yet? No, which is why the county is contacting Chief to review fire safety issues.
 - 3.2.1.5. Mary Priester asked about the Lookout alert. She's not confident that everyone got transferred or knows they need to create a new login. Chief will follow up with the JeffCom administrator for the system so Mary has the correct information to share in her newsletter.
 - 3.2.1.6. Dave suggested we send an email blast on the department email chain, so the community has a heads up to check. Sheila recommended we utilize different email lists to reach everyone with the same message. Dave volunteered to draft the message.
- 3.3. Community Organization Reports
- 3.3.1. Grange
 - 3.3.1.1. Terri Costeldia noted that a canyon clean-up is scheduled for this Sunday but could be delayed due to weather.
 - 3.3.1.2. Communicating with Sam for the hydration drive
 - 3.3.1.3. Noted having problems with the Lookout alert as well. Mentioned the confusion and is hoping to get everything cleared up before they broadcast their message.
 - 3.3.2. Auxiliary
 - 3.3.2.1. Pig Roast is still planned for Saturday Oct 1st. She's asked for volunteers. Dave Primmer will handle the roasting again.

- 3.3.2.2. Mary expects fewer donations this year due to the unknown status of businesses in the community. Please share ideas with Mary who is happy to follow up.
- 3.3.2.3. GGAC voted to increase their budget since food costs are going up, to ensure they are prepared to support the FFs.
- 4. Old Business: none
- 5. New Business
 - 5.1. Oaths of Office – New Board Members
 - 5.1.1. Met on Tues with election officials to certify the election.
 - 5.1.2. Sheila explained the process, highlighting the following: 809 ballots were mailed. 18 were unused (they print extra). Total delivered and not cast: 478. 330 ballots were cast and returned. Of the 330, Steve Green received 116 votes, Niffy Ovuworie 128, Dave Primmer 112, Deb Curlee 160, Nick Meyer 93, John Arendt 90, Marith Cady Reheis 104. The new elected board members are Steve Green, Niffy Ovuworie, and Deb Curlee.
 - 5.1.2.1. Once the oaths are signed tonight, they send in the certification of the election along with the canvasser’s certificate which has to be filed in several places. The Attorney files in the district court, clerk of courts, assessor, etc. and the oaths of office, filed along with surety bond.
 - 5.1.2.2. Asked the 3 new board members to come up, take the oath of office.
 - 5.1.2.3. Deb Curlee read the oath and signed the Oath of Office.
 - 5.1.2.4. Steve Green read the oath and signed the Oath of Office.
 - 5.1.2.5. Niffy Ovuworie read the oath and signed the Oath of Office.
 - 5.2. Recognition of Outgoing Board Members
 - 5.2.1. Sheila recognized the outgoing board members.
 - 5.2.2. Dave Kinnard shared words of appreciation celebrating Dannel Agar, Paul Trost, and Sam Patton and the work they accomplished (see Dave’s [Letter of Gratitude](#)).
 - 5.2.3. Chief presented outgoing board members with tokens of appreciation.
 - 5.2.4. Sheila shared Paul's first stint on the board, noting he was responsible for the entire oversight and construction of station 82.
 - 5.2.5. [Paused for a picture-taking session.]
- 6. Public Comment
 - 6.1. DeeDee Ramstetter inquired about Fairmount’s fire danger gauge sign, They told her they received a grant for their sign. DeeDee asked the Chief if we could get a grant for signs. Chief noted that there’s discussion about those signs because fire danger fluctuates. The fire chiefs are discussing a better system. DeeDee thought it would be good for our community to have signs. We have money in the budget. Sheila thought we could have it at the entrance to the canyon. Chief noted we put in for a joint grant for LED signs but we didn’t get it.
 - 6.2. Sheila noted the group of kids at Centennial Cone burning pallet fires. Chief addressed this: 2 weeks ago, GGFPD was toned at 2:00 a.m. Neither Sheriff’s nor Park Rangers were available. Chief described the scene. He blocked the road with Fire apparatus, and found 20 to 30 16–18-year-olds burning pallets in the parking lot. They were part of an anti-drug/anti-alcohol group. Jeffco Sheriff finally arrived. Under 16 received tickets (\$1125.00) for burning during burn ban, illegal fire in open space park and curfew violation. The 18+ year olds received tickets (\$725) for open fire in the park and burning during fire ban (\$725). These were Aurora kids. Everyone under 18 had to call their parents for a ride or they would go to jail. They were clueless about the fire danger and received a stern lecture from the Chief.
 - 6.3. Julie Ramstetter noted that last Saturday was the worst she’s ever seen with the traffic around Mt. Galbraith Park. She noted it was bottle necked, and just crazy. She asked if the

Board/Chief consulted with JeffCo about parking along the side of the road. Chief did talk to JCOS, but it's the Sheriff who owns the road. As a citizen, she wants to know where to put the pressure. With the Sheriff. Julie understands it's not the FD's job. She was wondering if our FD was trying to push JeffCo to doing something. DeeDee noted that nothing will happen until someone gets hurt. Terri noted that JCOS reached out to the Grange and are considering a new parking area and a foot bridge. They reached out to the Grange 6 months ago and they are very aware of the parking/safety issues.

- 6.4. Sam Patton shared words of gratitude, appreciation and encouragement to the board he served with for the past 8 years and the new board members (see Sam's [statement](#)).
- 6.5. Steve Green noted there was an error in the IGA discovered during discussion at the April 2022 board meeting. The error was a discrepancy of the monthly payment of \$833 versus \$1000 to TLFPD. Board confirmed it was fixed and signed. As Steve remembers it, the IGA was not taken to completion, it was tabled. It was a monthly payment that, in error, got sent as one lump sum. Steve noted that was a big error and wondered why it was even being discussed at the last meeting only to find out now that the \$10,000 had been erroneously sent prior to board approval in January. Sheila corrected it was revised in April.
7. Adjournment
 - 7.1. Sheila reminded that we'll be electing officers at the June meeting and to consider what position you want.
 - 7.2. DeeDee asked about the venue for June. Station 82. Chief suggested having the June meeting at the Grange. Confirmed.
 - 7.3. Sheila Carlon adjourned the regular meeting at 8:10 pm. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board is on June 19, 2022, at the Grange.

END

Minutes approved by the Board on June 19, 2022.

TO: Dannel Agar, Sam Patton, Paul Trost

Thank you for your service on the GGFPD Board of Directors

Your generous, volunteer service on the Board was marked by consistent positive collaboration working toward improving the health and safety of the residents and visitors in our District, while maintaining careful stewardship of taxpayer resources.

During your combined tenures, the District was able to:

- Recruit and retain the longest-serving professional Fire Chief in the history of our District;
- Purchase, refurbish and equip a new fire Station 3 in the lower Canyon, helping to improve service to our high traffic zones and address the growing needs of Mount Galbraith Open Space Park;
- Replace aging fire apparatus and add an additional, high capacity engine;
- Replace out-of date firefighter personal protective equipment, radios and tools with top quality gear;
- Recruit, train and maintain a highly-certified cadre of volunteer firefighters despite the major reductions in volunteer manpower seen nationally and regionally;
- Improve the Districts communication infrastructure with tower-based repeaters and VHF equipment;
- Dramatically lower the District's ISO rating, used by insurance companies to help determine property and casualty insurance rates, resulting in lower cost, more available insurance for many of our residents;
- Provide educational programs in wildland fire preparedness and first aid/cardiopulmonary resuscitation to the community;
- Co-sponsor and provide manpower for the Jeffco Slash Chipping weekends at the Grange, resulting in lower fuel burden for our high-risk wildland fire environment;
- Restore and maintain NFPA Firewise certification for the District, which recognizes the wildland fire prevention efforts of our community and also helps lower insurance rates for some residents;
- Promote and win electoral support to protect the District from the financial harms of the Colorado Gallagher amendment which adversely impacted many rural Colorado fire departments (the amendment has subsequently been repealed by the State);
- Identify illegal property tax mill levy increases incurred under prior District administrations and granted taxpayer credits to return the entire excess tax levied to our residents;
- Complete, pass and submit to the State two full financial audits after many years of no audit oversight;
- Formalize mutual aid agreements with neighboring fire departments that facilitate interagency cooperation to help with larger or more complex emergency incidents;
- Collaborate with adjacent Timberline Fire Protection District for joint firefighter training, certification maintenance and record keeping, that has helped attract a record number of recruits in our new shared basic fire academy;
- Support forward-looking discussions with neighboring Timberline District about future opportunities to improve emergency services and conserve public resources;
- Equip and staff GGFPD firefighter strike teams to assist our fellow Coloradans with fire emergencies throughout our region and across the state, while earning additional funding for the district and valuable experience for our firefighters;
- And finally, accomplish all the above while the Fire Department responded to a record number of emergencies and with no increase in mill levy!

In addition to this legacy of positive collaboration on the Board, we are grateful for your many individual contributions, which include:

Mr. Dannel Agar- a 15 year resident of the district, a financial professional and a retired firefighter with 11 years as an in-district volunteer, completed a four year term as member of the Board, served as Board Secretary, and Chaired our Pension committee, with one result being the identification of an opportunity to increase the pension support of previously retired FF at no cost to the district (but does not personally participate!)

Mr. Paul Trost- a 33 year resident of the district, retired wildland-certified firefighter with 3 years of fire service, a still active business owner and water quality expert, who volunteered for his second stint on the Board, totaling 7 years, and served most recently for two years as our Treasurer, working with our accountant to providing high level oversight of our District finances. He also served as Board liaison with the Grange, helping resolve the well water, drainage and access issues that the District inherited and had festered between the County and the Grange for over 30 years.

Mr. Sam Patton- a 10 year resident of the District, master electrician, and private business owner, a still very active volunteer firefighter for 6 years in our Department, and our current senior Board member, having served 8 years since 2014. He served as Board President from 2016-2020, providing the leadership and much of the leg work for many of the Board accomplishments outlined above, while serving as a Lieutenant on the Department, responsible for the operation of Station 1, supervising engine maintenance throughout the district, training as EMT and providing medical liaison with our directors at St. Anthony Hospital, and among our firefighters having the highest number of emergency calls responded to!

On behalf of a grateful Golden Gate Canyon Community, thank you and your families for your combined 20 years' service as firefighters and 19 years of service on the Golden Gate Fire Protection District Board of Directors.

Steve Green's response to Dave's letter:

Much of [this] is opinion, not facts or actual events. A considerable amount does not tell the true story and is biased, omitting the negative and only spinning to the positive. It completely ignores the controversial events that took place under these directors while on the board. I agree that they should be recognized for their service like all outgoing volunteers should, but going into such detail and selected events as written here while omitting many negatives from the perspective of the community and previous board members is "spin." For that reason I do not think this should be included in the minutes and **it should be labeled as the opinion** of the author or authors. This should not be posted with the minutes.

Sam Patton's comments at the 19 May 2022 Regular Board Meeting:

This will only take a few minutes

First, I would like to thank the board and all the board members I served with since 2014. Being a board member is a volunteer position and is a lot of work. So, to past board and current board members thank you for your time and thank you for putting up with me over the last 8 years. It has been an honor to represent Golden Gate Fire as a board member.

I think we have accomplished a lot of work in the last 8 years including acquisition of a new brush truck, adding a new fire station, preparing to remodel another one, and hiring a quality fire chief. The main function of this board is to ensure the health of the fire department and make sure the fire department has the budget and resources needed to effectively serve the community residents and visitors. This board serves the community and the fire fighters. To the current/new board I will let you know, as a fire fighter, that we have a good department in place. We have good fire fighters, and we have a good fire chief. I realize there are some people, including some on this new board, who may not agree with Chief DiFeo's decisions, but Chief DiFeo is doing everything for the benefit of his fire fighters and this community. Chief brings a lot of qualities and experience that Golden Gate Fire needs. He is a highly qualified fire chief and has helped put Golden Gate Fire on the map. An example of this experience happened recently when we had a structure fire on a red flag warning day with dry and windy conditions. Chief DiFeo was able to call recourses from several other districts and also started ordering the correct air support before even arriving on scene in case the fire got out of hand. This is experience that no one else on this department has and this is experience that Golden Gate must have.

Chief DiFeo is good for this department and these fire fighters, don't screw it up for us.

As far as the future of this department: as we have all heard a lot of news lately regarding our fire fighters, it is a constant struggle to maintain an all-volunteer fire department. This will not change; it will be a constant effort of this department (and all departments across the US) to maintain an adequate, well-trained staff. I realize there is a lot of passion when it comes to Golden Gate Fire due to the history that many of you know of. But to think that anyone who calls 911 during their emergency, resident or not, cares about the history or how you feel about other departments is quite foolish. And I am sure that anyone sitting here that calls 911 in the future will not care who shows up, just that someone shows up to help them.

These fire fighters are all volunteers. Which means they do all this training, call response, care for stations and equipment on their own time and mostly at their own cost. We should all be grateful for their dedication to this department. Despite what the board does, or anyone else here who complains about what the Chief or the board decides, these are the people who jump out of bed at 2am and drive to the fire station, in all weather conditions, in order to get to the person having a medical emergency or trying to get to fire as fast as they can so it doesn't spread and burn down this district. These volunteer fire fighters save lives.

Again, thank you the honor of being on this board and thank you for this time tonight. Good luck!

Steve Green's response to Sam's letter: Again this should be labeled as opinion and has no place in the minutes. It should not be posted with the minutes either.