UNIFIED FIRE AUTHORITY BOARD
FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

May 14, 2026, 9:00 a.m.

1. Call to Order
   Chair Henderson called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

2. Public Comment
   No public comments were received.
   Public comment was available live and with a posted email address.

3. Minutes Approval
   Mayor Fotheringham made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 9, 2026, Finance Committee as submitted. Mayor Gray seconded the motion, and all voted in favor; none opposed.

4. Budget Presentation

Chief's Budget Message

Fire Chief Burchett provided introductory remarks regarding the purpose and structure of the meeting. The Finance Committee conducted a review of the proposed FY 2026–2027 budget. Division Chiefs and Section Chiefs would each present their respective portions of the budget and answer committee questions.

Chief Burchett referenced the April 9, 2026, Finance Committee budget overview meeting. Since that meeting, he has met individually with nearly all board members to specifically discuss the proposed Fire Training Center project and answer questions regarding the proposal. Chief Burchett stated that, based on those meetings, staff prepared a supplemental memorandum included within the packet that addressed the four most common questions raised by board members regarding the proposed Fire Training Center project.

Long-Term Financial Sustainability

One of the primary questions raised by board members involved the sustainability of the organization if the Fire Training Center project were included in the budget. Although the budget document traditionally includes a five-year General Fund forecast, staff expanded the forecast to ten years to evaluate the impacts of the project. The ten-year projection assumptions included:

- A 4% annual member fee increase
- Cost-of-living adjustments based on the seven-year rolling CPI average

- Conservative CPI growth assumptions
- 2% annual growth in non-personnel expenditures
- Future lease payment obligations included in the capital plan
- Maintenance of the organization’s fund balance at or above 8.5%

Revenue Sources and Cost Recovery
Chief Burchett next discussed anticipated revenue sources associated with the Fire Training Center. The first phase of the fee schedule would focus on cost recovery associated with the existing training facility. Once the new facility was constructed, the fee schedule would be reevaluated to incorporate financing considerations. Chief Burchett noted that UFA had been pursuing partnership opportunities with outside agencies, and although negotiations were ongoing, no finalized agreements were available at this time. Staff projected conservative future revenue estimates associated with outside use of the facility, including $95,000 annually by FY 2031–2032.

Operating Costs
Chief Burchett reviewed anticipated operating costs for the new facility. UFA did not anticipate the need for additional staffing at the facility in the foreseeable future. Current staffing includes two Captains and two Specialists. These personnel were expected to sufficiently support operations and maintenance needs. Estimated increases in utility and maintenance costs were projected at $10,000–$12,000 annually above current operating expenses. Chief Burchett noted that although the new building would be larger, it would also be more efficient than the current facility.

Chief Burchett discussed projected financing assumptions related to the proposed Fire Training Center bond. Finance has been working with Zions Bank regarding financing estimates. Based on current assumptions, it is estimated interest rate of 3.86%, and the annual payment is $1.835 million.

Chief Burchett emphasized that the proposed member fee increases already included the full bond payment amount and that staff did not anticipate returning in future years to request member fee increases specifically related to the bond obligation. The annual payment represented 1.74% of the total UFA budget initially, with that percentage decreasing over time as the organization grew.

Chief Burchett also discussed the possibility of future refinancing opportunities should interest rates decline. Chair Henderson asked for clarification regarding the proposed fee schedule and what specific costs would be recovered. Fee calculations included:
- Consumable materials
- Personnel time
- Utilities
- Wear and tear on facilities
- Cleaning costs
- Facility maintenance expenses

Chair Henderson discussed the 4% annual member fee increase assumption used in the projection model. The increase reflected anticipated growth-related demands and the organization’s inability to independently capture “new growth” revenues in the same manner municipalities do through property tax growth.

Mayor Fotheringham stated that even with the capital investment, the proposal still reflected a relatively modest fee increase. Sustainability is both a financial consideration and a modern training center that is appropriate for an organization of the size of UFA and beneficial to the larger community.

CFO Hill provided clarification regarding the proposed bond structure. The bond obligation would be a UFA obligation. UFA cannot obtain tax-exempt bonds due to its structure. UFA therefore uses conduit financing through another governmental entity. Historically, Unified Fire Service Area served as the conduit financing entity for other UFA lease obligations. CFO Hill emphasized:

- UFSA would not carry the debt obligation on its books
- UFA alone would be responsible for repayment
- Bond proceeds and construction costs would flow entirely through UFA accounts

Mayor Jared Gray announced during the meeting that Eagle Mountain intended to pursue separation from UFSA and transition to becoming a direct member of UFA. Mayor Gray emphasized that Eagle Mountain remained supportive of UFA's regional fire service model and wanted to ensure any transition would not negatively impact the proposed bond financing process.

Committee discussion clarified that UFA member fee obligations would continue regardless of UFSA membership structure. The financing structure would not negatively impact remaining UFSA members. Future direct membership arrangements would simply shift proportional funding responsibilities.

Mayor Gettel commented on recently released inflation figures. Mayor Gettel noted that the most recent inflation data showed 3.81% inflation from April 2025 to April 2026, with western regional inflation estimates ranging between 3% and 3.5%, and the 4% was a good percentage to use.

Chief Burchett reviewed the remaining budget schedule, including:

- May 14, 2026 – Finance Committee budget review
- May 19, 2026 – Tentative Board approval
- June 16, 2026 – Public hearing and final budget adoption
- June 16, 2026 – Adoption of updated fee schedule

Executive Summary Presentation

CFO Hill presented the Executive Summary section of the budget. Highlights included:

- General Fund: $97.2 million
- Wildland Fund: $5.1 million
- Emergency Management Fund: $3.1 million
- Fire Capital Replacement Fund: $33.6 million
- Emergency Management Capital Fund: $369,000
- Revenue distribution charts
- Expenditure breakdowns
- Budget calendar
- Staffing/FTE charts
- General Fund forecasts
- Fee schedules

CFO Hill highlighted that no new FTE positions were requested in the FY 2026–2027 budget. Total staffing included 527 sworn personnel, 61 civilian personnel, for a total of 588 FTEs. CFO Hill reviewed the proposed member fee increases by jurisdiction, including:

- Cottonwood Heights – 4.28%
- Holladay – 2.11%
- Herriman – 3.62%
- Riverton – 3.84%
- UFSA – 5.95%

The higher UFSA increase captured the remaining costs associated with the addition of the engine company in Kearns.

Chief Burchett briefly reviewed the member fee allocation chart. The chart is one of the most important sections reviewed each year because it helps demonstrate the regional value and efficiency of the UFA service model. Chief Burchett used Holladay as an example and noted the city contributes $64,473 toward Fire Prevention services, although the amount may initially appear modest relative to the scope of services provided, that contribution gives Holladay access not only to a dedicated Fire Prevention Specialist but also to the full capabilities of the entire UFA Fire Prevention Division whenever needed. Chief Burchett explained that the regional service model becomes especially valuable during large-scale or complex projects requiring coordinated inspections, plan reviews, hazardous materials evaluations, and code compliance oversight. The model provides member communities access to specialized personnel and resources.

Chief Burchett also highlighted several divisions reflected on the chart that demonstrate the value of outside funding and partnerships. He specifically pointed out that:

- The Camp Williams program operates at no direct cost to the organization because it is fully supported through contract funding; and
- The Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) program is fully funded through FEMA reimbursements and federal funding sources.

Chief Burchett then discussed the Emergency Management line item reflected on the chart. The Emergency Management section shows a negative number, which represents the administrative cost reimbursement provided back to UFA member communities through the Salt Lake County Emergency Management contract. Salt Lake County funds the Emergency Management Division, including administrative overhead expenses, and those reimbursements effectively offset a portion of UFA’s administrative costs.

911 Emergency Transport-Assistant Finance Director Turnbaugh

Assistant Finance Director Turnbaugh presented the 911 Emergency Transport section of the funding sources. Director Turnbaugh explained that ambulance transport revenue remains UFA’s second-largest revenue source and plays a role in supporting emergency operations.

Director Turnbaugh began by reviewing the history and structure of UFA’s ambulance transport program. UFA staffs:

- 11 ambulances staffed with one full-time paramedic and one full-time EMT
- 2 peak-load 24-hour ambulances
- 2 peak-load 12-hour ambulances

These peak-load units are utilized to address higher call volume periods and assist in maintaining response capabilities during busy demand times.

Director Turnbaugh directed the committee to the collection statistics chart. Over the previous five years, UFA has averaged a 44% gross collection rate on ambulance billings. Collections are influenced by billing volume and payer mix. Reviewing the billing and collection trends further, Director Turnbaugh stated that over the past five years, gross billings increased 38% and net collections increased 32%. Increases in collections generally correlate with increased transport volume, state-approved billing rates, and changes in payer composition in the jurisdiction.

Director Turnbaugh next reviewed transport volume by level of care. She explained the distinction between Advanced Life Support (ALS) and Basic Life Support (BLS). Director Turnbaugh stated that two-thirds of UFA's transports are ALS transports, while roughly one-third are BLS transports. Director Turnbaugh explained that transport billing rates are established by the State of Utah and are not independently set by UFA. Over the previous five years, state-approved transport rates increased 30%. However, FY 2026–2027 marked the first year in which the reimbursement rates remained unchanged from the prior fiscal year.

Director Turnbaugh further explained that ambulance billing revenue is driven by three primary factors: transport volume, level of care provided (ALS versus BLS), and state-approved billing rates. Director Turnbaugh then reviewed the payer mix chart, which outlined the proportion of transports billed to Medicare, Medicaid, Veterans Administration (VA), private insurance, and self-pay patients. She explained the distinction between "fixed payers," such as Medicare, Medicaid, and VA, versus non-fixed payers such as private insurance and self-pay accounts. The chart also identified the collection percentages associated with each payer type and the relative size each category represents within UFA's jurisdiction.

Director Turnbaugh explained that Medicaid reimbursement operates differently from most private insurance systems. UFA participates in a state Medicaid assessment program that allows ambulance providers to receive enhanced federal reimbursement support through the State of Utah. As a result, Medicaid reimbursements generally provide a more predictable base-rate payment structure than some private insurance plans. Despite this reimbursement structure, rising healthcare deductibles and self-pay balances continue creating collection challenges for ambulance providers nationwide.

Director Turnbaugh then reviewed the five-year ambulance revenue and expenditure trend analysis. Key highlights included:

- A projected 4% increase in ambulance revenue for FY 2026–2027
- A projected 4% increase in personnel costs largely tied to market adjustments and COLA increases
- A 58% increase in depreciation expense
- A 161% increase in interest expense
- Mutual aid relationships
- Tourist-area and canyon transport demands
- Collection rates
- Non-resident service impacts
- Medicaid reimbursement structures

- Long-term ambulance deployment needs

CFO Hill stated that ambulance transport services are not intended to operate as a profit center for the organization, particularly given UFA's staffing model of one paramedic and one EMT per ambulance, which provides a higher level of care but also increases costs.

Director Turnbaugh further explained that while collection percentages may initially appear low, UFA's collection performance generally aligns with national ambulance industry averages. Current projections indicate ambulance needs may arise in future years as call volume continues increasing.

Emergency Operations Budget-Assistant Chief Dustin Dern

Assistant Chief Dern presented the Emergency Operations Budget. Emergency Operations represent the largest portion of UFA's budget due to personnel-related costs associated with maintaining daily emergency response readiness. UFA staffs 26 fire stations and serves 484,000 residents. The Emergency Operations budget is heavily personnel-driven because maintaining emergency response capability requires consistent staffing at all stations and on all frontline apparatus every day.

98% of the Emergency Operations budget is tied to personnel expenditures, while only 2% represents non-personnel expenses. The largest portion of the FY 2026–2027 budget increase was tied to the proposed market adjustments and COLA increases. Despite increasing demand, staff are making efforts to identify efficiencies and reductions wherever possible. As part of the FY 2026–2027 stress-test process, Emergency Operations identified a reduction within the small equipment line item, decreasing the allocation from $5,000 to $1,000.

Aside from the market and COLA adjustments, the Emergency Operations budget included three primary proposed increases. The first proposed increase involved adding $15,000 to the overtime budget to support the organization's Peer Support Program. The increase was necessary to close a funding shortfall created by the expiration of previous grant funding that had supported portions of the behavioral health program. Assistant Chief Dern emphasized that the Peer Support Program plays a critical role in supporting the mental health and well-being of UFA personnel, particularly given the stressful and traumatic nature of emergency response work. Maintaining the program remains a high priority, and the overtime funding would allow peer support participation and coverage.

The second proposed increase involved dispatch services. Both Valley Emergency Communications Center (VECC) and Central Dispatch anticipated both personnel and capital increases during the upcoming fiscal year. As a result, UFA's share of dispatch service costs would increase by $72,000 within the non-personnel expenditure category. Dispatch services remain a critical component of emergency response readiness and are essential to maintaining efficient response coordination.

Assistant Chief Dern then discussed the third proposed increase, which involved continuation of the Low Acuity Unit pilot program. He reminded committee members that the Low Acuity Unit was initially placed into service in August 2025 as a trial program designed to provide a lower-cost response option for low-acuity medical calls that may not require deployment of larger fire apparatus or full emergency resources.

When the FY 2026–2027 budget was being developed, staff determined that data was still needed before making a recommendation regarding a permanent staffing model for the program. As a result, staff requested a one-time transfer from fund balance in the amount of $198,000 to continue operation of the trial unit for another fiscal year. Extending the pilot program would allow staff to gather more complete data related to:

- Response effectiveness
- Unit utilization
- Transport rates
- Apparatus wear reduction
- Staffing impacts
- Long-term efficiency

The low acuity unit operates four days per week. Although staff do not yet feel enough data has been collected to make a permanent recommendation, early results have been promising. As an example, he noted that Medic Engine 101 responded to 100 fewer calls during the first quarter of the year compared to the same period last year, indicating reduced use of heavy apparatus for minor calls. The program may reduce apparatus wear and improve system performance. Assistant Chief Dern shared an example where the Low Acuity Unit handled a minor medical call, allowing Medic Engine 101 to remain available for a nearby cardiac arrest response, which resulted in a successful patient save.

Special Operations Budget-Operations Chief Kay

Operations Chief Kay, accompanied by Captain Green, presented the Special Operations Budget. Operations Chief Kay explained that the Special Operations Division is responsible for providing Hazardous Materials response, Heavy Rescue operations, and Water and Ice Rescue capabilities in UFA's service area. Special Operations personnel provide technical rescue and hazard response support. In addition to handling specialty incidents, these teams also support scene safety and coordination during major emergencies.

Operations Chief Kay directed the committee to review the graphs illustrating increases in call volume and demand for Special Operations companies. For FY 2026–2027, the proposed Special Operations Budget totaled $187,131, and the budget represented a 12.2% decrease, or roughly $26,000. He emphasized that the reduction reflected the completion of prior one-time capital purchases and did not reduce capability. The division is now transitioning from those one-time projects toward more sustainable personnel and equipment investment planning.
A major focus of the upcoming fiscal year involves expanded cadre-driven training initiatives. Operations Chief Kay reported that overtime funding within the Special Operations budget would increase to $72,925, which represents more than 40% of the division's total budget. The increase represented 4.9% growth from the prior year and supports two major in-house training initiatives:

1. A five-week Hazardous Materials Technician School
2. A new two-week Truck Operations School

Operations Chief Kay explained that these in-house training programs are intended to build internal expertise, support professional development, strengthen recruitment, improve succession planning, and create a sustainable internal training pipeline.

Operations Chief Kay further explained that non-personnel spending within the division decreased by 21%, due to the completion of several prior one-time equipment and project purchases. Remaining equipment expenditures are focused on replacing obsolete equipment, maintaining PPE inventories, and sustaining hazardous materials detection capabilities.

As part of the stress test process, the division achieved 3% in savings by shifting training responsibilities from external vendors to internally developed instruction programs. Operations Chief Kay then reviewed several line-item changes.

- A 4.88% increase in cadre overtime associated with the implementation of the Truck Operations School
- A 54% decrease in the clothing line item due to the completion of prior water rescue dry suit purchases
- A 14% reduction in the small equipment line item associated with the completion of one-time projects

Fire Training Budget-Division Chief Steve Prokopis

Division Chief Prokopis explained that the Fire Training Division is responsible for:

- Training all newly hired firefighters
- Delivering ongoing training opportunities for existing personnel
- Administering required certification courses
- Maintaining firefighter training records

Division Chief Prokopis then reviewed the division org chart. Current staffing includes five sworn personnel and one civilian employee. The organization has experienced an increase in hiring demand over the past several years, which has resulted in larger and more frequent recruit academies. UFA now conducts two recruit camps annually, which are scheduled each spring and fall. The recruit academies are budgeted and designed to remain scalable in order to meet changing hiring demands. In addition to standard recruit camps, UFA also maintains the capability to conduct one to two lateral hire academies annually, with each lateral academy lasting four weeks.

Division Chief Prokopis noted that UFA historically hired 10–20 firefighters annually. However, hiring needs have increased in recent years. 67 firefighters were hired during the previous 15 months, and since 2021, UFA has hired a total of 244 firefighters. The Fire Training Division continues focusing on training quality. He further noted that UFA is meeting its hiring demands successfully.

The Fire Training Division budget reflects an 4.67% decrease for FY 2026–2027. The reduction resulted from two factors: the first involved adjustments within the personnel budget. The division reduced training cadre positions from 10 to eight. This reduction was made possible due to the addition of a new full-time position approved during the previous fiscal year and improved progress in meeting current hiring demands, which has allowed for somewhat smaller recruit camp sizes requiring fewer support personnel. The reduction of two cadre positions resulted in $54,457 in savings, along with a proportional reduction in overtime expenditures totaling $16,580. Overall, the Fire Training Division budget decreased by $71,922. Despite the reduction, the division’s capability and training quality would remain intact.

Division Chief Prokopis noted that all non-personnel expenditure line items within the Fire Training budget remained flat during the current fiscal year. New hire training activities account for nine months of the Fire Training Division staff's annual workload. Because of the volume of recruit training, the division relies heavily on training cadre personnel borrowed from the Operations Division. These cadre personnel serve as subject matter experts and provide critical support during peak training periods. Support from the Operations Division remains essential to maintaining training capacity and meeting hiring demands.

Division Chief Prokopis outlined the proposed UFA Fire Training Center Fee Schedule. The Fire Training Division developed its first formal fee schedule for use of the Magna Training Center due to increasing demand from outside agencies requesting use of the facility. Organizations utilizing portions of the Magna Training Center include:

- Fire departments
- Police agencies
- Sheriff's Office personnel
- SWAT teams
- Military units
- Rio Tinto
- USAR teams
- Salt Lake Community College
- University of Utah
- School districts
- Various civic organizations

UFA values these cooperative training partnerships and believes the shared use of the facility benefits public safety agencies in the region. With Board approval, staff anticipated implementation of the new fee schedule effective on July 1, 2026.

The Committee thanked Fire Training for their hard work and for the professionalism they bring to UFA.

Emergency Medical Services-Division Chief Rob Ayres

Division Chief Ayres presented the EMS Division Budget. Division Chief Ayres explained that the EMS Division's mission and core focus centers on supporting Operations personnel in delivering effective, evidence-based emergency medical care throughout UFA's communities. He stated that the division continues emphasizing:

- Hands-on training
- Protocol review
- Clinical quality improvement
- Ongoing education for EMS personnel

Division Chief Ayres explained that as part of the organization-wide 10% stress test process, the EMS Division identified $30,000 in budget reductions through adjustments in two primary areas. The first reduction involved paramedic training. Chief Ayres explained that the division proposed reducing the number of internally sponsored paramedic students from 13 students to 10 students annually. The adjustment more accurately reflects UFA's rolling five-year average of personnel ready to attend paramedic school and would result in $30,000 in savings.

The second reduction involved the elimination of the monthly public CPR certification course. Participation in the certification course remained consistently low, averaging three participants per month. As a result, the division proposed redirecting those resources toward broader non-certification community CPR education initiatives, including revitalization of the “Push to Survive” program. Division Chief Ayres stated that current research shows bystander CPR improves patient outcomes regardless of whether formal certification is obtained, and the proposed change would allow UFA to reach a larger portion of the community more effectively.

Division Chief Ayres also discussed the division’s controlled substance security program. Although medication usage and medication costs continue increasing due largely to updated treatment protocols and expanded patient care standards, the division identified efficiencies within the security supply process through participation in a subscription-based program with NARCBOX. While medication expenditures continue rising, the improved supply process resulted in $1,000 in net savings within the controlled substance security supply budget.

Urban Search and Rescue Budget-Division Chief Brett Fossum

Division Chief Fossum presented the Utah Task Force One budget and provided an overview of the program’s mission, responsibilities, and funding structure. Utah Task Force One is one of the nation’s federally deployable Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams within the national FEMA USAR system, with Unified Fire Authority serving as the sponsoring agency.

Division Chief Fossum stated that the team provides highly specialized rescue capabilities during large-scale disasters and emergency incidents. The budget supports readiness, rapid deployment capability, specialized equipment, fleet readiness, communication systems, training, and meets FEMA compliance requirements.

Division Chief Fossum reported that outside of deployment reimbursements, the Utah Task Force One budget has historically remained relatively stable at $1.5 million annually, supported through federal funding.

Many Utah Task Force One members are also UFA employees, creating mutually beneficial training and partnership between the organizations. UFA personnel assist with training task force members. Task Force instructors also support UFA training activities, and many training expenses are reimbursed or fully covered through federal grant funding.

Division Chief Fossum noted that the rubble pile and specialized training props located at the UFA Training Center are owned and maintained by Utah Task Force One and are funded through federal grants and reimbursement programs. The partnership allows UFA personnel to benefit from highly specialized rescue training while minimizing financial impact to the organization.

Wildland / Camp Williams Budget-Division Chief Widdison

Division Chief Widdison presented the Wildland and Camp Williams budgets for FY 2026–2027. Chief Widdison began by reviewing the Wildland Division’s nationally deployable resources. The division supports a 22-person hand crew, two wildland engines, and the single-resource program. These resources are deployable nationally through interagency agreements and generate revenue through reimbursement programs associated with wildfire response assignments.

Division Chief Widdison then focused on the General Fund transfer request associated with the Wildland Division, specifically the funding allocated toward the Fuels Crew program. For FY 2026–2027, the Wildland Division requested $500,000 in General Fund support. The transfer is divided into two primary categories:

- $100,000 supports administrative functions tied to UFA operations; and
- $400,000 supports the operation of the Fuels Crew program.

Division Chief Widdison noted that the Fuels Crew allocation represents a $15,000 increase over the prior fiscal year. The increase is associated with overtime costs related to wildfire response activity within UFA jurisdiction and anticipated elevated fire activity during the upcoming wildfire season.

The Fuels Crew consists of a 10-person seasonal wildland-specific crew, supported by an assigned Wildland Specialist. The crew serves three primary functions: Wildfire Mitigation and Risk Reduction, Wildland Response Capability, and Community Engagement and Education.

The Fuels Crew program also plays an important role in supporting UFA's participation within the Utah Cooperative Wildfire System. Under the agreement, the State assumes costs associated with large fires and extended attack wildfire incidents. In return, UFA is required to meet an annual Participation Commitment value through prevention, preparedness, mitigation, and wildfire readiness activities. Division Chief Widdison reported that UFA's 2026 Participation Commitment requirement totaled slightly more than $294,000. The Fuels Crew serves as one of UFA's primary resources for meeting those participation requirements.

Division Chief Widdison noted that the Wildland Division will continue closely monitoring several budget line items during the upcoming fiscal year, including Fuel costs and vehicle maintenance expenses. The division's aging fleet continues to create maintenance challenges, and fuel pricing remains difficult to predict due to market volatility.

Division Chief Widdison then briefly reviewed the Camp Williams budget. The Camp Williams Fire Program provides wildland fire management services, fire suppression, wildfire mitigation, prescribed fire operations, and training support for the Camp Williams military installation. The program is funded through the Camp Williams contract and Wildland fire reimbursement assignments when resources deploy off base. Division Chief Widdison emphasized that the Camp Williams program is a contract-supported operation that provides dedicated wildfire protection for the military installation while also supporting UFA needs when resources are required.

The Committee thanked the Wildland Division for their work in the communities.

Logistics Budget-Division Chief Mike Greensides

Division Chief Greensides presented the Logistics Budget. Division Chief Greensides began by reviewing the stress test reductions identified within the Logistics Division budget. He directed committee members to where $231,000 in selective budget reductions were outlined. Overall, the Logistics Division budget reflects a reduction of $481,000 or 6.53% from the prior fiscal year. Despite the reduction, the division was still able to address several critical adjustments, escalating costs, and necessary projects while remaining within budget limitations.

Division Chief Greensides reviewed the need for a Supply Specialist position. The request was intended to improve the ratio of support personnel to operations personnel as demands continue increasing.

Division Chief Greensides reviewed a capital outlay request involving the replacement of respirator fit-testing machines. The current machines have become outdated and increasingly prone to mechanical failures, making replacement necessary to ensure respiratory protection compliance and reliability.

Division Chief Greensides then reviewed expenditures and highlighted a 27% decrease in the clothing provisions line item. A major project identified within this section involved funding for the Clean-for-Dirty Exchange Program, which includes the purchase of 57 replacement sets of turnout gear. Firefighter turnout gear has a maximum service life of 10 years, after which the equipment must be removed from frontline service. Under the exchange program, new turnout gear is issued to firefighters, older but still serviceable gear is reassigned to reserve use, and remaining usable gear is utilized for recruit training academies and exchange inventory. The program helps maximize equipment life while maintaining safe protective gear.

Division Chief Greensides next reviewed fuel expenditures. The proposed Logistics fuel budget includes an increase of $51,000. The increase was driven by concerns regarding fuel market instability. Chair Henderson asked questions regarding how fuel projections had changed the budget development process and how staff planned to monitor future fluctuations. The division had already adjusted fuel projections once during the budget cycle, and staff would continue monitoring fuel costs closely in the fiscal year. $51,000 was added after the original budget proposal due to changing market conditions.

Division Chief Greensides then reviewed increased utility and HVAC-related costs. The HVAC maintenance line item increased to $28,000. The increase reflects not only expanded HVAC maintenance costs, but also a transition toward treating replacement filters for apparatus bay air filtration systems as an expense rather than periodic project-based funding every several years. Division Chief Greensides stated that maintaining improved air quality within apparatus bays remains an important firefighter health and safety initiative at UFA facilities.

Division Chief Greensides reviewed two improvement projects for the Logistics warehouse involving lighting upgrades and fan improvements totaling $17,000. He also reviewed the $25,000 increase within the medical supplies line item. Sanitation costs continue increasing, resulting in an $8,000 increase within the sanitation budget line item. He also reviewed a $20,000 increase within the small equipment and non-capital equipment budget categories. These funds support firefighting tools, hose replacement, station equipment, and other support equipment.
Division Chief Greensides outlined several projects. One project he specifically highlighted involved materials for the construction and maintenance of training props within Station 253.

Division Chief Greensides reviewed increasing utility costs associated with water and sewer services. The proposed budget included a $15,000 increase to account for rising utility expenses across UFA facilities.

Division Chief Greensides summarized the 6.53% reduction within the Logistics Division budget. He reiterated that despite the reduction, the division focuses on readiness, equipment reliability, facility support, Firefighter safety, and cost-conscious planning.

Technology Budget-Technology Director Casey Bowden

Technology Director Bowen informed the committee that the Technology Division is making progress addressing technical debt while modernizing technology systems. Major technology initiatives planned for FY 2026–2027 include migration to Microsoft Cloud email services, transition away from VMware systems, evaluation and testing of a new phone system, and modernization of server and storage infrastructure.

The Technology Division budget is not flat for FY 2026–2027, largely due to increasing software and technology service costs. He directed committee members to the non-personnel expenditure and explained that while some software costs increased, other categories remained flat or decreased. As part of cost-saving efforts, the division fully participated in a State of Utah-supported cybersecurity grant program after the State secured permanent funding for the software platform.

Director Bowden explained that participation in the program generated $80,000 in savings by allowing the organization to transition away from internally maintained security software solutions. Director Bowden reviewed several major technology investments included in the proposed budget. These include Microsoft 365 email upgrades, logistics supply ERP improvements, data gathering and analysis software, situational awareness tools, QA review software, and generative AI tools meeting government security and privacy standards. The ERP improvements would improve the management and tracking of station supply operations and logistics support.

Director Bowden then reviewed work related to Gold Cross ambulance billing data integration. The division's goal is to automate transport reconciliation processes between ESO patient care records, CAD dispatch data, and Gold Cross billing data. Gold Cross modified its API structure, allowing UFA to begin building automated reconciliation processes. The project is intended to reduce manual reconciliation work, improve efficiency, identify missed transports, detect discrepancies between systems, and improve insurance reimbursement.

Committee members lead a discussion regarding artificial intelligence and future applications within UFA. Chair Henderson referenced AI discussions occurring within municipal police departments and asked Director Bowden to expand on UFA's approach toward AI implementation. Director Bowden stated that the organization is intentionally attempting to remain ahead of emerging technology trends and emphasized that organizations unwilling to adapt to AI technology risk falling behind operationally. Director Bowden also explained that an AI policy development is under review within Command Staff, and the Technology staff has assembled a small internal AI working group to evaluate use cases and efficiencies

Emergency Management Budget-Director Tara Behunin

Emergency Management Director Behunin presented the EM budget and provided an overview of the division's mission, funding structure, and priorities. The Emergency Management Division works to save lives, protect property, and improve disaster preparedness through:

- Outreach
- Planning

- Training
- Exercises
- Emergency response coordination
- Recovery planning
- Hazard mitigation efforts for both natural and man-made disasters.

The FY 2026–2027 proposed budget aligns with the County's approved funding structure. Director Behunin reported that priorities for the upcoming fiscal year follow recommendations identified within the 2024 Threat Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA). These recommendations continue guiding preparedness, mitigation, training, and capability-building priorities for the division.

Director Behunin outlined areas of savings and expenditure increases within the proposed budget. Primary savings were achieved through right-sizing several budget items, completion of projects associated with the Emergency Coordination Center facility, and elimination of miscellaneous rental expenses that were no longer necessary. Director Behunin reviewed the division's revenue sources; the primary funding source remains the Salt Lake County contract. Additional revenue sources include two major annual federal grants: the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) and the Homeland Security Grant. These grants support both internal division operations and Valley-wide emergency preparedness capabilities. She also reviewed the Municipal Emergency Planner Reimbursement, which offsets management costs associated with oversight of emergency planners serving the Municipal Service District and Midvale.

A new revenue source added during the current fiscal year is the Wildland Land Interface (WUI) Preparedness, Prevention, and Mitigation Grant. The grant will support defensible space outreach campaigns and an upcoming wildfire preparedness town hall meeting.

Director Behunin then reviewed capital outlay items. Proposed projects include the purchase of a new drone to support development of a drone task force in partnership with the Sheriff's Office, replacement of a deployable light tower, and replacement of an enclosed equipment trailer. These projects are intended to improve emergency response coordination, field operations, and disaster readiness capabilities.

Director Behunin reviewed expenditure increases and highlighted several technology-related upgrades. One increase involves the replacement of aging computer equipment within the Emergency Operations Center to ensure the facility can activate effectively and reliably during emergencies. Director Behunin reviewed increased professional service costs associated with website maintenance and accessibility compliance. The increase supports website accessibility compliance. The division plans to replace one aging fleet vehicle as part of the Capital Replacement Plan outlined later in the budget document.

Director Behunin acknowledged that federal grant funding creates some uncertainty and described recent funding cycles as somewhat unpredictable. However, she explained that the division remains relatively stable due to Salt Lake County contract funding and collaboration with the State of Utah to pursue state-supported emergency management funding opportunities. Grant funding remains important for emergency response capabilities.

Committee members also asked for clarification regarding how the Emergency Management program financially impacts UFA and member communities. Salt Lake County has historically contracted with UFA to provide countywide emergency management services. Although Emergency Management personnel are UFA employees, the program itself is funded through Salt Lake County contract revenues and Grant funding sources.

Chief Burchett further explained that administrative costs associated with supporting the division, including Payroll, Human Resources, Legal services, and administrative oversight, are accounted for within the member fee structure. He referenced the member fee allocation chart, which identifies a $125,000 administrative cost offset credited back through the Emergency Management funding structure. CFO Tony Hill further clarified that Emergency Management operates within a separate Special Revenue Fund, completely separate from the General Fund that supports frontline fire operations.

Administration & Planning Budget-Assistant Chief Wade Russell

Assistant Chief Russell presented the Administration and Planning Budget. Assistant Chief Russell explained that the Administration and Planning Division provides executive leadership, strategic direction, and organizational support across all areas of Unified Fire Authority. He stated that the division's responsibilities include:

Professional development
Behavioral health and wellness
Government relations
Legal services
Compliance
Risk management
Strategic planning

Assistant Chief Russell reviewed several budget adjustments within the proposed FY 2026–2027 budget. The first involved funding for external behavioral health clinicians. The proposed budget increases that line item from $100,000 to $120,000. Assistant Chief Russell explained that the $20,000 reflects increased utilization trends and growing demand for behavioral health services among employees. The increase would allow UFA to continue providing timely, high-quality, and accessible behavioral health support for personnel.

Assistant Chief Russell next reviewed increases related to Property, Casualty, and Cyber insurance. The proposed budget includes $880,000 for these insurance coverages. The $60,000 increase was attributed to market conditions and an 8% increase in property valuations. Assistant Chief Russell stated that the increase was necessary to maintain appropriate insurance coverage and risk protection for the organization.

Assistant Chief Russell discussed the organization's Tuition Reimbursement Program. UFA reimburses 75% of tuition costs, up to $4,000 annually per employee. Participation in the program has increased as employees continue investing in their professional development and educational advancement. To support the increased utilization, the proposed budget includes an $15,000 within the tuition reimbursement line item. Assistant Chief Russell stated that staff anticipate growth in the program.

As part of the stress test process, the Administration and Planning Division identified $9,000 in budget reductions. Assistant Chief Russell explained that these reductions were intentional, targeted, and focused on lower-impact expenditures and efficiencies, while preserving core services and support functions.

Assistant Chief Russell noted that future budget cycles will likely require evaluation of tuition reimbursement funding and travel budgets. The division's travel budget has remained essentially flat for five years, despite steadily increasing travel-related expenses. As costs continue rising, the organization may need to reevaluate and right-size those budget categories to maintain professional development opportunities and external training access for employees.

Fire Prevention Budget-Fire Marshal Watkins

Fire Marshal Watkins presented the Fire Prevention Budget. Fire Marshal Watkins explained that the mission of the Fire Prevention Division is to advance community risk reduction efforts by reducing fire risk and enhancing public safety through proactive prevention activities. The division's responsibilities include fire code enforcement, building inspections, plan reviews, hazardous materials inspections, and public education and outreach.

Fire Marshal Watkins outlined budget adjustments within the Fire Prevention Division. As part of the 10% stress test process, the division identified $3,000 in savings within the books and publications line item.

Fire Marshal Watkins also reviewed a proposed $10,000 budget reallocation from the Hazardous Materials CADRE overtime program into Community Risk Reduction initiatives. The adjustment allows the division to strengthen prevention-focused programs and community outreach efforts while still maintaining the sustainability of the Hazmat Cadre program through existing funding.

Fire Marshal Watkins emphasized that the change does not create any new budget increase for the division but instead reallocates existing resources toward expanded community risk reduction efforts supporting member communities.

Fire Marshal Watkins also highlighted technology upgrades included within the proposed budget. The Technology Division budget includes funding for iPads for Fire Prevention personnel to support the field implementation of live cloud-based inspection software. The software system improves efficiency, data accuracy, inspection consistency, and field inspection capabilities. Fire Marshal Watkins noted that 90% of municipalities within the State of Utah utilize the Live inspection platform. He also stated that UFA was one of the first agencies in Utah to implement the system and view the platform as an important tool for Fire Prevention services.

Fire Marshal Watkins then reviewed the Hazardous Materials Inspection Program. The program is projected to generate $370,000 in revenue during FY 2026–2027. Fire Prevention staff continues identifying businesses in UFA jurisdictions that require hazardous materials permits and inspections.

Fire Marshal Watkins also reviewed several future staffing considerations. Potential future budget requests may include a full-time Hazardous Materials Inspector and a Community Risk Reduction

Manager position. These positions would further strengthen community risk reduction initiatives, hazardous materials oversight, public education efforts, and inspection capabilities.

Committee members encouraged Fire Marshal Watkins to continue documenting inspection activity, hazardous condition findings, and compliance improvements to help demonstrate future needs and staffing justifications. Fire Marshal Watkins agreed and noted that the hazardous materials permitting system continues to support compliance efforts.

Fire Marshal Watkins highlighted the Fire Prevention Division's detailed fee schedule. The fee schedule outlines:
Permit fees
Hazardous materials permit fees
Other Fire Prevention service charges

He reminded committee members that UFA member communities are not charged permit fees for community fireworks events requiring Fire Prevention permits.

Committee members complimented the division's proactive approach to prevention, community outreach, and hazardous materials compliance efforts.

Special Enforcement Budget-Staff Captain Steve Bowen

Staff Captain Steve Bowen presented the Special Enforcement Division Budget. Captain Bowen explained that the Special Enforcement Division serves as a specialized component of Unified Fire Authority and supports the organization's mission, vision, and core values through a variety of high-risk and specialized response functions.

As part of the budget stress test process, the division identified $3,300 in targeted reductions. Captain Bowen explained that the reductions were carefully evaluated in order to preserve core services, response capability, and program quality.

Captain Bowen reviewed a proposed budget request involving a contract with Evidence.com, a cloud-based digital evidence management platform. The proposed allocation totals $4,500. The system would improve digital evidence security, evidence storage, data management efficiency, and coordination with prosecutors. The platform would also support evidence-sharing requirements associated with the Salt Lake County District Attorney's Office, allowing investigators to securely upload photographs, Investigation records, and other digital evidence for criminal prosecution and case management purposes. Captain Bowen stated that implementation of the system would occur in coordination with the Technology Division.

Captain Bowen next reviewed a proposed $10,000 increase to the SWAT Medic Program CADRE overtime budget. Since the program's creation in 2004, Special Enforcement personnel have provided dedicated medical support for tactical law enforcement operations. Originally, the program supported only the Unified Police Department. However, the program has expanded over time. In 2019, support expanded to South Valley SWAT, and in 2024, support expanded to Taylorsville SWAT through formal Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs). Captain Bowen stated the overtime increase supports tactical medical training and readiness. He further noted that

$5,000 of the increase would be offset through funding support provided by participating agencies under the existing MOUs.

Finance Division Budget-CFO Tony Hill

CFO Hill presented the Finance Division Budget and provided an overview of the division's responsibilities, operational priorities, and budget adjustments for FY 2026–2027. He explained that the mission of the Finance Division is to safeguard the fiscal health of the organization through transparency, timely reporting, accurate financial information, and relevant financial analysis and support.

CFO Hill summarized the division's budget changes. He explained that, outside of expenditures associated with the 911 ambulance transport program, ambulance billing services, and Medicaid matching programs, the remainder of the Finance Division budget remained essentially flat with no expenditure increases. While several individual costs increased, including outside audit services, bank fees, and ClearGov software expenses, the division was able to offset those increases through reductions and efficiencies in other areas of the budget. As a result, the only net increase reflected within the division budget was $65,000 associated with the ambulance billing program and related ambulance revenue collection operations.

CFO Hill highlighted efforts by the Accounts Payable team to modernize vendor payment systems. Over the past several years, the Finance Division has worked aggressively to transition vendors away from traditional paper check payments toward ACH electronic payments.

CFO Hill directed committee members to the ambulance billing increases identified within the Finance Division expenditures. The increases are tied to ambulance transport billing operations and revenue collection services previously discussed during the ambulance transport budget presentation.

CFO Hill reviewed one of the more financial actions included within the proposed budget involving the payoff of the Logistics warehouse loan. He referenced Chief Burchett's earlier budget remarks regarding the proposed debt payoff. UFA plans to utilize available fund balance reserves to fully pay off the remaining warehouse debt owed to Unified Fire Service Area. The payoff utilizes one-time available fund balance resources. No revenue sources are being used for the payoff, and the action will eliminate $188,000 in annual debt obligations. CFO Hill stated that eliminating the debt payment will create financial flexibility beginning next fiscal year and into the future.

The proposed Finance Division budget totals $4.3 million. While the budget appears to reflect a substantial increase, $800,000 of the increase is associated with the one-time warehouse loan payoff. When excluding that one-time expenditure, the increase for the Finance Division is 3.66%.

Human Resources Budget-Human Resources Director Day

Human Resources Director Day presented its FY 2026–2027 budget. She explained that the Human Resources Division supports the entire employee life cycle at Unified Fire Authority, including:
Recruitment and hiring
Employee onboarding
Training support
Policy administration

Benefits administration
Employee wellness and support services

The division’s primary goal is to ensure that UFA maintains: qualified personnel, effective support systems, safe and sustainable working environments, so employees can perform their duties effectively and safely. Director Day stated that the Human Resources budget continues to align closely with the organization’s strategic plan, with emphasis on leadership development, internal policy improvement, behavioral health support, and organizational communication.

These efforts support workforce stability. As part of the stress test process, Human Resources reviewed expenditures to identify cost reductions that would not negatively impact services. During the previous fiscal year, the organization budgeted for 37 employee allocations. Now that those positions have largely been filled, staffing levels are returning to more typical hiring projections. As a result, Human Resources anticipates lower hiring activity during FY 2026–2027, generating $31,000 in savings.

Director Day reviewed several changes related to employee medical and screening programs. Due to policy adjustments, drug screening costs increased by $8,200. However, because hiring activity is expected to decline, new hire physical examination costs also decreased, resulting in net savings of $1,600.

Human Resources also reviewed changes related to policy management. The division’s part-time Policy Analyst is scheduled to retire, resulting in $47,000 in savings. Director Day explained that the position will not be refilled at this time. Over the past several years, the organization has anticipated this retirement and implemented PowerDMS, a policy management software platform designed to improve policy tracking, compliance management, policy updates, and accessibility. The implementation of PowerDMS now allows the organization to absorb the retiring employee's responsibilities internally without replacing the position.

As part of the proposed FY 2026–2027 budget, Human Resources requested funding for a pilot Occupational Health and Medical Oversight Program. The proposed pilot program costs $13,800. The pilot is intended to strengthen medical oversight, improve coordination with contracted physicians, enhance consistency in employee medical care, and allow earlier identification and management of employee health-related issues. The pilot program will allow the organization to evaluate effectiveness before making any commitments.

Director Day directed committee members to the detailed budget adjustments. Overall, the Human Resources budget reflects a 4.5% decrease for FY 2026–2027. Looking ahead, she noted that one future consideration that may require evaluation is the implementation of a paid parental leave program. Such a program could improve employee well-being, strengthen recruitment efforts, and improve employee retention and competitiveness.

Information Outreach Budget-Director Nile Easton

Director Easton stated that as part of the stress test process, the division identified $3,500 in direct reductions through adjustments to professional fees, retirement party funding, printing costs, postage, and membership expenses. Retirement party funding was reduced largely because fewer employees have recently chosen to hold formal retirement events. The division also eliminated a part-time summer position that had remained difficult to fill for five years. The position was eliminated due to staffing challenges. Eliminating the position resulted in $36,000 in savings, which was essentially transferred back into Operations rather than functioning as a direct reduction.

Director Easton stated that the IO Division intentionally limited new budget requests and instead focused on maintaining core needs and continuing measurable support for both the organization and member communities.

The IO Division also discussed growth in digital outreach and social media engagement. Director Easton illustrated increasing online engagement trends across the organization's digital platforms. Staff then directed committee members to review revenue trends associated with community event support services. They explained that a noticeable revenue decrease between FY 2023 and FY 2024 resulted from a deliberate decision to reduce staffing support for large private for-profit events that were competing for resources during the same time periods as city-sponsored community events. Affected communities included Herriman, Eagle Mountain, Riverton, and Millcreek. UFA intentionally prioritized support for member city events over private commercial events when resource conflicts arose. As a result, some private events now obtain medical and event staffing support from outside providers such as Gold Cross Ambulance.

The division noted that the gradual increase now reflected in event revenues is tied to growth in city-sponsored community events rather than a return to supporting large private events.

Lastly, Director Easton reviewed the fee schedule adjustments. Several fees associated with private event support services were increased 5–10% to reflect rising costs.

Capital Replacement Fund-Chief Burchett

Chief Burchett introduced the Capital Replacement Fund presentation. FY 2026–2027 is not a lease financing year, meaning the organization is not entering into any new major lease obligations during the current budget cycle. However, the proposed capital plan does include $540,000 in cash purchases for various equipment and needs.

CFO Tony Hill directed committee members to review the summarized capital funding sources, capital expenditures, and projected ending fund balance totals. The proposed capital replacement fund is projected to end the fiscal year with $6.1 million in fund balance. Several years earlier, the organization worked with Councilmember Henderson to establish a target reserve equal to 75% of outstanding capital payment obligations. The projected ending balance for FY 2026–2027 meets that target.

CFO Hill then reviewed the list of proposed cash purchase items. Councilmember Henderson emphasized the importance of maintaining replacement schedules, asset life-cycle planning, and ongoing reserve contributions for large capital items such as servers, technology infrastructure, apparatus, specialized equipment, and other high-cost assets. He stated that even when equipment is purchased outright rather than financed, the organization should continue planning and reserving funds annually for future replacement needs rather than reacting to equipment failures or major replacement spikes.

The organization's capital replacement planning process was outlined in the budget document. The document identifies capital assets, planned replacement timelines, equipment life cycles, and long-term replacement schedules extending through FY 2033–2034. CFO Hill stated that nearly all proposed purchases within the current budget cycle are already included within the replacement plan. The only exception identified was a $18,000 replacement dump trailer, which required unplanned replacement after the existing trailer experienced failure.

CFO Hill noted that the capital replacement plan manages $95 million in total capital assets. The objective of the plan is to smooth member fee impacts, avoid major funding spikes, maintain predictable replacement cycles, and ensure readiness of critical equipment. The organization's capital planning strategy is specifically designed to prevent significant fluctuations in future member fees caused by large equipment replacement cycles.

Before concluding, Chief Burchett briefly reviewed the appendix section of the budget document. The appendix includes information related to benefits and compensation, retention history, wage history, and compensation survey data.

Chief Burchett referenced employee retention information previously requested by Councilmember Henderson. The appendix contains substantial supporting information that may assist committee members in understanding organizational compensation trends, historical wage adjustments, and workforce retention patterns.

5. <u>Deliberation</u>

Chair Henderson emphasized the importance of maintaining predictable replacement schedules to avoid future spikes in member fees and highlighted the value of staff discipline, long-term planning, organizational transparency, and sustainable budgeting practices.

Committee members expressed appreciation for the professionalism and transparency demonstrated throughout the budget process. Chair Henderson reiterated that the committee's role is to provide oversight on behalf of taxpayers and ensure long-term financial sustainability.

6. <u>Recommendation to the Full Board of Directors</u>

Mayor Fotheringham made a motion to recommend submitting the proposed budget as presented to the UFA Board of Directors for consideration. Mayor Jackson seconded the motion and all voted in favor; none opposed.
(Mayor Gray did not vote)

7. <u>Possible Closed Session</u>

None

8. <u>Adjournment</u>

Mayor Buroker made a motion to adjourn the May 14, 2026, Finance Committee Meeting. Mayor Jackson seconded the motion, and all voted in favor; none opposed.

<u>BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE</u>

Mayor Buroker	Mayor Jackson
Mayor Fotheringham	Mayor Gettel

Councilmember Henderson	Mayor Gray	
Councilmember Harris	Mayor Bourke	
Deputy Mayor Kanter	Mayor Bennion	

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Dominic Burchett	CFO Tony Hill	CLO Brian Roberts
Clerk Micayla Dinkel		

ATTENDEES

AC Dern	AC Russell	DC Widdison
Courtney Samuel	HRD Kiley Day	OC Kay
DC Greensides	DC Ayres	DOC Easton
DC Fossum	Captain Green	Captain Bowen
Union President Young	Vice President Doyle	DC Prokopis
Trenton Martin	BC Bogenschutz	DC Widdison
Assistant Finance Director Turnbaugh	EM Director Behunin	