

Mid Rogue Fire District Board Meeting: August 10, 2026

5:30 p.m. – Merlin Park Community Center
Live Streamed at www.youtube.com/@MidRogueFD

Rural Fire Protection District Attendance:

Directors Present: Tom McGowan – Via Zoom, Randy Benetti Sr., Ralph Weidling, Mark Jones

Members Absent: Vincent Ownbey (Excused)

Staff Present: Executive Director Phil Turnbull; Administrative Assistant Kassie Austin

Recorder: Kassie Austin

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. A quorum was established.

The board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Agenda

Director Weidling made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Benetti. Upon roll call: Director McGowan – Yes; Director Benetti – Yes; Director Weidling – Yes; Director Ownbey – excused; Director Jones – Yes. Motion carried 4-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

Director Benetti made a motion to approve the July 27, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. Director McGowan seconded the motion. Upon roll call: Director McGowan – Yes; Director Benetti – Yes; Director Weidling – Yes; Ownbey – excused; Director Jones – Yes. Motion carried 4-0.

4. Secretary/Treasurers Report

The Secretary/Treasurer reported \$198,233.74 in checking, \$1,000.00 in the payroll account, \$30,000 in the P-card account, and \$255.03 in savings, for a total of \$229,488.77 held at Evergreen Federal Bank. The Local Government Investment Pool balance was \$1,270,853.42, including \$10,617.55 in interest earned since July 1. Total District funds were reported at \$1,500,342.19. Since the board has been sworn in, the board has spent a total of \$95,332.00.

5. Sue Densmore Public Affairs Presentation

Sue Densmore provided a presentation regarding the district's future permanent tax-base effort and lessons learned from the prior fire-district campaign. Ms. Densmore discussed the advantages the district has today, including an established elected board and greater ability to define and communicate the district's intended service model before a measure is placed before voters. Ms. Densmore emphasized beginning public education well in advance of a campaign, identifying likely opposition and potential negative messaging, preparing responses to anticipated concerns, and clearly defining the amount and purpose of the proposed tax base. She recommended establishing the election timeline early and working backward from statutory and campaign deadlines. Ms. Densmore discussed the cost of obtaining her services for the district and it was estimated to be around \$1,500.00.

6. Executive Director Report

Executive Director Phil Turnbull presented a concept for potential alternative funding if a permanent tax base is unsuccessful. The initial concept involved companion ballot measures, with a permanent tax base as the primary measure and a voluntary membership/user-fee structure as a possible secondary option. Mr. Turnbull emphasized that the concept was preliminary, had not been reviewed by legal counsel, and was not being recommended as a replacement for a permanent tax base. The board discussed in-depth significant concerns regarding legal enforceability, collection procedures, administrative workload, voter confusion, equitable payment for services, and the district's all-hazards responsibilities. The board explained that a permanent tax base remains the district's primary funding objective. The Executive Director was directed to focus first on

developing the financial analysis needed to determine the appropriate tax rate and on public education regarding District services, funding needs, and the current Rural Metro subscription structure. Mr. Turnbull reported continued work toward obtaining the district's fire department identification number and completing required State Fire Marshal training. He also presented a concept for a volunteer support/liaison program that could assist at incidents and increase District visibility. The board supported exploring the concept through Friends of Mid Rogue or another volunteer-led structure so that staff time remains focused on the district's primary funding and planning objectives.

7. Public Comment

Fred Cohen, Merlin, addressed the board regarding the importance of establishing a fair and sustainable funding system in which all residents contribute to fire protection rather than relying on subscribers to carry the cost of service. He emphasized the need for the district to clearly explain who it is, what services it provides, how funding would be used, and why a permanent tax base is necessary.

8. New Business

a. Committee Reports

Staffing: Nothing to report.

Training: Nothing to report.

Communications: Nothing to report.

Policy: Nothing to report.

Prevention: Nothing to report.

Vehicle Acquisition: Nothing to report.

Standards of Coverage: This matter was discussed extensively under the Executive Director Report.

b. Public Affairs Firm Discussion and Selection

The board discussed the respective scopes and pricing of United Strategies and Consulting and Liz Loomis Public Affairs. Sue Densmore's potential future involvement was also discussed, with the board noting that her experience may be particularly valuable to Friends of Mid Rogue during a future campaign phase.

Director Weidling made and to select United Strategies and Consulting to provide public affairs services for the Mid Rogue Fire District. The motion was seconded by Director McGowan. Upon roll call: Director McGowan – Yes; Director Benetti – Yes; Director Weidling – Yes; Ownbey – excused; Director Jones – Yes. Motion carried 4-0. The Executive Director was authorized to move forward with preparation of the agreement.

9. Correspondence

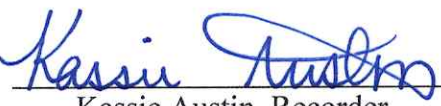
The board reviewed routine Evergreen Federal Bank statements and an additional invoice from Sorenson, Ransom & Ferguson.

10. Additional Matters of the Board

No additional matters were brought forward.

11. Adjournment

The board adjourned the meeting at 7:27 p.m. without objection.


Kassie Austin, Recorder

Mid Rogue Fire District Board Meeting: September 14, 2026

5:30 p.m. – Merlin Park Community Center

Live Streamed at www.youtube.com/@MidRogueFD

Rural Fire Protection District Attendance:

Directors Present: Randy Benetti Sr., Ralph Weidling, Mark Jones; Vincent Ownbey

Members Absent: Tom McGowan (Excused)

Staff Present: Executive Director Phil Turnbull; Administrative Assistant Kassie Austin

Recorder: Kassie Austin

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. A quorum was established.

The board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Agenda

Director Weidling made a motion to approve the September 14, 2026 agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Benetti. Upon roll call: Director McGowan – excused; Director Benetti – Yes; Director Weidling – Yes; Director Ownbey – excused/not yet present; Director Jones – Yes. Motion carried 3-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

Director Benetti made a motion to approve the August 10 meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Weidling. Upon roll call: Director McGowan – excused; Director Benetti – Yes; Director Weidling – Yes; Director Ownbey – excused/not yet present; Director Jones – Yes. Motion carried 3-0.

4. Secretary/Treasurers Report

The Secretary/Treasurer reported \$192,284.11 in checking, \$255.03 in savings, \$72,609 in the PERS account, and \$29,601.49 in the P-card account. The Local Government Investment Pool balance was \$1,493,720.14, excluding the most recent accrued interest. With estimated accrued interest, the LGIP balance was expected to be approximately \$1.499 million.

The board discussed moving the Treasurer's Report to the first meeting of each month to cover the prior month's activity. Staff will continue assisting the Treasurer with financial reporting and receipt reconciliation. The board also discussed timely completion of required year-end reporting.

Director Ownbey arrived during this agenda item.

5. United Strategies Report

Isis Thornton-Saunders presented the proposed public education and communications strategy. Phase One, anticipated to begin in October and continue through December, will focus on who Mid Rogue Fire District is, what services it provides, its history, and why the district matters. The board emphasized that messaging should describe the district as an all-risk, all-hazard fire district and include structure fires, motor vehicle accidents, rescue, hazardous materials response, wildland fire, and other emergency services.

Phase Two, beginning in January, will focus on long-term funding, longevity, and sustainability. Any future ballot-measure campaigning would be handled separately from the district through a political action committee. Proposed outreach methods include radio, direct mail, social media, print publications, community events, town halls, and earned media. Every Door Direct Mail was discussed as a potential option. Ms. Thornton-Saunders will revise the messaging and bring a Phase One budget to the next meeting. The anticipated launch date is October 1.