Mid Rogue Fire District Board Meeting: November 9, 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, Vincent Ownbey, Mark Jones
Members Absent at Roll Call: Tom McGowan (Excused; joined during the meeting)
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. Director McGowan joined the meeting after agenda item 3.
The board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Agenda

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

3. Approval of Minutes

Director Weidling made a motion approve the October 12, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Benetti. Upon roll call: Director McGowan – excused; Director Benetti – Yes; Director Weidling – Yes; Director Ownbey – Yes; Director Jones – Yes. Motion carried 4–0.

4. Treasury Report

The Treasurer reported fiscal year-to-date expenditures of $89,412.74 and incoming funds of $19,162.91, primarily interest from the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP). The Board discussed the likelihood of drawing on LGIP funds as expenditures exceed interest income.
The Treasurer reported balances of $124,561.31 in the district checking account; $10,514.55 in the PERS payroll account, $29,809.82 in the Ramp card account, and $2,755.04 in savings. The LGIP account has a balance is $1,284,973.55. All funds totaling $1,452,614.27.

5. Executive Director Report

Executive Director Turnbull reported that the Oregon State Fire Marshal's office expected to provide an update by the end of the week. The Rural Metro negotiating subcommittee received an initial service agreement draft and asked District legal counsel to prepare a draft reflecting the District's priorities. Executive Director Turnbull will follow up with counsel on timing. The membership database and the District's request regarding a name change remain part of the negotiations. The Fire Chiefs Association is expected to consider the mutual aid agreement later in November.
Phase One of the public education campaign is expected to resume following the election. Staff circulated the United Strategies report after the prior Board meeting was canceled. Staff reported that three Fireside Chats had been released and that a dispatcher interview was planned. Outreach includes an upcoming presentation to local real estate professionals and hosting the Chamber of Commerce Greeters on January 13, 2027. Turnbull asked directors to suggest community groups for presentations.
Recruitment continues for Friends of Mid Rogue Fire District and the associated political action committee. Turnbull is preparing a six-month strategic plan update for December, with Phase Two of public education as a priority. Staff is exploring homeowner insurance education as part of that work. The Board discussed the United

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Strategies advertising request and will have a United Strategies representative discuss the matter further at the next scheduled meeting.

6. Public Comment

No public comment was received.

7. Old Business

a. Review of Employee Benefit Packages

The Board reviewed Oregon Fire Chiefs Association (OFCA) and Special Districts Insurance Services (SDIS) options for employee benefits. The discussion covered medical, dental, vision, life and disability insurance, along with a possible health savings account contribution. Examples of quoted annual employee-plus-family premiums included $42,432 for OFCA Option 1, $37,380 for SDIS Blue PPO Option 2, and $33,960 for SDIS Red.

The Board discussed coverage tiers, employee plan choice, and using a fixed dollar cap or a percentage to determine the District contribution. Directors considered how the package would apply to current and future employees and discussed the Executive Director's existing medical benefit arrangement separately. The Board deferred a decision until the next meeting to review the options and obtain employee feedback. The presenter will confirm whether employees may choose among the plans presented and share the answer with the Board.

8. New Business

a. Committee Reports

Staffing was addressed under Old Business. There was no Training report, and the Policy Committee still needs to meet. Under Prevention, the Board discussed District participation in the Christmas parade with Rural Metro and representation at the November 14 planning meeting. Mr. Turnbull will follow up with Rural Metro Chief Nelson on possible District identification on a Rural Metro engine before the parade.

b. Mid Rogue Fire District Boundary Update

The Board reviewed the status of the Murphy boundary correction involving 81 properties and three other parcel corrections. District legal counsel will send the materials to the County, after which the County Surveyor can estimate the cost of updating the legal description. Counsel was asked to draft a letter to the County Commissioners confirming the requested Murphy correction. The Board will discuss payment once it receives the estimate. The boundary change will return to the County Commissioners for action.

c. OFDDA Conference Review

Attendees reviewed training on public meetings, committee notice, executive-session procedures, and defensible space ordinances. Directors discussed examples from Sisters and Ashland. Mr. Turnbull will follow up with the Oregon Division of Financial Regulation about a potential community presentation and explore incorporating homeowner insurance education into Phase Two. Turnbull also reported that the Special Districts Association of Oregon provided input on the Rural Metro contract process, which he forwarded to District legal counsel.

d. United Strategies Social Media Advertising Request

United Strategies requested that the District use its own purchasing card to pay Meta directly for Facebook advertising within the existing campaign budget. The Board discussed billing, spending controls, and reporting. The Board tabled the request until the next meeting so Isis Thornton-Saunders could present it and answer questions.

e. Board Order No. 2026-002

A motion was made and seconded to approve Board Order No. 2026-002 forming the Volunteer Services Unit as presented. Upon roll call: Director McGowan – Yes; Director Benetti – Yes; Director Weidling – Yes; Director Ownbey – Yes; Director Jones – Yes. Motion carried 5–0.

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f. Proposed Application for Volunteer Services

The Board reviewed the revised application, which describes the volunteer support roles. Staff reported that the background screening account and user agreements were in place and training was scheduled for November 10. The Board discussed criminal and driving-record checks as baseline screening for the volunteer roles.

The Board approved use of the Volunteer Services application without objection.

g. Signing Authority for the Executive Director

The Board tabled the item.

h. Volunteer Services Unit Guidelines and Policies

The volunteer guidelines remain in development. The Board identified the need for a volunteer policy and a travel reimbursement policy and form for employees and volunteers.

9. Correspondence

The Board reviewed the $790 OFDDA registration invoice, a legal invoice showing a $1,733 balance, a check from Rural Metro, bank statements, and an $8,050 invoice for the District mailers. Staff reported receipt of the palm cards and indicated that postage must be paid before the mailers are sent. The Board discussed whether the mailing would reach post office boxes and whether reduced postage options were available.

The Board discussed responding to questions posted on District social media, including questions about Rural Metro subscriptions. Staff will follow up with United Strategies about the outstanding question and coordination of responses.

10. Additional Matters of the Board

The Board discussed precinct-level voter turnout data and its potential use in planning public education outreach. United Strategies was looking into the availability of the data.

11. Adjournment

The Board adjourned at approximately 7:08 p.m. without objection.

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Kassie Austin, Recorder

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MID ROGUE FIRE DISTRICT **BOARD PROGRESS REPORT - 11/23/2026**



	DESCRIPTION	NOTES	Oct wk 4	Nov wk 1	Nov wk 2	Nov wk 3	Nov wk 4	Dec wk 1	Dec wk 2	Dec wk 3	Dec wk 4	Jan wk 1	Jan wk 2
1	**Service Contract Negotiations**												
	RMF Negotiations	In Progress											
	MRFD Draft												
	Pro-Forma Budget Committee	On Standby											
1	**Public Education (Phase 1 & 2)**												
	Media *(all forms)*	Ongoing											
	Public Presentations	Scheduling											
	Stakeholder Visits	*Ongoing*											
	Fireside Chats	In Progress											
2	**MRFD Vol Support Unit**												
	General Update												
	GIS assistance	Ian Kassab											
	MISC												
	Mutual Aid Agreement	17-Nov											
	Homeowner Insurance Project	Active											
	Updated Strategic Plan	Covers Through June 30, 2027											
1	**OSFM FDID**												
	Email exchanges												

TASKS ON HOLD	MILES	
7251 RADIO ID / VIN: 19-23820	**100660 (as of 11.03.26)**	**101649 (as of 11.20.26)**

MID ROGUE FIRE DISTRICT **2026 STRATEGIC PLAN**



DESCRIPTION	START DATE	TIME	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26	Oct-26	Nov-26	Dec-26
First Responders & Gov Leaders	11-May	2 Mo.								
Form Friends of MRFD	June	2 Mo.								
Position Papers	June	3 Mo.								
Standards of Cover	June	3 Mo.								
Civic & Business Organizations	June	5 Mo.								
RMF Contract	Sept	2 Mo.								
Pro-Forma Budget	Oct	2 Mo.								
Long-Term Plan	Nov	2 Mo.								
Public Education	Nov	7 Mo.								
2027 Strategic Plan	Dec	1 Mo.								