

Meeting Minutes for
Rico Fire Protection District
Regular Meeting: April 20th, 2026

The regular Rico Fire Protection District Meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chair Tyler Lapp.

Roll Call: RFPD Board members Gregg Anderson, Maria Casanova, Sarah Eckles, Tyler Lapp and Paul Ruud.

Guests Present: RVFD Fire Chief Todd Jones, RFPD Administrator David Kunz, Terry Schuler and Wiley Freeman (SMPA); Allyn Svoboda

Approval of Agenda: Sarah Eckles moved to approve the agenda as written; Maria Casanova seconded the motion. Approval was unanimous.

Approval of Minutes: Gregg Anderson moved to approve the minutes for the March 16th, 2026 regular meeting; Sarah Eckles seconded the motion. Approval was unanimous.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Approval of Financial Report and Accounts Payable, Pension Checks: Kunz presented (1) additional bill for payment: \$708.58 to Pueblo Community College as part of the payment for Violet Fallon's EMT class (Telluride School District/Miner's School paid for the majority of the class). Kunz commented that this would be covered by the \$5,000.00 awarded by the Telluride Foundation towards training. Sarah Eckles moved to approve the financial report and pay the bills as presented (plus 1 additional). Paul Ruud seconded the motion. Approval was unanimous.

Administrative Report (Administrator David Kunz):

Kunz has updated all wildland credentials in IQS. Todd Jones asked Kunz to confirm that all of the CRFF agreements are in order.

Grants (awarded):

CFSDPG: (State grant for firefighter disease prevention). \$2539.40 (100%) in funding for highway visibility vests and safety lighting. Acceptance has been filed, waiting for acknowledgment of receipt.

El Pomar (Wildland fire): Request for \$5,981.83 for wildland fire equipment; awarded \$5000.00. Fulfillment started.

Telluride Foundation FY 2026 (Community): \$5,000.00 in training funds. Fulfillment started.

Grants (pending applications):

CDPHE EMTs: Kunz applied for \$10,486.00 (50/50 match) in communications funding to replace/upgrade (4) mobile radios. Review in process. Award notifications in June, 2026.

Fire Chief Report (Fire Chief Todd Jones):

Runs: (3) EMS calls: 64 YO female breathing difficulty; 24 YO male with heart attack symptoms/anxiety; 39 YO male w/ chest pain and cardiac history.

Training: Mancos live burn on 4/25; Lewis/Arriola is hosting a burn tower exercise on 4/28.

Equipment: Engine 921 had a fuel delivery/cylinder misfire issue that appears to have resolved. Ambulance 925 will have A/C unit repaired (new compressor).

Old Business:

Transfer of Lots to RFPD from Town of Rico: The Town had their first reading of the resolution to effect the transfer at their April 15th meeting; the second reading will occur at the May 20th meeting.

Proposed new Fire Station Construction and Financing: No revised plans yet from Tom Bulk. Other options could include Mike McAllister out of Durango.

SMPA/Discussion of Safety Plan for microgrid facility:

Wiley Freeman stated that the seed money for the project had come from the Department of Energy through DOLA targeted toward microgrids for energy resilience. There was an initial \$30,000.00 planning grant followed by \$1.4 million awarded towards construction of the microgrid/battery storage project with goals of backup power for the Town and peak load management.

The location of the project was initially pitched to CDOT, then to ARCO, then to the Town (shop site), and finally to the Telluride School District (Old Rico School site). TSD has a similar (1 MWhr system plus solar) energy storage facility in operation at the Telluride High School. An additional advantage of the Rico School location is proximity to a 3-phase power line.

In the event of a power outage along the single 16-mile distribution line running from the Sunshine substation to the Town, the isolation switch (located on ARCO property near the CDOT shop) would turn the Town into its own microgrid powered by the 4 MWhr storage battery, supplemented by individual homeowner solar installations. Freeman described the Lithium Iron Phosphate (LiFePo4) chemistry as a safer alternative to the Lithium Ion typically used in electric car applications. He added that the proposed project would meet the new NFPA 855 code for electric storage facilities. According to Freeman, the system monitors individual cell bank temperatures and de-energizes, shuts down and self-extinguishes in case of a malfunction. Should all these measures fail, the unit is designed to burn itself out in a controlled manner. Freeman added that the primary combustion products would be similar to a house fire: carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and water.

Chief Jones brought up his concerns in the event of a thermal runaway: closure of the highway, and fire suppression staffing if the fire was a longer event. Board member Anderson also asked if SMPA could help with the prefiltration system for RVFD's SCBA compressor (which intakes air approx. 100' from the battery site), and provide periodic training and refresher training for volunteers.

Freeman again emphasized that the battery unit would be safe, quiet and in an enclosure designed for safety and aesthetics. Given an upcoming funding deadline (June 30) SMPA would like to see the MOU with the RFPD signed as soon as possible.

Additional Business

Fourth of July: The Liquor (Beer) license was approved by the Town and will go to the State.

Chief Jones is looking at accepting a donation of a tanker truck from Mancos. The truck has a larger tank and a 750 GPM pump along with a drop tank, ladders and deck gun. The unit could replace Tanker 927, which could then be donated to the Town for watering roads.

The next regular RFPD meeting is scheduled for May 18th; 2026.

A motion to adjourn was made by at 8:28 PM. by Sarah Eckles; seconded by Maria Casanova.

Chairman

Secretary