RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

West Metro Fire Protection District
Board of Directors Special Meeting – Study Session
Thursday, July 9, 2026

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting – study session of the West Metro Fire Protection District board of directors was called to order by President Bill Clayton at 6:00 p.m. This meeting was held in accordance with the applicable statutes of the state of Colorado, at West Metro Fire Protection District's Administration, 433 S. Allison Parkway, Lakewood, Colorado.

II. ROLL CALL

President Bill Clayton	Present
Vice President Carolyn Wolfrum	Present
Secretary Don Sherman	Present
Treasurer Amira Watters	Present
Director Mike Williams	Present
Director Joe Zimmermann	Present
Director Steven Haire	Present

Also present were Fire Chief Jeremy Metz; Deputy Chief Gary Armstrong; Deputy Chief Steve Aseltine; Deputy Chief Mike Kirkpatrick; Ms. Adele Reester, Esq.; Captain Mike Mulcahy representing IAFF Local #1309; Mr. Bruk Mulaw; and, Ms. Jennifer Wheaton as recording secretary.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: It was moved by Don Sherman and seconded by Carolyn Wolfrum to approve the agenda of the special meeting – study session of the board of directors dated July 9, 2026, as amended to move agenda item VI – Polling to an earlier point in the meeting, after agenda item IV – 2025 Financial Audit Presentation. The motion was voted upon and carried.

IV. 2025 FINANCIAL AUDIT PRESENTATION – Chris Daues and Max Haberkorn, RubinBrown

Auditors Mr. Chris Daues and Mr. Max Haberkorn from RubinBrown provided auditor communications to the board highlighting viewpoints and results of their external audit engagements for the year 2025. The auditors issued an unqualified (clean) opinion on the District's 2025 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, noting strong overall stewardship and no material weaknesses. Despite a per capita revenue dip from property tax reductions, through good forecasting, strategic planning, management, and oversight, the District achieved a budgetary surplus. Furthermore, pension plans are well-funded, and liabilities are decreasing with the District's general obligation bond scheduled to be fully paid off by 2027.

VI. POLLING – New Bridge Strategies – Lori Weigel (moved to an earlier point in the meeting)

To inform the board about public opinion and voter sentiment, Ms. Lori Weigel with New Bridge Strategies presented the results of a second 2026 public opinion survey that was conducted in late May through early June, showing similar findings compared to the polling that was conducted in March 2026 and in mid-2025. The survey was conducted among 300 registered voters throughout the District's service area via text message and email invitations to online surveys and live telephone interviews, focusing on two specific concepts: a sales tax increase and a property tax increase.

The key findings of that research indicate that a 0.75% sales tax measure receives a bare majority initial support and increases if the measure includes a provision to publicly disclose spending, while a 6 mil property tax measure does not reach majority support under current conditions. Ms. Weigel reported that voters in support of the tax express concerns about increasing wildfire risk in the District and support investments in emergency services, wildfire response, and firefighter safety. Overall tax burden, cost of living, and concerns surrounding lack of accountability for how public funds are spent were noted as the primary drivers of opposition. When evaluated alongside potential city ballot measures, voters maintained strong baseline support for the fire district, prioritizing its funding either in conjunction with or in preference to a new city tax.

V. CRITICAL FUNDING NEEDS – Fire Chief Jeremy Metz

Chief Metz presented a comprehensive capital analysis to the board, outlining the District's critical funding shortfalls for deferred infrastructure projects, alongside projected costs for future organizational needs.

Deferred Projects
Over the last two years, the District has deferred an estimated $12.9 million in essential renovation projects required to address capacity limitations, modernize operational needs, and improve facility safety. These critical infrastructure needs, which include gender-neutral restroom upgrades in the fire stations, emergency generator installations, and end-of-life system replacements, are further strained by a 10% annual increase in regional construction costs.

Critical Equipment Needed
Over the next one to five years, the District projects approximately $8 million in critical equipment needs, and faces compounding equipment inflation costs of 5% to 7% annually. The highest-priority requirement is the comprehensive replacement of the District's self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) air paks. This procurement is estimated at $4 million due to federal grant funding caps. Other immediate and near-term critical needs include replacement of the remaining cardiac monitors, which have more than doubled in cost over the past decade, along with vital radio infrastructure, expired ballistic gear, and mechanical CPR devices.

Facility Build/Rebuild

The District is confronted with a substantial funding shortfall and long-term infrastructure deficit for new fire station construction and complete facility rebuilds that are projected to cost $127 million over the course of the next 10 years. While the construction of planned Fire Station 18 is the immediate priority, it remains underfunded by $7 million, with $18.5 million transferred from reserves against an estimated $25.5 million total cost. Furthermore, a 2023–2024 independent study indicates the District is already two to three stations behind current growth demands; planning for a future Station 19 could reach up to $40 million due to compounding inflation and a five-year development timeline. To address aging facilities, leadership recommends a phased rebuild strategy starting with Station 2 (estimated at $30 million between 2028 and 2030), followed by Station 1 or Station 6 (estimated at $34 million by 2034) to allow time to evaluate how Station 18 alters regional response data.

Facility Remodels

Stations built under the 2006 bond, such as Station 7 and the Training Center, are now reaching 20 years of age and require a continuous, budgeted cadence of kitchen and operational remodels to address heavy wear and tear, which are estimated to cost approximately $7 million in the next two years.

Apparatus Replacement

The District projects over $6 million in emergency apparatus purchases for 2027, followed by an additional $4 million in anticipated procurement for 2028. This schedule is designed to replace aged apparatus that have been in service for over 20 years. Though escalating manufacturing inflation is anticipated to stabilize, industry-wide production backlogs now create a five-year delay between vehicle orders and delivery.

VII. SUSTAINABLE FUNDING PROJECT UPDATES – Catalyst Public Affairs

Lynea Hansen of Catalyst Public Affairs presented projected sales tax revenues based on three rate scenarios: 0.5% (estimated to result in $22 million in revenue annually), 0.65% (estimated to result in $28.6 million in revenue annually), and 0.75% (estimated to result in $33 million in revenue annually). These estimates provide the board with critical fiscal data to evaluate potential ballot language, should the board authorize a sales tax initiative for the November 2026 election.

Ms. Hansen also showed 10-year projections for the District’s revenue and expenses using a 0.65% sales tax example, which demonstrates that even with the addition of a 0.65% sales tax, expenses will soon outpace revenues.

Ms. Hansen recommends implementing a robust community education campaign to highlight the District's immediate critical financial needs. Crucially, public messaging must maintain transparency by framing the sales tax initiative not as a complete cure-all, but as an incremental step within a multi-phased capital funding plan that will eventually require a subsequent general obligation bond to resolve the remaining deficit.

VIII. REPORT OF THE UNION – Captain Mike Mulcahy

President Mulcahy confirmed the organization's full commitment to mobilizing its membership in support of the District's strategic goals, focusing on internal alignment and campaign readiness. The Union has spent the last several months educating its own members on the District's operational realities, budget details, and long-term capital shortfalls. This alignment ensures firefighters understand the necessity of facility remodels and apparatus and equipment purchases amidst escalating costs and severe procurement delays. The Union is prepared to deploy a highly organized, targeted door-to-door campaign. Over 400 firefighters and non-uniformed employees are each committed to contributing 10 to 15 hours of their personal time to direct voter outreach, which leadership notes is the most effective tool for moving public sentiment. President Mulcahy emphasized that the upcoming election is a critical opportunity to secure necessary funding. Despite ongoing legislative volatility and shifting financial conditions, leadership firmly believes the District cannot afford to wait and must advance the ballot measure now.

IX. NEXT STEPS – Fire Chief Jeremy Metz

Chief Metz informed the board about the District's municipality and stakeholder engagement plan while preparing the necessary statutory mechanisms for a potential November 2026 ballot measure. Chief Metz and other organizational leaders continue to brief municipal and county partners to establish transparent communications and address local concerns. Presentations have concluded with multiple cities—including a recent session in Edgewater, with upcoming meetings scheduled for Lakewood and the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners. Additional briefings are planned with local metropolitan districts, business associations, and civic organizations. To build grassroots community awareness, the District is leveraging summer public events. Initiatives include the launch of a new webpage on the District's website and social media messaging, detailing the critical funding needs, an upcoming Community Fire Academy, and localized fire station open houses. Notably, the five stations rebuilt under the previous bond (Stations 4, 5, 7, 8, and 10) will feature public informational displays highlighting that these facilities are now fully paid off, underscoring the District's fiscal responsibility.

During the July 21, 2026 board meeting, the board will consider a resolution to select the Designated Election Official (DEO) and authorize Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) with Jefferson and Douglas counties. Simultaneously, the board will review an initial ballot measure board brief and provide direction on a specific sales tax rate percentage to serve as a placeholder in the draft resolution language.

The final ballot language and resolution will undergo formal legal review. During the August 18, 2026 board meeting, the board will vote on the official referral of the sales tax measure for the November 2026 coordinated election.

Ms. Reester informed the board about the Fair Campaign Practices Act, which imposes strict limitations on District, board, and employee activities once ballot language is set, requiring a clear separation between official duties and personal advocacy. While official District communication must remain fair and balanced, individuals may campaign in their personal capacity.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: There being no further business to be presented, it was moved by Bill Clayton and seconded by Joe Zimmermann to adjourn the special meeting - study session of the West Metro Fire Protection District board of directors. The motion was voted upon and carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Recording Secretary: /s/s/ Jennifer Wheaton
/s/ Don Sherman