



UNIFIED FIRE AUTHORITY BOARD MINUTES

July 21, 2026 7:30 AM

Electronically via Zoom Webinar/UFA Headquarters-3380 South 900 West SLC, UT 84119

- Call to Order

Quorum present

Chair Fotheringham called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

- Public Comment

No members of the public requested to speak either in person or electronically. Public comment was available live and through the posted public comment email address.

- Minutes Approval

a. June 17, 2026, UFA Board Meeting Minutes

b. June 17, 2026, UFA 6PM Board Meeting Minutes

Mayor Sudbury made a motion to approve June 17, 2026, UFA Board Meeting minutes as well as the minutes from June 17, 2026 6PM Special Meeting as submitted. Councilmember Stewart seconded the motion, and all voted in favor; none opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

- Committee Updates

Chair Fotheringham reported that no committee meetings had been held since the previous Board meeting.

- Consent Agenda

a. Review of June Disbursements

CFO Hill presented the June disbursements for the Board to review. He noted that the report was generally consistent with previous months. No questions or concerns were raised.

Councilmember Stewart made a motion to approve the consent agenda items as submitted. Mayor Overson seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

- Administrative and Planning Report

Assistant Chief Wade Russell introduced the Administration & Planning report and provided an overview of UFA's Special Enforcement Division. AC Russell explained that the division, led by Division Chief Paul Larsen and reporting to Fire Marshal Watkins, provides highly specialized capabilities that support UFA, law enforcement partners, and the communities UFA serves.

Fire Marshal Watkins provided an overview of the Special Enforcement Division and its primary areas of responsibility, including fire and arson investigations, bomb squad operations, tactical paramedic support, internal investigations, and new-hire background investigations.

- **Fire and Arson Investigations:** Investigators determine the origin and cause of fires and manage criminal fire investigations from the initial scene through the investigative process and, when appropriate, the apprehension and arrest of those responsible. UFA participates in a joint arson task force with Salt Lake City Fire Department, allowing the agencies to share resources, specialized equipment, and investigative expertise. UFA also maintains partnerships with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and other local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.
- **Bomb Squad Operations:** UFA operates one of eight accredited bomb squads in Utah. Bomb technicians are trained and certified through the FBI Hazardous Devices School in Huntsville, Alabama. Responsibilities include rendering safe improvised explosive devices and homemade explosives, responding to commercial explosives and certain military ordnance, conducting post-blast investigations, supporting executive protection and major-event security operations, assisting SWAT teams with explosive threats, administering commercial blasting permits, and safely disposing of fireworks and ammunition.
- **Tactical Support:** The division provides tactical paramedic and bomb technician support to law enforcement agencies, including Unified Police Department, South Valley SWAT, and Taylorsville Police Department. Tactical paramedics operate alongside law enforcement during high-risk incidents to provide advanced medical care at the point of injury. Tactical bomb technicians provide specialized expertise to SWAT commanders and tactical teams during incidents involving explosive hazards.

Fire Marshal Watkins reviewed FY25–26 activity for the Special Enforcement Division. During the fiscal year, the division:

- Responded to 295 explosive and fire investigations.
- Conducted 49 canine deployments involving accelerant- and explosive-detection canines.
- Assisted with 21 arson arrests.
- Completed 98 SWAT paramedic deployments.
- Delivered 25 explosive-awareness and SWAT medical training courses to public safety partners.

The Board discussed the extensive training required for UFA bomb technicians. Division Chief Larsen explained that initial certification requires six weeks of training at the FBI Hazardous Devices School in Huntsville, Alabama. The federal government covers the cost of the training, with UFA responsible for employee wages. Bomb technicians return every three years for a one-week recertification and participate in ongoing training, with Thursdays dedicated to explosive-related training.

Chief Burchett noted that UFA maintains an MOU with ATF that allows UFA investigators to assist with significant incidents outside UFA's service area while receiving reimbursement for those services. State funding has also assisted with equipment purchases supporting the program. Staff agreed that reimbursement, outside funding, and the value of specialized resources are important considerations when providing these capabilities beyond UFA's member communities.

Following the Board Meetings, Board members were invited to view Special Enforcement Division equipment and resources, including bomb squad capabilities, bomb suits, and one of the division's canines.

- Operations Report

- a. Call Volume/Incident Highlight

Assistant Chief Dern presented the Emergency Services Operations Report and reviewed year-to-date response activity through July 7, 2026. UFA has responded to nearly 21,000 incidents year to date. Based on the current call volume, AC Dern anticipated UFA could finish the calendar year approximately 2,000 incidents above the previous year.

AC Dern reviewed first-due response performance and explained that the measure reflects how often the engine or ladder assigned to an area is the first apparatus to arrive at an incident within its first-due area. UFA's overall first-due performance remained approximately 95%. Call volume and large incidents can affect this performance when first-due units are already committed elsewhere. During significant incidents, UFA uses move-ups to reposition available units and maintain coverage throughout the service area.

AC Dern also discussed the following:

- UFA responded to approximately 3,500 incidents during June.
- Response-time performance remained relatively consistent from month to month.
- Turnout times typically increase slightly during the summer as crews respond to more grass, brush, and wildland fires and may need to cross-staff from structural apparatus to Type 6 engines or water tenders.
- The low-acuity unit operating out of Station 101 showed approximately 20% unit-hour utilization based on its 40-hour workweek.
- Fire-related calls increased by approximately 116 from the previous month, while medical calls decreased.

AC Dern provided a preliminary comparison of July 4th call volume. UFA responded to approximately 150 incidents on July 4, 2026, compared with approximately 125 incidents on July 4, 2025. Although total call volume was higher, AC Dern noted a significant reduction in activity during the traditionally busiest period between approximately 8:30 and 10:30 p.m. He explained that the radio and response activity were noticeably quieter than in previous years and attributed the change largely to the fireworks restrictions in place.

Incident Highlight – Butterfield Canyon Rescue

OC Kay presented an incident highlight from a significant technical rescue that occurred in Butterfield Canyon on July 4. A young driver went approximately 250 feet off the roadway and came to rest in heavy brush on an extremely steep portion of the canyon. The vehicle could not be seen from the roadway above or below. Crews utilized the what3words location app to identify the driver's location. OC Kay explained that the application divides the globe into small geographic squares, with each square assigned a unique three-word identifier. Dispatchers can obtain the three-word location from a caller and enter the information into CAD, allowing responding crews to more accurately locate individuals in remote areas.

UFA crews from Copperton and the Heavy Rescue team from Riverton responded, with mutual-aid assistance from South Jordan and West Jordan Fire Departments as well. Crews performed a technical rope rescue to reach and remove the driver. Once crews reached the vehicle, they also performed an extrication and removed a vehicle door to access the patient. OC Kay reported that despite the approximately 250-foot descent and complexity of the incident, the driver sustained relatively minor injuries.

The UFA Board commended the crews for their work and discussed whether the what3words application could be promoted to residents. OC Kay noted that the application is increasingly used for incidents in remote areas, particularly canyon rescues, and could potentially be incorporated into future public-information efforts from Information Outreach.

b. CARES Data Report

EMS Division Chief Rob Ayres presented UFA's 2025 Cardiac Arrest Registry to Enhance Survival (CARES) data. CARES is a national program that collects and analyzes out-of-hospital cardiac arrest data and provides participating agencies with benchmarking information. UFA submits EMS incident data to the State of Utah, which provides the applicable information to CARES.

DC Ayres reviewed UFA's calendar year 2025 cardiac arrest data:

UFA responded to 372 cardiac arrest incidents out of 30,694 total EMS incidents.

Of the 372 cardiac arrest incidents, 295 met CARES criteria for analysis. CARES primarily evaluates non-traumatic cardiac arrests in which resuscitation was attempted by a professional provider.

Bystander CPR was performed in 156 cases.

An AED was applied prior to EMS arrival in 39 cases, with two patients receiving a shock before EMS arrival. Return of spontaneous circulation (ROSC) was achieved in 98 cases.

Sixty-one patients survived the prehospital event and were admitted to the hospital.

Forty-one patients ultimately survived and were discharged from the hospital, representing a survival rate of just under 14%, compared with a national rate of approximately 10%.

DC Ayres also reviewed the Utstein survival measures, which focus on cardiac arrest patients with circumstances and heart rhythms that provide a reasonable opportunity for successful resuscitation. UFA achieved an approximately 41% Utstein survival rate and a 60% Utstein bystander survival rate. The national Utstein bystander survival rate was approximately 37%.

DC Ayres emphasized that UFA uses CARES data not only to measure performance but also to guide clinical protocols and training. Research demonstrates that high-quality chest compressions and early defibrillation are critical factors in cardiac arrest survival. UFA's training therefore places significant emphasis on effective CPR and utilizes the Resuscitation Quality Improvement (RQI) program to reinforce those skills.

Board members congratulated UFA personnel on the strong cardiac arrest survival outcomes and expressed appreciation for the work contributing to those results.

Fire Chief Report

a. Mutual Aid Report

Chief Burchett presented UFA's year-to-date Mutual Aid Report and explained that the report will be provided to the Board approximately twice each year to monitor UFA's mutual-aid relationships with neighboring fire agencies.

Year-to-date data showed a difference of only 32 responses between mutual aid received and mutual aid provided. Chief Burchett noted that while individual agency relationships may vary, the regional mutual-aid system remains well balanced overall. UFA regularly monitors the data and works directly with neighboring fire chiefs when adjustments are needed.

The Board discussed the importance of considering more than the number of calls exchanged when evaluating mutual aid. UFA often provides specialized resources, heavy apparatus, and additional personnel that may represent greater cost and capability than a standard response. Staff confirmed that mutual-aid activity can be evaluated by apparatus type, personnel hours, time committed, and specialized resources to ensure relationships remain equitable.

Chief Burchett emphasized that the mutual-aid system is intended to provide the closest appropriate resource to critical incidents while maintaining appropriate value for UFA member communities. Staff will continue monitoring mutual-aid activity and report significant concerns to the Board.

b. 2027-2029 Strategic Plan Update

Chief Burchett provided an update on the development of UFA's 2027–2029 Strategic Plan. EMS Division Chief Rob Ayres is chairing the Strategic Planning Committee and provided the Board with an overview of the process and anticipated timeline.

DC Ayres explained that the strategic planning process began in June and is designed to gather input from UFA employees, external stakeholders, Board members, community representatives, and the general public. An internal Strategic Planning Committee of approximately 20 employees was established, representing a cross-section of the organization, including civilian employees, multiple divisions, ranks, and experience levels.

The committee's first step was to develop and distribute an internal survey focused on identifying UFA's strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and challenges that may influence the organization over the next three years. Approximately 300–400 employees responded to the survey, generating nearly 2,000 individual data points.

The committee has begun reviewing and organizing the survey responses into common themes. The goal is to narrow the feedback into approximately three to five primary themes within each category that can ultimately be used to develop the goals and initiatives included in the new Strategic Plan.

DC Ayres outlined the next phases of the process:

- External Stakeholder Survey: UFA liaisons are working with Board members and municipalities to identify community stakeholders who should be invited to participate. An external survey is anticipated to be distributed in August.
- Focus Groups: Following the internal and external surveys, UFA plans to conduct focus groups to gather more detailed information regarding the themes identified through the surveys. The focus groups are expected to occur during August and September.
- Community/Social Media Outreach: UFA also plans to conduct outreach through social media to gather broader public input regarding the organization and its future priorities.
- Plan Development: Once the internal, external, and public input has been gathered, the committee will spend October and November further refining the identified themes and developing proposed goals and initiatives for the next three years.

A draft of the Strategic Plan is anticipated to be presented to Command Staff in November for review and input. The plan is then expected to be presented to the Board in December or January for review and approval. DC Ayres noted that the timeline is aggressive but expressed confidence that the committee will meet the anticipated benchmarks so the new Strategic Plan can be in place as the current plan concludes at the end of the calendar year.

c. Recognition of Councilmember Huish

Chief Burchett reported that Councilmember Huish has moved out of White City and, as a result, stepped down from the White City Council and the UFA and UFSA Boards. White City is in the process of appointing

a replacement. Chief Burchett noted that Councilmember Huish will be formally recognized at a future meeting.

d. Board Leadership

Chief Burchett reviewed the current Board leadership structure. Chair Fotheringham and Vice Chair Gettel have completed the first year of what has traditionally been a two-year term. Both are willing to continue serving in their current roles, and no concerns or requested changes were expressed by the Board.

e. Paramedic Leadership

Chief Burchett provided an update on UFA's efforts to address the current paramedic shortage. UFA plans to conduct a targeted paramedic lateral hiring process in conjunction with the recruit camp scheduled for February.

Staff have evaluated the current lateral hiring requirements and identified opportunities to reduce certain entry requirements that can be completed through UFA training after hire. UFA also plans to provide a limited sick and vacation leave bank to lateral hires. Chief Burchett explained that leaving accumulated leave behind at another agency can be a significant barrier for experienced paramedics considering a move to UFA. UFA will focus on leave benefits and a target recruitment campaign. Recruitment efforts will include a video featuring current lateral employees discussing their experiences with UFA.

Chief Burchett noted that the paramedic shortage is occurring statewide and nationally. UFA's goal is to position itself as a destination fire department and attract qualified paramedics through the revised lateral process. Recruitment will begin in August, with successful candidates anticipated to join UFA in February. The Board discussed where lateral candidates are typically recruited from. Chief Burchett noted that recent lateral hires have been a mix of local and out-of-state candidates.

Mayor Grey also shared information regarding Eagle Mountain's housing grant program, which may provide up to \$25,000 to eligible first responders and other qualifying professions who relocate to the community, which might help in recruitment.

f. Fire Training Facility Reimbursement Resolution

Chief Burchett provided an update regarding the Fire Training Facility Reimbursement Resolution. The resolution was included on the UFSA Board agenda for consideration because UFSA will serve as the conduit financing entity for the Fire Training Facility loan.

The resolution will allow UFA to begin incurring eligible expenses for the project and be reimbursed for those expenditures once financing is secured. This will allow work on the facility, including construction

management and architectural design, to move forward while staff continue to monitor interest rates and determine the appropriate timing for financing.

g. Fireworks Ban Update

Chief Burchett provided an update regarding fireworks restrictions in advance of the Pioneer Day holiday. He reviewed recent guidance from the State Forester and noted that municipalities wishing to maintain or implement a full fireworks ban or make changes to their existing restriction maps or discharge dates were required to submit documentation to the State Forester.

Municipalities choosing to return to the fireworks restriction maps adopted prior to May 1 were not required to take additional action.

Chief Burchett noted that he had communicated directly with Board members regarding the available options and provided letters of support to municipalities choosing to pursue a full ban. UFA staff remained available to assist municipalities with the required documentation and mapping information.

Board members expressed appreciation for UFA's communication and assistance as municipalities worked through the State's requirements and determined the appropriate restrictions for their communities.

Possible Closed Session

No closed session was held.

Adjournment

Councilmember Stewart moved to adjourn the July 21, 2026, UFA Board Meeting. Mayor Sudbury seconded the motion, and all voted in favor; none opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mayor Cheri Jackson

Mayor Paul Fotheringham

Mayor Gay Lynn Bennion

Councilmember Chrystal Butterfield

Councilmember Kathleen Bailey

Mayor Scotty John

Mayor Kristie Overson

Mayor Tish Buroker

Councilmember Catherine Harris

Mayor Mick Sudbury

Mayor Jared Gray

Deputy Mayor Catherine Kanter

Councilmember Sheldon Stewart

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Councilmember Jared Henderson

Mayor Dustin Gettel

Mayor Roger Bourke

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

CFO Tony Hill

CLO Brian Roberts

Clerk Micayla Dinkel

Fire Chief Dominic Burchett

ATTENDEES

AC Dern

AC Robinson

HRD Day

AC Russell

FM Watkins

DOC Easton

OC Kay

Specialist Rivera

Digital Media Specialist Samuel

DC Ayres

BC Lintz

David Chipman

BC Bogenschutz

DC Greensides