



# GOLDEN GATE

## Fire Protection District

P.O. Box 843

Golden, CO 80402-0483

(303) 279-3538

[www.goldengatefire.org](http://www.goldengatefire.org)

### Golden Gate Fire Protection District

#### Meeting Minutes

21 July 2022

1. Preliminary
  - 1.1. Location/Call to order: Deb Curlee called to order the regular meeting of the GGFPD Board at 7:02pm at Station 81, 32360 Robinson Hill Rd, Golden.
  - 1.2. Welcome audience.
  - 1.3. Pledge of Allegiance
  - 1.4. Roll call indicated a quorum was present with Sheila Carlon, Dave Kinnard, Steve Green Niffy Ovuworie. Chief DiFeo was present.
  - 1.5. Additions and Deletions to the Agenda: add 5.4 New Business - SDA conference, add 4.4 Old Business - Station 81 Remodel. Public comment moved to 4.5.
  - 1.6. Conflicts of Interest: none
2. Approval of June 2022 Meeting Minutes: **Motion #1** by Niffy Ovuworie. 2nd by Dave Kinnard. Deb noted that Admin did an outstanding job on the minutes. Discussion: Dave noted we covered philosophy last time, adding that a one-page format is his preference rather than the 11 page transcript format. Vote: 5 yes. **Motion passes.**
3. Reports
  - 3.1. Treasurer's Report
    - 3.1.1. See <https://www.goldengatefire.org/minutes-and-financials/> for report.
    - 3.1.2. Open issues/summary of discussion:
      - 3.1.2.1. Discussion on mail situation, physical vs. PO Box address. Official business address is the PO Box primarily due to the issues with the physical address.
      - 3.1.2.2. Sheila asked if we needed to follow up on our audit exemption since we haven't heard anything. Dave said we are covered by statute, but will follow up to see if he can get a status update.
      - 3.1.2.3. Deb asked if an audit could be done anytime even if we have the exemption for the year. Dave said the auditor usually picks the time frame. Typically, it is budgeted for the following year, noting an audit is not in our current budget.
      - 3.1.2.4. Dave noted Steve's request to receive copies of bank, checking, and credit card statements. Steve corrected that he would like to look at them, not necessarily receive them. Dave wanted to move to make available for review a PDF in email to Steve and anyone else who would like to see hardcopies of our account statements. Niffy made a point of clarification asking if the statements are imported into QB. Dave clarified that they are reconciled against them, explaining they are reconciled through QB against the bank statements. Niffy asked if we get any benefit from looking at the actual statements vs. the treasurer reconciling accounts per the reports presented to the Board. Steve noted that sometimes items are categorized differently which don't tell the story. Dave noted the bank statements have no useful info on expense category so we try to put substantial details in QB. Steve noted photos of the checks are available. Dave explained the

PDFs of the bank statements won't have photos of the check so if Steve has a photo request, we can generate it.

- 3.1.2.5. Niffy asked if there's an ability to auto export. No, Dave downloads them as part of the workflow.
- 3.1.2.6. **Motion #2** by Dave Kinnard to share account statements. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Niffy Ovuworie. Vote: 5 yes. **Motion passes.**
- 3.1.2.7. Deb asked about publishing financial reports 2 weeks prior to the board meeting. Sheila wondered if it would be current/reflective enough due to when statements become available.
- 3.1.2.8. Deb asked if the minutes could be published within the first week.
- 3.1.2.9. Damian noted the question from last month about the credit card, right now, the revised one so its correct now. Dave noted that the current report is old data and the card statements now correlate with our financial position statement. That's what you should see on the balance sheet.
- 3.1.2.10. Steve would like to see the breakdown, nothing complicated. Dave agreed and understood wanting to see more detail about a purchase. He explained about the categories in QB and how they are easily viewed in just one click.
- 3.1.2.11. **Motion #3** by Niffy Ovuworie to post meeting minutes one week following a board meeting and financial reports 10 days prior to the next board meeting. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Deb Curlee. Discussion: Dave suggested 10 days after closing. Sam Patton noted that the budget meeting is on the first Thursday in October. Board decided to table this to see what's reasonable. Dave prefers to hold this to a standard. Vote: 5 yes. **Motion passes.**

### 3.2. Chief's Report

3.2.1. See <https://www.goldengatefire.org/minutes-and-financials/> for report.

3.2.2. Open issues/summary of discussion:

- 3.2.2.1. Medical Director interviews ongoing between GFD, FFD, GGFPD, TFPD. Chief noted the hospital pays them to be our outreach.
- 3.2.2.2. Regarding the stations' security cameras, due to lack of FF availability to help install cameras, Chief said his company would do it for approximately \$50/hr, noting others would charge \$75/hr. Steve asked if there were other bids. Deb's concern was what was covered and the actual cost. Steve noted that the close relationship may cause some concern and would look bad. Niffy noted the perception of conflict of interest and the board paying the Chief to do this. He thinks that it would be better to get some quotes. Steve noted the shortage of help everywhere.
- 3.2.2.3. Deb asked if we have procedures for when accidents happen (to GGFPD directly). Is there a police report? It was noted that for both accidents, the cops were on accident alert so they couldn't respond. Sheila noted that one of the residents had damage to their property and no police reports were filed for any of them. Chief explained that info and documentation were exchanged and noted in the Call Report. Deb asked if it's better to turn it over to insurance so there's no liability. Dave explained the situation with the guy that hit the Brush. Based on his impression, he seemed honest and able to come up with the amount.
- 3.2.2.4. Deb asked if Chief was comfortable with the way accidents are handled by our insurance. Gerrit Verschuur spoke up stating any damage over \$1K must be reported in 60 days. Gerrit also asked what our SOP states in the event a fire apparatus is involved in an accident. Niffy noted you can call the police after the

fact and Chief noted you may be able to do it online. He will investigate this so it's more standardized.

- 3.2.2.5. Chief will research billing for the deployment for one of our FFs.
- 3.2.2.6. Discussion on fire signs. Deb inquired about fire ban signs at the station. Chief explained the quotes he received are for 3 fire danger signs. Steve wanted to know who would change the arrows on them. Deb knows a volunteer who could be responsible for changing them. Chief noted keeping signs current is an issue and that the fire chiefs discussed this with different districts reporting different statuses on the same day. Steve got a bid from First Signs for 4x4 signs that were a little cheaper. Steve will send a copy to Chief, noting \$100 seems cheap. They are 2mm in thickness. Deb will sort out all the signs and thanked Chief for the effort.
- 3.2.2.7. Chief thanked Gerrit for mowing the station twice. Dave noted that Paul Prue mowed station 81. Gerrit also mowed the station with Paul.
- 3.2.2.8. Niffy inquired about the fire meetings, notifications and minutes.
- 3.2.2.9. Steve raised the issue that after last month's meeting, Chief wrote to the board members (paraphrasing) he didn't need board members getting involved in his job. Steve pointed out they contribute to policy explaining that he participates in fire marshal meetings. For example, when Charlie Bartel was looking for standards for mountain roads, Steve noted some of those standards were impossible to meet and they were subsequently changed. Steve stated he was adding valuable, policy related input to those meetings. We are making suggestions which are open to public comment. Chief confirmed the public has an opportunity to provide comment. Niffy noted we shouldn't get hung up on who is making policy. His concern was representation and the perception that what is being advocated is the board and community position and board business. Niffy cautioned on the principle of acting in an official capacity, representing the district vs. representing the district as an employee. Steve respectfully disagreed. They are making policy. It was clarified that Chief is not making policy. He is a subject matter expert. Niffy made a **motion (#4)** to table this discussion about whether you are making policy or not. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Sheila to close it. Deb wants more detail on each of these meetings. Chief will send them a summary of what was discussed.
- 3.2.2.10. Steve inquired about a policy for chaining the trucks, referencing the accident one of the rigs got into. Chief explained chaining the rigs depends on road conditions. Referencing GGFPD's accident, in this situation, JeffCo had not plowed our district roads. Sam Patton explained the situation and reasoning not to chain up. Steve noted that we care about the FFs which is why he asked about policy and how we can avoid that in the future. Sheila noted that after the accident, JeffCo did plow more quickly following storms.
- 3.2.2.11. Steve asked Chief if he agreed with the decisions of the Fire Marshalls. Was it unanimous or was there dissension? Chief noted it's usually unanimous, and if it's not, it's up to the county anyway. Steve noted the big disparity between metro and mountains, Chief agreed but this is based on where the WUI starts.
- 3.2.2.12. Steve inquired about the DOLA grant. What are your goals? Niffy explained that he and Deb toured with the Chief, whose goal is to put shift quarters here, explaining that probationary FFs need an engineer to drive the rigs so they can go on calls. Steve noted he wasn't informed enough and didn't get a tour. Deb noted it's on the agenda later and moved the discussion on.

### 3.3. Community Organization Reports

### 3.3.1. Auxiliary

- 3.3.1.1. DeeDee Ramstetter noted the Pig Roast is scheduled for Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>. They are seeking donations.
- 3.3.1.2. DeeDee asked Dave about the beds/bedding at station 82. Chief will look into GGAC's reimbursement of the beds.
- 3.3.1.3. DeeDee asked if the Chief had looked into grants for the signs. Chief researched the Forest Service which didn't have any grants as well as the open grant list which also had nothing for signs. Niffy asked if we should wait or buy now and then apply for a grant. Chief will continue to research this.
- 3.3.1.4. Chief noted the FD is working through their inventory and will likely reach out to GGAC with requests.
- 3.3.1.5. DeeDee noted the crest/seal at Station 82 (that the GGAC hung), and to expect the other stations will soon have one in a prominent location where the community can see it.

### 3.3.2. Grange

- 3.3.2.1. Terri Costeldia noted the Rummage Sale will be August 7<sup>th</sup>.

### 3.4. Public Comment:

- 3.4.1. Gerrit Vershuur called for the Chief's immediate resignation stating that he's not doing his job. Gerrit asked the Chief if it was true that he discussed a walkout of firefighters if things did not go the Chief's way. The Chief denied ever having said that. Gerrit noted they are old rivals, but the buck stops with the Chief. Gerrit noted the maintenance at the stations is appalling, and ultimately believes the Chief is dangerous. He explained how he went to station 82 to see if the generator kicked in during the power outage. The bay doors did not open and doubted that any of the FFs would know what to do. Additionally, he noted 1) having a fire chief without an assistant fire chief means Damian is handling too much. "Damian is everything." There's nothing for people to take pride in their fire department. It hurts morale. No FD is run this way. "If anything happened to you, we have no discernable line of continuity." Chief tried to explain chain of command but Gerrit interrupted that we need an assistant fire chief. Gerrit listed more complaints. Chief explained we don't have time to do everything and Gerrit responded that it was because Chief was doing too much.
- 3.4.2. Steve explained that a long time GGFPD FF asked to meet with him this week and went to his house expressing his frustrations.
- 3.4.3. Patty Neer expressed her frustrations that station 82 is not functioning. She has no idea who's in charge and stated her concern that district 2 is not covered. Patty asked when the last time there was a shift worker at station 82. 2 days ago. Chief explained why it might look like no one was at station 82 with the staging of the Brush at Station 83 so FFs could pick up the brush and then park it in the bay. Patty questioned why no one was living at the station. She felt that the district 2 folks are left high and dry. Chief explained the situation has changed over the years..Several FFs used to live in district 2 but have retired. We used to have a resident FF but his work and personal situation changed and he resigned. Chief explained the requirements and qualifications a resident FF needs to live there. Chief has no control over these things. Patty insisted they are not covered and yet there's talk about putting quarter million into remodeling station 81. Chief explained that the plan is not to have everyone at Station 81, rather to have experienced FFs/Engineers (all who live on the district 1 side) available to take the probationary and rookie FFs on calls. Dave Kinnard asked Patty what she wanted to see. Patty said they never see anyone at the station. Sam Patton explained that the Brush gets

picked up and parked in the bay so often it looks like no one is there. It was explained that our FFs have full time jobs; they shift overnight; they do their shifts, but it's difficult.

3.4.4. John Arendt noted Steve Green's position that extended response times were acceptable because we don't want to pay.

3.4.5. Terri Costeldia talked about the stations' conditions and how frustrated she was by what she saw. She noted the flag was a point of community pride. She noted the mower was stolen from station 82, and asked what was being done for mowing? Burning the grass off, a controlled burn, was not an option. Patty Neer noted past wildland fire which started from a controlled burn. Chief explained how controlled burns work. DeeDee noted she's aware of how they work but the problem comes from building maintenance, noting that the community stepped up to help.

3.4.6. Steve noted wildland fires which started as a controlled burn had some deaths. No one says controlled anymore; it's now a prescribed burn. His advice: just mow it.

#### 4. Old business:

##### 4.1. Slash

###### 4.1.1. Wildland Fire Prevention Report from Dave Kinnard, Coordinator

4.1.1.1. Jefferson County has recently announced it will no longer support the summer slash collection event the District has co-sponsored at the Grange in prior years with support from the Grange and Auxiliary. In an effort to improve the county-wide cost-effectiveness of the slash collection program, Jeffco has increased the number of collection days from 2 to 4 days a week but has reduced the number of collection sites. The heavily subsidized cost for slash drop-off will remain \$20 for 162 cubic feet of slash, or roughly the amount carried by an 8x5 ft truck bed or trailer bed loaded to 4 feet high, at seven sites in the County.

4.1.1.2. We have investigated the possibility of assuming sole financial responsibility for continuing a slash collection event. In discussions with the vendor who has supported us in the past, as well as a local canyon-based vendor, the cost to unload slash, chip on-site, reload and transport the biomass to the Jeffco collection center would exceed \$60-80 per load, depending on the amount of volunteer manpower employed. Based on prior experience, with 156 loads recorded in 2021, the cost to the district if we maintained a \$20 fee would be over \$9000. In view of the higher cost and short planning time frame, the District will not be able to facilitate a slash event in-canyon this summer.

4.1.1.3. Alternative strategies were discussed. Steve Green presented research on the cost of purchasing a high capacity used-chipper with costs ranging from \$35-80,000. The role of broad-based community lobbying with the county commissioners to re-establish the Grange site in future years was considered. The risk for untrained volunteers handling chipper operations was recognized. Information on this year's sites and dates for Jeffco slash collection may be accessed on-line at [www.jeffco.us/slash](http://www.jeffco.us/slash). Dave will forward this information to Niffy for posting on our website.

4.1.1.4. Over the past 5 years, the Board Wildland Fire Prevention Coordinator has worked with the Fire Department to achieve and maintain our community NFPA Firewise certification, planned community education events and coordinated our slash collection efforts with the Grange and Auxiliary. Dave announced he is stepping down from this role and solicited interest and new initiatives from other members of the Board.

- 4.1.2. Deb inquired about dumping slash at the bottom of the hill. It was explained the city of Golden manages that and only when there's a major event to clean up the city.
- 4.1.3. DeeDee asked if the community/residents got together and petitioned the county if that would make a difference. Dave thought it a great idea to exert some political force. Having more than 800 signatures might make a difference.
- 4.2. Tender at Timberline station 8.
  - 4.2.1. Deb raised her concern that our tender is housed out of district in TFPD's Station and affecting our ISO rating. Chief referenced his email, explaining that moving the tender there does not affect our ISO rating. In reality, it should not be driven by anyone. It's dangerous. We keep it for one reason, keeping it full of 3000 gallons meets our ISO rating which does not require a tender to be in a certain location. This tender will never be used and we rely on auto aid when we need more water. Niffy asked if we have it in writing. What he understands is that it's only on paper to help our ISO. We don't need it because we have auto aid, and it doesn't matter where it sits. Sam Patton explained the benefit of having the vehicle inside and plugged in, noting past years when it sat outside and had to get dumped every winter, so the lines didn't freeze and rupture. Steve asked what was wrong with it: it's old, you're carrying 3000 gal. of water with bad brakes—it will never be used on a call. It's not fixable. DeeDee asked why we can't just get rid of it. Sam explained that rig is strictly for an ISO rating. DeeDee asked about tanks/cisterns but those are mostly private and not for the fire department.
  - 4.2.2. Terri Costeldia reported to the board that there were some litigation issues with TFPD Station 8 and the Green Foundation. She feels we should not be part of that, noting the Green Foundation is not happy that we have our tender there. Niffy asked if there's another spot we can put this tender. He would like to avoid nonsense associated with that station. Chief explained there is no nonsense. Steve wanted to make a motion of who wants to leave it there or we table it as we are wasting a lot of time on this. Niffy asked for Chief's recommendation. Chief feels like it's in a good spot. Deb asked Terri to keep everyone up to date. Niffy asked if they wanted us to move it. Deb would like to pursue this further and doesn't want it to become an issue with the Green Foundation.
- 4.3. Website
  - 4.3.1. Niffy needs access to the website. Admin will set it up.
- 4.4. Remodel of Station 81
  - 4.4.1. Deb explained that because 3 board members are new, they have not had a chance to address this. Having toured this station, she feels it has not been maintained and can be renovated for a lot less money. Deb personally felt the priority should be getting a resident at station 82. Steve noted that station 82 is already situated to have a resident but since he didn't get a tour, he's not ready to vote on this. Sheila noted this has been talked about for several years. Station 81 is the oldest station and in the worst shape. Since all the in-district FFs live here, we need someone to shift here because rookie FFs need to team up with experienced FFs. 50% of the calls are run out of station 81, 25% out of station 82, 25% out of station 83. She explained that a couple years ago, money was earmarked and a committee formed to look at plans. Then the election happened and movement stalled. Sheila felt there's no reason we can't remodel station 81 *and* get a resident FF for station 82. Chief noted the facilities grant opens 1 Aug and closes 30 Aug. Niffy asked if it's already budgeted. (Niffy stepped away to take an urgent call.)
  - 4.4.2. Mike Czyzewski questioned if we have the original architectural plans from Ramstetter. He was involved in the original construction and noted the north wall is framed for a door and this whole area was framed so that we could pop the roof off and

build up. (Niffy returned at 21:19.) Chief explained that the goal is to turn it into a livable fire house. Niffy asked if FFs could shift from their home. Chief explained the 2 different programs. The shift program is for out of district FFs. Niffy asked if there was a way to solve this without spending a quarter million. Marith Reheis explained the reason there are so many unqualified drivers is because turnover is so high, noting we'll always have this problem. Niffy asked what it takes to get everyone qualified. 50 hrs on the brush, 100 hrs on the engine. Chief explained the challenge is that an experienced FF has to spend the time to train the new FFs on top of constant turnover; everyone only has so much time. Dave explained Sheila's point as a tactical advantage: this is a consequence of numbers being low, once FFs get qualified, they move to paid positions which is why, to Marith's point, we have high turnover. Small, rural FDs are collapsing and what we do here can help us recruit/retain FFs, noting the shift program has met with success. Steve mentioned some alternative solutions like the FPPA pension program. Sam Patton was doubtful a \$300 monthly check for life would retain FFs and felt the data doesn't support this. Deb doesn't feel comfortable making a decision. Chief explained he's asking for approval to apply for the grant for this purpose.

- 4.4.3. **Motion #5** by Niffy Ovuworie to allow Chief to apply for a grant. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Sheila Carlon. Discussion: Steve wanted to know the negative aspects. Niffy called a point of order that a call for a vote was out. Vote: 3 yes, 2 abstentions. **Motion passes**. Dave asked if there was a downside to it getting awarded. Niffy wanted to know if we have an obligation. Chief will double check. Niffy's concern is they must trust that the previous board did their due diligence. Dave asked if we needed professional help and how much it would cost. Chief has employed a grant writer in the past who charges a couple grand.

## 5. New Business

### 5.1. Resident FF for station 82.

- 5.1.1. Deb was concerned it was never advertised. Chief corrected it was advertised and everyone was given an opportunity to apply. Traditionally we haven't gone outside of the district. He's not opposed to it but the resident must have certifications. However, since most of our calls are medical, he might consider having an EMT. Chief noted the resident is often first on scene, so they need to know every aspect of the job. Deb asked about the vetting process. Chief can write up something and advertise outside our district. Chief noted that TFPD has the same program and they have a hard time as well. Niffy asked if the program was like ROTC which pays for everything, but you owe 6 years. This could be a 4-year contract. Someone explained that the attorneys already said that kind of contract doesn't stand up in court. Sam Patton noted that a resident FF is not there 24/7. They are only required to be there 72 hours a month and 24 hours on the weekend. That's GGFPD policy. Deb asked that a Station 82 resident become a priority.

### 5.2. August Board Meeting Location

- 5.2.1. Board unanimously agreed to meet at Station 82 next month.

### 5.3. August Pension Board meeting will be held at Station 82 at 6:30pm

### 5.4. Additional discussions (not on the agenda)

- 5.4.1. Deb addressed another concern raised by Steve that the application for volunteers on our website only has TFPD's name on the application. If someone looks at the website application the only name is Chief Bondus. Deb would like Chief DiFeo's name on it. Chief noted the 4 people we brought on, their applications came to Chief, however, if it's contentious, Niffy can add Chief's name on the website. Niffy's concern was that the recruits are all going to TFPD which was not true.

- 5.4.2. Deb pointed out another of Steve's concerns: that part of the recruitment effort was sending out a newsletter from Timberline. She felt this board needs to see it before it goes out to ensure we are part of the process. The last communication was a post card. Niffy noted we have a certain amount of money we need to spend. Since the post cards weren't successful, next attempt is having a booth at the Gilpin county fair. Steve felt it was inappropriate that another FD is managing our recruitment efforts, stating we need to be part of the review process.
- 5.4.3. Sheila announced the SDA's annual conference will be 15-17 August in Keystone, noting the conference is good, especially for new people. Deb noted there's a virtual option. There is a fee but it gives you access to the presentations.
6. Public comment
- 6.1. Linda Searcy wanted to follow up on her previous board inquiry about the Ballot Issue A. Deb replied that she did not get an answer. Dave wondered if it's possible to reach out to the lawyer who wrote it. We can reach out to Micky, noting the attorneys don't do anything for free. Steve inquired if it's null and void why we can't rescind it. You can't rescind a vote. Niffy suggested putting it on the next ballot. But it was noted you can't tack it on the next ballot. Steve corrected, if Gallagher was rescinded statewide and the Ballot Issue A was tied to Gallagher Amendment then the Ballot Issue A vote is null and void. It was also said that to rescind Ballot Issue A requires a new and expensive voting process.
- 6.2. John Arendt presented a question from a group of neighbors who live in an area that's farthest from the fire stations on new members' thoughts, plans or initial ideas on recruitment and retention since it's been a couple of months. John intimated that each new board member stated that their top priority would be firefighter recruitment and retention during the community meeting for board nominees and requested an update on their progress. New members responded as follows: Steve replied he is looking into the FPPA. Deb does not remember specifically that this was part of her campaign. She said she pushed for more community involvement; and Niffy elected not to entertain a false premise. Terri noted this question was unfair since they just took over last month.
7. Adjournment
- 7.1. Deb Curlee adjourned the meeting at 9:51 pm. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board is on August 18, 2022 at 7:00 pm at Station 82.

END

Minutes approved by the Board on August 18, 2022.