

BONNEVILLE COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT NO. 1

Minutes of Special Meeting held October 16, 2025

The Bonneville County Fire Protection District No. 1 (“Fire District”) held a special meeting of Commissioners on Thursday, the 16th day of October, 2025, at 6:30 p.m., at the BCFD Station No. 1., located at 2137 S. Ammon Rd., Ammon, ID 83406.

The following were present:

Commissioners Ralph Isom, Derik Nielsen, Dana Kirkham, Tyler Gebbs, and David Long were present. District Communication Officer Richard “Dick” Fowler, Chief John Molbert, and District Administrative Assistant Ashley Meyers were also in attendance. The meeting was also attended by many members of the public.

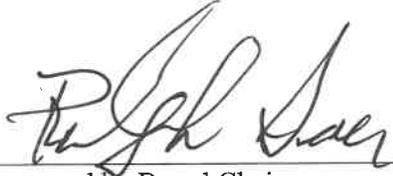
Notice of the time, place, and purpose was posted at premises of 490 Memorial Drive, Idaho Falls, Idaho; 2137 S Ammon Rd, Ammon, ID 83406; as well as the Fire District website. A copy of the notice and agenda is attached to these minutes.

It was declared that a Quorum of Commissioners were present and due notice of the meeting had been posted in accordance with law.

DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS

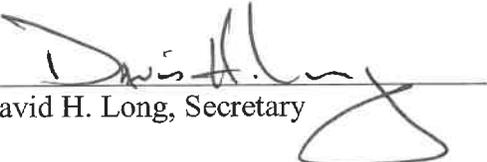
1. **Call to Order**. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Ralph Isom.
2. **Incorporation of Meeting Notes**. Attached hereto as Exhibit “A” are the meeting notes taken by Ashley Meyers, District Administrative Assistant, which are incorporated herein in full by this reference. These notes are included as part of the Fire District’s official meeting record in accordance with Idaho law. Also attached hereto as Exhibit “B” is a true and correct copy of the presentation notes from the special meeting.
3. **Adjournment**. There being no further business to come before the Board of Commissioners at the meeting, a motion was made to adjourn with unanimous approval at approximately 7:49 p.m.

Approved the 11th day of December, 2025.


Approved by Board Chairman

ATTEST:

The undersigned, as Secretary of the Bonneville County Fire Protection District No. 1, hereby attests that the foregoing minutes were approved by a proper vote of the Board of Commissioners of the Fire Protection District on the 11th day of December, 2025.


David H. Long, Secretary

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Bonneville County Fire Protection District No. 1
Thursday, October 16, 2025

SPECIAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Bonneville County Fire Protection District No. 1 ("Fire District") will hold a special meeting on Thursday, October 16, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Fire District No. 1, which is located at 2137 S Ammon Road, Ammon, ID 83406. The Commissioners of the Fire District will take up the following agenda during the meeting:

- 1) Call to Order and Roll Call by Chairman Ralph Isom.
- 2) Report from Fire Chief Jon Molbert and/or Commissioner Dana Kirkham with supporting facts and numbers regarding Fire District Operations.
- 3) Discussion Item: Streamlining Fire District Operations (focus of discussion: communications, response times, equipment, real property, and personnel needs; District-wide improvement strategies.)
- 4) Possible Discussion Item: Feasibility, Benefits, and Possible Concerns of Expanding the Scope of Idaho Falls Fire Departments Service, including alternative options.
- 5) Patron and Community comments (limited to 5 minutes each).
- 6) Recess/Adjournment.

DATED this 12th day of October, 2025.



Douglas R. Nelson Assistant Secretary
Bonneville County Fire Protection District #1

Commissioners Work Session
October 16, 2025

Meeting Notes

- **Opening** Ralph Isom started the meeting at 6:30 pm on 10/16/25. He thanked everyone for attending and discussed the agenda items for the meeting. Derek Neilsen specified that this meeting was only for presenting information.
- **Meeting Purpose and Introduction** Dana Kirkham welcomed attendees and reiterated that the meeting's purpose was to discuss information compiled by Dana and Derek regarding fire district operations. She emphasized the need for an open mind, stating that the discussion is about the end user and patrons, without predetermined outcomes. Dana also thanked Jon, Paul, and Dwayne for their significant work in gathering information.
- **Equitable Service and Data Points** Dana identified the overarching issue as the lack of equitable response across the District. She presented data from the 2020 census, noting that the Bonneville County Fire District services approximately 52,000 people, with the City of Ammon accounting for 17,000 of them. Dana highlighted that roughly 51% of patrons receive a different level of service than the rest of the county.
- **NFPA Standards for Fire Departments** Dana explained the distinctions between NFPA 1710 and 1720 standards, which govern career and combination fire departments, respectively. She noted that the City of Idaho Falls, a career fire department, is governed by NFPA 1710, while the Bonneville County Fire District, a combination fire department, falls under NFPA 1720. Dana elaborated on response time and staffing requirements for different hazard levels under NFPA 1710, stating that a low hazard response requires 17 firefighters in 8 minutes, and a high hazard response requires 43 firefighters in 10 minutes.
- **NFPA 1720 Standards and Written Plans** Dana explained that the NFPA 1720 standard categorizes areas as urban, suburban, or rural, with different staffing and response time requirements; for example, a suburban area requires a minimum of 10 firefighters and a 10-minute response time. Jon confirmed that the Bonneville County Fire District has a written plan, including standard response procedures, mutual aid agreements, and protocols for various first responders, as required by NFPA 1720. Dana noted that 75% of fire departments in the United States, including both Idaho Falls and Bonneville County, do not actually meet NFPA standards.
- **Discrepancy in Service Levels and Costs** Dana pointed out a significant issue: all patrons in the district pay the same amount, but they do not receive the same level of service. She emphasized that the district must decide which standard to adopt—1710 or 1720—and then determine how to meet that chosen standard. Dana clarified that the discussion is about fairness, as patrons paying the same amount should receive equivalent service.



Commissioners Work Session
October 16, 2025

- **Current Response Levels** Dana detailed the current fire response levels, stating that for a low-hazard fire in the county, the response includes one battalion chief, 12 firefighters, three engines, one ladder truck, and two ambulances, totaling 17 firefighters. She clarified that this represents minimum staffing, meaning more personnel could respond. In contrast, a low-hazard fire in the City of Ammon proper receives one battalion chief, seven firefighters, one engine, and one ladder truck, totaling eight personnel, with potential for additional engines and firefighters, at minimum staffing.
- **Financial Implications of Staffing Standards** Dana presented the financial implications of current and proposed staffing models. She explained that the current staffing for three shifts costs approximately \$460,000 annually per shift, totaling \$1.3 million, with a burdened cost of \$1.9 million annually. To meet the NFPA 1720 standard, an additional two firefighters would be needed, while transitioning to the NFPA 1710 standard would significantly increase costs (hiring an additional nine firefighters), raising annual burdened costs to \$2.3 million.
- **Equipment and Assets** Dana explained Bonneville County Fire District currently has one staffed station, one unstaffed station, and one station that BCFD owns, but Idaho Falls staffs and uses. They also listed BCFD's equipment and apparatus, 22 in total. Idaho Falls currently has six staffed stations (one district owned), one new station under construction, and a list of equipment and apparatus totaling 45 (7 district owned, and at least 1 airport owned). BCFD has approximately 45 personnel (full-time and paid call) and IFFD has approximately 145 personnel (all full-time). IFFD owns all their ambulances but contracts the service.
- **Infrastructure Costs for Automatic Aid** Dana outlined the significant costs and requirements for achieving automatic aid, which involves both departments being able to seamlessly assist each other. This includes an estimated \$312,000 to align self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBAs), \$275,000 for communication equipment to ensure compatible radios, and a potential \$1 million for a dispatch console with an additional \$225,000 annually for dispatchers. She also mentioned unquantified costs for aligning attack lines, nozzles, and EMS training to achieve Advanced Life Support (ALS) capability.
- **Training and Tactical Alignment for Automatic Aid** Dana emphasized the importance of aligning tactical approaches and apparatus setups between the two departments for automatic aid to work effectively. This would involve extensive training to ensure both departments follow the same response plans, tactics, and equipment layouts, although these aspects do not have direct dollar costs associated with them, they represent a significant time investment. The total initial investment for these alignment efforts is estimated at approximately \$2.39 million, excluding additional personnel costs.

Commissioners Work Session
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- **Three Options for Moving Forward** Dana presented three options for the district to consider: Option 1. Working towards automatic aid with Idaho Falls; Option 2. Becoming a full-service district independent of Idaho Falls (move away from the contract); Option 3. Merging with Idaho Falls Fire Department. She explained that each option has significant time, planning, and logistical considerations. Dana emphasized that the meeting's goal was to provide information for the commissioners to consider before making a decision on which path to pursue.
- **Challenges and Considerations for Each Option** Dana discussed the challenges associated with each option, noting that automatic aid has specific costs and constraints, while becoming an independent department would require a much larger initial investment for new stations and ongoing maintenance. She also highlighted the issue of the Ammon station's limitations due to city boundaries, which often results in Idaho Falls responding to areas where the Ammon station should. Derek added that a lot of the cost components regarding each option end up being equal. Paul added that a merger allows costs to be spread out over time.
- **Fairness and Future Governance** Dana stressed that the core issue is fairness, as all county patrons pay the same taxes but do not receive the same level of fire service. She acknowledged that the current Idaho Falls leadership is amenable to solutions but expressed concern about potential changes after the upcoming election, highlighting the legal hurdles of binding future councils. Dana emphasized that regardless of the chosen path, addressing the disparity in service levels is crucial and BCFD needs to be responding outside of the City of Ammon Limits.
- **Discussion of Fire Services Options** Dana presented three options for fire services, noting that options one and two involve similar staffing and budget, while option three involves a contract. They highlighted that all three options are viable but require a 12 to 24-month timeline for realization. Dana added that based on the numbers we have collected thus far, automatic aid would probably be the best, however we could end up wasting mostly new equipment, separation could be more cost effective in the long run, and the merger would present the most legal hurdles and possibly have more compounding costs to consider five years from now. Dana emphasized the urgency of making a decision to move forward, as the department has been in a holding pattern.
- **Clarification on Option Two** Dana clarified that Option Two entails full separation, with all district equipment, stations, and contract money maintained in-house. They confirmed that this option is manageable and that the contract money would adequately cover additional staffing and future growth. Dana also addressed concerns about potential reduced response times for county patrons under Option Two, stating it's a critical question that needs to be answered by elected officials.

Commissioners Work Session
October 16, 2025

- **Strategic Planning and Growth** Dana underscored the importance of selecting an option for strategic planning, especially given the continuous growth of the city and county. They explained that current planning is complicated by the existing contract with Idaho Falls, which might not be permanent. Dana noted that choosing a path would allow for proactive planning of station locations and expansion to get ahead of growth.
- **Automatic vs. Mutual Aid** Dana and other speakers discussed the differences between automatic aid and mutual aid, with automatic aid being preferred for quicker responses as it dispatches the closest unit regardless of jurisdiction. They explained that automatic aid requires parity in equipment and standards between departments. Dana also highlighted communication challenges during joint operations due to differing radio systems and channels.
- **Dispatch Issues** Dana addressed long-standing dispatch issues, noting that BCFD's channel is often turned down in favor of Idaho Falls' calls, leading to delayed or unanswered calls for BCFD firefighters. They stated that a dedicated dispatcher and console for Bonneville County Fire would resolve many of these issues, although it would require a significant initial investment of \$1.5 million and ongoing costs. Dana suggested that while there might be some offset from existing county collections, the main investment would need to come from the district.
- **Equipment Compatibility and Department Preferences** Dana and other speakers discussed equipment compatibility, specifically SCBAs and radios, in the context of moving towards automatic aid. They noted that the Bonneville County Fire District has relatively new equipment that would be wasteful to discard. Dana also mentioned that equipment choices often come down to department preference, making standardization challenging.
- **Comparison with Other Fire Departments** Dana engaged in a discussion comparing the situation in Bonneville County with other fire departments like Pocatello, Chubbuck, Boise, Meridian, and Caldwell. They concluded that these comparisons are challenging due to significant differences in operational structures, contracts, and citizen service models.
- **Timeline for Decision and Future Considerations** Dana suggested that the decision on which path to take should be an action item at the next meeting (November 13, 2025) to ensure progress. They acknowledged that the election year presents challenges, as new officials might have different opinions, but emphasized the importance of maintaining momentum towards a decision. Dana commended Jon, Paul, and Dwayne for their professionalism and dedication, as well as all the firefighters for their efforts.
- **Meeting Adjournment** The meeting adjourned at 7:49 pm.

Commissioners Work Session
October 16, 2025

Suggested next steps

The group will study the presented information regarding the three options and vote on a path at the next meeting.

The group will explore whether the city can go in with them for a dedicated console to cover Ammon's dispatch.

The group will ensure that the decision on which path to take remains a standing action item for the next meeting to maintain progress.

Bonneville County Fire District

Current Status



Problem to solve: BCFD does not have equitable response across all patrons

2020 Census Numbers:

Bonneville County	123,964 (number includes all of BC)
City of Idaho Falls	64,818
City of Ammon	17,694

BCFD	52,182
City of Ammon	17,694

NFPA Staffing numbers	34,488
City of Ammon Zone	17,694

Approximately 81% of our patrons receive a different level of service.

NFPA 1720 – For Combination/Volunteer Departments

Demand Zone	Demographics	Minimum Staff to Respond	Response Time in Minutes
Urban area	More than 1,000 people per square mile	15	9
Suburban area	Between 500 – 1000 people per square mile	10	10
Rural area	Less than 500 people per square mile	4	Depends on travel distance
Special Risks	Determined by the AHJ	Determined by AHJ based on risk	Determined by the AHJ

NFPA 1720 - Requires written plan for volunteer fire departments that includes standard response procedures (who will respond to what) that are predetermined based on the reported incident's location and nature. This plan must include any mutual aid agreements between the volunteer fire department and all the potential first responders in the community and surrounding areas such as law enforcement hospital ambulances, and private companies providing hazmat services.

Approximately 30,000 Departments nationwide

According to Congressional Report S. Hrg. 108-898:

**75% of departments DO NOT meet the NFPA Standard
Including IFFD and BCFD**

Which standard is better 1710 or 1720 – Determined by make up and demographics
Different standards for different circumstances

BCFD issue to address:

All households are paying \$56.1190/100K of valuation but all are not receiving the same level of service.

**Which standard do we adopt and live to equitable across all patrons?
How do we do that?**

NFPA Standard 1710 = 17
 Personnel on scene w/8
 minutes

COUNTY	AMMON
1 Battalion Chief	1 Battalion Chief
12 Firefighters	7 Firefighters
3 Engine	1 Engine
1 Ladder Truck	1 Ladder Truck
2 Ambulance (4 fighters/EMS)	
Total = 17	Total = 8
Potential to Send	Potential to Send (Paid Call/FT Callback)
4 Ambulance (8 Firefighters)	2 Engine (6-10 Fire Fighters)
2 Engine (6 Firefighters)	

Current Shift Staffing

Shift 1		Shift 2		Shift 3	
Staff Officer	98,609	Staff Officer	98,609	Staff Officer	98,609
Captain	84,763	Captain	84,763	Captain	84,763
Driver/FF	67,183	Driver/FF	67,183	Driver/FF	67,183
FF	52,522	FF	52,522	FF	52,522
FF	52,522	FF	52,522	FF	52,522
FF	52,522	FF	52,522	FF	52,522
Daily Extra	52,522	Daily Extra	52,522	Daily Extra	52,522

Each Shift = 460,642
Total Annual Cost = 1,381,926
Burdened = 1,902,221
Actual 2026 Budget = 2,204,159

Projected Staffing to Parity

Shift 1		Shift 2		Shift 3	
Captain	84,763	Captain	84,763	Captain	84,763
Driver/FF	67,183	Driver/FF	67,183	Driver/FF	67,183
FF	52,522	FF	52,522	FF	52,522
FF	52,522	FF	52,522	FF	52,522
FF	52,522	FF	52,522	FF	52,522
FF	52,522	FF	52,522	FF	52,522
FF	52,522	FF	52,522	FF	52,522
FF	52,522	FF	52,522	FF	52,522
FF	52,522	FF	52,522	FF	52,522
FF	52,522	FF	52,522	FF	52,522

Each Shift = 572,122
 Total Annual Cost = 1,716,366
 Burdened = 2,362,746.76

Current Salaries BCFD 2,300,000	21 FT 20 Paid Call
Hire +9	+420,176 (unburdened) +578,357 (burdened)
1 Additional Station	Cost???

BCFD	IFPD
1 Staffed Station	6 Staffed Station (1 District Owned)
1 Unstaffed Station	1 New Station Under Construction
20 Personnel	145 Personnel
20-25 Paid Call	No Paid Call
5 Staff Vehicles	11 Staff Vehicle
3 Fire Apparatus	7 Fire Apparatus (2 District Owned)
5 Tenders	3 Tenders (2 District Owned)
5 Brush Trucks	5 Brush Trucks (3 District Owned)
1 Ladder Truck	2 Ladder Trucks
1 ARFF Apparatus	3 ARFF Vehicles (# Airport Owned)
2 Semi-Flatbed	14 Ambulances

Challenges to Automatic Aid

Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) 26x12K	\$312,000
Communication Equipment 55x5K	\$275,000
Dispatch Console	\$1M
5 Dispatchers	\$225,000 <i>no 2nd.</i>
Staffing Models	\$578,357
Total Initial Cost	2,390,357
EMS - Ammon needs to maintain EMT level providers on every response	
Tactical Approaches	
Apparatus Setup and Equipment	

1. Set a strategic plan to meet automatic aid

2. Move away from Idaho Falls contract and become full service district – adopt standard NFPA 1710 or 1720 for all patrons

3. Merge with Idaho Falls Fire Department

Things to consider:

- Upcoming contract renewal
- Boundary limitations
- Automatic aid stipulations
- Ongoing costs