

Battle Creek Fire Protection District

Minutes for Regular Meeting
August 20, 2025

There being a quorum, the regular meeting of the Battle Creek Fire Protection District was called to order by President Esposti on August 20, 2025 at 6:31 PM at the Hayward Fire Hall with directors Leo Van Sambeek, Levi Van Sambeek, Jack Bradt and Stuart Adrian; additionally, Fire Chief Dale Gadbois, and Administrator Garrett Dixon were in attendance, along with firefighters Seth Knutson, Cliff Lemme and Joe Chandler.

Secretary Report

All members having previously received and read the minutes from the May 13, 2025 regular meeting, **a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes** was made by Leo and seconded by Levi, motion passed. A second **motion to approve the minutes as presented with an editorial correction as noted before the meeting** was made by Leo and seconded by Levi, motion passed.

Treasurers Report

As of August 20, 2025 the District's Total Assets were \$360,831.40, comprised of the following; District Deposit Accounts of \$166,034.33, District Investment Accounts of \$164,099.78, and Fire Department Checking Account Balance of \$30,697.29. Levi reviewed the Fire Department Monthly Summary, noting that the District transferred additional funds to the Fire Department in July to cover the annual insurance premium of approximately \$41,000. The payment to the insurance company was made in August and will show in the next months Monthly Summary. The current Fire Department Checking Account Balance reflects this payment already clearing the bank. We have used 60% of the budget YTD. **A motion to approve the Financial Report** was made by Stuart and seconded by Leo, motion passed.

Old Business

A) Plan for USDA Loan Repayment

Discussion on following through on the motion from the May 13 meeting to cash out the two USDA CD's and use cash from the Money Market Savings to payoff the loan mid September. The current payoff amount is \$69,972. Leo will determine if there are any penalties for cashing in the low interest CD early, and if so, exercise the option of taking payment out of the District checking account, then when the low interest CD matures, placing those funds into the checking account.

B) Report on possible Wildland Fire Safer Grants

In response to a question from the public at the May 13 meeting, Dale and Garrett provided additional information on the type and availability of federal grant funding.

C) Social Media strategy for communicating with the public

Stuart suggested building a website, and gave some cost estimates for setting up and maintaining the site. Only two other Departments in Pennington County currently have websites, North Haines and Rapid Valley. The Department would rather have a website as opposed to Facebook, as is the current situation. **A motion to have Stuart present a proposal with cost estimates** was made by Leo, seconded by Levi, motion passed.

New Business

A). Attorney for District

Further discussion on having an attorney on retainer. It was decided not to place an attorney on retainer.

B) Budget Proposal

Dale outlined the 2026 budget proposal. The Department is proposing a 5% pay increase for FTE. The Department is also looking at paying an insurance incentive to help employees purchase health insurance on their own. This incentive would add \$25,200 to the budget for 7 FTE. The Department would pay \$300/month to each FTE to be used for health insurance. The Department is also looking to see if employees could be covered under the Pennington County insurance program. How the incentive would be paid has not yet been determined.

The budget proposal includes a new category for vehicle replacement under Capital Outlay in an amount of \$50,000. Garrett explained the Apparatus Replacement Plan. Garrett will make some adjustments to the numbers and categories in the proposed budget. As the opt out request needs to be finalized by October 1, the Departments proposed budget will be further discussed at another meeting on September 17.

There was confusion in regard to the 2026 Tax Levy Request received from Custer County, which identified \$486,327.11 tax dollars available, which is the same amount as the 2025 tax dollars available. Garrett will call Custer County to resolve the discrepancy.

C) Training position to deal with Task Books

Stuart was going to propose a part time position dedicated to helping fire fighters complete their task books, but in light of the preceding budget discussion, instead asked Garrett what could be done to facilitate getting books completed. Garrett said

that training sessions for some of the more difficult to complete tasks are provided annually. Dale said the best opportunity to get tasks signed off on was to be on an out of state fire for a couple of weeks.

D) Skyline Fire

Discussion on letter received from resident contesting the billing for Skyline Fire. Levi will ask the letter writer for documentation of any insurance claims that they may have submitted for the fire.

E) Eastern Custer County Ambulance Service

Leo gave an update on the boundaries being proposed for the Eastern Custer County Ambulance Service. One proposal is to use the existing Battle Creek Fire District boundary minus the Keystone Ambulance District, and add the Folsom and Fairburn area. Another proposal is for the new district to include all of Eastern Custer County.

Items from the Fire Chief/Administrator

- One position vacant, currently being advertised
- Hermosa & Custer parades
- MDA fill the boot fundraiser in Keystone, raised \$1300 for MDA
- Hose testing completed
- Pump & ground ladder testing in October
- ISO rating updates underway
- Calls for service YTD 205
- Tender support on two fires in Southern Hills
- One rally fatality in Keystone
- Planning underway for 2026 Mt. Rushmore July 4

Additional Items

John reported that Pennington County has not yet allowed Jerry Reichert to realign his property lines within the Hill City Fire District, and that we have done all we can.

Brief discussion on whether or not Black Hills Energy Wildfire Mitigation Plan to shut down power lines will affect the District.

Move to adjourn by Jack, second by Leo, motion passed. Meeting adjourned 8:15 pm

Respectfully submitted Stuart Adrian

