



UNIFIED FIRE AUTHORITY BOARD MINUTES

OCTOBER 21, 2025, 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 7:31am.

- Public Comment

None

Public comment was available live and with a posted email address.

- Minutes Approval

a. September 16, 2025

Mayor Gettel made a motion to approve the September 16, 2025, minutes as submitted. Mayor Knopp seconded the motion, and all voted in favor; none opposed.

- Consent Agenda

a. Review of September Disbursements

CFO Hill presented the September 2025 disbursements. Total disbursements in the General Fund were approximately \$9.6 million, with additional activity in the other UFA funds. No specific items were highlighted for concern. CFO Hill indicated that September was a standard month and offered to answer any questions; none were raised.

Mayor Gettel made a motion to approve the September disbursements as submitted. Deputy Mayor Kanter seconded the motion, and all voted in favor; none opposed.

- Committee Updates

a. Benefits and Compensation-Chair election will be in January 2025

No meeting was held

b. Governance Committee-Chair Gettel

No meeting was held

c. Finance Committee-Chair Henderson

No meeting was held

- Approval of the FY26-27 Budget Calendar

CFO Hill presented the proposed budget calendar for the FY26–27 budget process. He noted that although the turnaround feels quick, staff will begin budget kickoff meetings within the next six weeks and prepare the budget software system for use in December.

Three Benefits & Compensation Committee meetings will be held (one each in January, February, and March), all scheduled on Thursdays at 9:00 am. Two Finance Committee meetings will be held– one in April for the Fire Chief’s proposed budget presentation and one on May 14 for budget review.

CFO Hill stated that the UFA sub-committee assignments, including chairs and members, are typically reviewed and confirmed in January each year, allowing Board members to join or leave committees at that time.

Council Member Jackson made a motion to approve the FY26-27 Budget Calendar as submitted. Council Member Buroker seconded the motion, all voted in favor; none opposed.

- Consider the Date of November 18, 2025, for a Public Hearing to Receive and Consider Comments on Proposed Amendments to the FY25-26 Budget

CFO Hill requested that the Board set a public hearing date to consider the first round of FY25–26 budget amendments. He explained that UFA typically conducts an initial amendment in November each year to true-up grants and miscellaneous items and to ensure the budget accurately reflects current funding and expenditures.

Mayor Gettel made a motion to set November 18, 2025, as the date for a public hearing to receive and consider public comment on proposed amendments to the 25-26 fiscal year budget. Mayor Overson seconded the motion, and all voted in favor; none opposed.

- Consider Resolution 10-2025A, Approval and Authorization to Enter Conduit Financing and Sublease with Unified Fire Service Area for Lease Purchase Agreement

CFO Hill presented a resolution approving the conduit financing structure and associated sublease with Unified Fire Service Area (UFSA) for equipment acquisition that was previously authorized in the budget. This is the second step in the financing package discussed at the September Board meeting.

The primary lessor is JPMorgan Chase Bank. UFSA serves as the lessee; UFA is the sublessee under the conduit financing structure. The total financing amount is approximately \$22.5 million for the acquisition of apparatus and equipment, consistent with prior Board-approved budget items. The final interest rate is 3.425%, resulting in annual payments slightly over \$3 million. The approved rate is below the 3.59% rate assumed during budget development, reducing anticipated payments by approximately \$115,000 annually.

CFO Hill provided context that UFA uses conduit financing through UFSA because UFA does not levy property tax or exercise eminent domain, and therefore does not meet all the criteria for non-taxable financing. Using UFSA as the conduit allows UFA to secure tax-exempt financing. This is the third time UFA has used this structure; other entities, such as the County or cities, could also serve as a conduit, but UFSA has agreed to fulfill this role for this transaction. Board members commented favorably on the secured interest rate and the financing timing.

Mayor Knopp made a motion to approve Resolution 10-2025A, authorizing UFA to enter into a conduit financing sublease with Unified Fire Service Area for a lease purchase agreement. Council Member Jackson seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote Taken

Bailey	YES	Jackson	YES
Bourke	-	Kanter	YES
Buroker	YES	Knopp	YES
Butterfield	YES	Overson	YES
Fotheringham	YES	Stewart	-
Gettel	YES	Weichers	-
Harris	YES	Westmoreland	YES
Henderson	YES		
Huish	YES		
Hull	YES		

• Administration and Planning Report-AC Russell

a. Professional Development Update

AC Russell provided the Board with an update on professional development. AC Russell described a structured, intentional approach to building leadership capacity from company officers through executive levels.

Captain’s Leadership Academy – A series of four internally taught courses focused on tactical decision-making, communication, and crew leadership. The program blends classroom instruction with scenario-based discussions to strengthen leadership under pressure in both incident and station environments.

Battalion Chief Leadership Academy – A four-course series preparing future battalion chiefs to serve as operational administrators capable of managing crisis and organizational complexity. Emphasis areas include incident command, crisis decision-making, and essential administrative processes.

Task Books – New task books for captain and battalion chief positions that provide measurable benchmarks

and validation of on-the-job leadership competencies, bridging the gap between classroom learning and operational performance.

External Partnerships – Continued participation in programs such as the Centerpoint Leadership Cohort, Mission-Centered Solutions “Point of the Spear” fire line leadership course, and ChamberWest Leadership Institute to support personal leadership growth and exposure to civic leadership.

Internal Engagement – Revamped liaison program and streamlined internal committees, offering employees opportunities to lead projects, represent UFA with municipal partners, and contribute to policy development.

AC Russell explained that historically, promotional processes for captain and battalion chief relied on written testing and assessment centers based primarily on eligibility criteria and certifications. The new academies and task books are now prerequisites for participation in promotional processes, ensuring candidates are better prepared for leadership roles. Board members asked several questions regarding course structure, participant eligibility, and how these programs support firefighters who choose a leadership path. AC Russell emphasized that the professional development plan provides a clear pathway from firefighter to chief-level positions.

b. Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Adoption Status Update

Fire Marshal Watkins provided an update on House Bill 48. The bill requires WUI code adoption by January 1, 2026, in communities meeting specific structure exposure score (SES) thresholds on the URAP map.

The WUI provisions are based on the 2006 WUI Code, which is derived from sections of the ICC Fire Code already adopted by member communities. Adoption applies to defined WUI boundary maps within each jurisdiction. Several valley-floor communities (e.g., Taylorsville, Riverton, and Midvale) have low or no qualifying SES scores and are expected to be exempt from adoption. Fire Marshal Watkins is reviewing each municipality’s SES scores with the State to confirm exemption status, where appropriate, and has written confirmation for exempt communities. For communities with higher SES scores, adoption processes are actively underway through council meetings.

Board members asked clarifying questions regarding which jurisdictions are exempt and whether all municipalities are on track to meet the January 1, 2026 adoption deadline. Fire Marshal Watkins confirmed that the State Forestry and Fire Division has concurred with exemptions for Taylorsville, Riverton, and Midvale, and that all other communities are on schedule for adoption. He encouraged board members to work through their liaisons with any additional questions.

- Support Services Report-AC Robinson

- a. Search and Rescue Common Operating Platform (SARCOP)

Assistant Chief Robinson introduced Deputy Director Chet Ellis (Emergency Management) to provide an update on the implementation of the Search and Rescue Common Operating Platform (SARCOP).

Deputy Director Ellis explained that SARCOP is a FEMA/Department of Homeland Security-supported suite of applications designed to gather, display, and share real-time incident data, particularly for disasters and urban search and rescue operations. It allows responders to use mobile devices in the field to capture damage and search information, which is transmitted back to administrators who can create maps, dashboards, and visuals to support decision-making and resource allocation.

SARCOP has been used by FEMA Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams nationwide since 2016 and is already in use by Utah Task Force One. The State Division of Emergency Management has provided 91 ArcGIS user accounts for the Salt Lake Valley, enabling each fire station and operational battalion chief to utilize the system. SARCOP will improve situational awareness and coordination during disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and other large-scale incidents, and can provide near-real-time information to elected officials through viewer dashboards.

In response to questions, DD Ellis gave examples where SARCOP would have been beneficial, including the Magna earthquake and the 2023 spring runoff flooding. He described how the system complements Crisis Track (used for damage assessment and funding documentation) and noted that Utah Task Force One used SARCOP in prior events. Board members discussed access for municipal officials, who will be able to obtain viewer privileges through UFA liaisons as desired.

- b. Fire Training Facility Feasibility Study

AC Robinson presented the results of the feasibility study for the fire training facility at UFA's training campus in Magna. The purpose of the study was to establish a clear, sustainable plan for future improvements and long-term investment at the site.

In FY22–23, \$2 million was earmarked in the capital replacement plan for upgrades, but the funding was removed due to a lack of a clear plan. In FY24–25, the Board funded a feasibility study to provide a long-term roadmap. The study began in October 2024 and was completed earlier this month. Key project goals included improving use of space, modernizing aging utilities and site systems, enhancing site circulation and safety, upgrading outdoor training areas, and incorporating buffers and landscaping to be good neighbors to new residential development along the west side of the property.

Major plan elements highlighted:

- Continued use of the existing training tower and butler building with modest modifications.

- Construction of a new multi-purpose building providing classrooms, offices, hands-on training areas, locker rooms, fitness space, and apparatus storage to simulate a fire station environment.
- Relocating training props away from the western residential boundary and replacing those edge areas with landscaping and buffering.
- A future outdoor training pavilion serving as a central hub for crews to gather, debrief, and shelter from weather.
- A potential future administrative building area.
- Inclusion on the site plan of a BLM/UFA wildland fire station funded by the Bureau of Land Management, co-located on the campus.

Conceptual floor plans and renderings of the multi-purpose building and the overall site were reviewed with the Board. AC Robinson emphasized that the plan focuses on scalable, sustainable growth.

The Board discussed:

- Additional buffering and fencing along other site edges as nearby residential development continues.
- Potential fee structures for external users (e.g., military and other fire agencies) with an emphasis on protecting the value of UFA membership while recouping some operating costs.
- Early discussions with Salt Lake Community College regarding their new firefighter program, as well as local fire departments interested in sending recruits to UFA's academies, with UFA's own needs remaining the first priority.

• Operations Report-AC Dern

a. Operations Report

UFA has responded to almost 35,000 calls so far this year, 3,300 calls in September. September saw a decline in structure and brush/wildland fires as the season started to change. Review of the five busiest stations, with Station 101 remaining the busiest, followed by Station 109.

b. Low Acuity Unit Update

AC Dern provided a three-month update on the low acuity response unit operating from Station 101 in Millcreek. The unit is a staffed Suburban operating Monday through Thursday on a 40-hour schedule.

- 119 incidents handled to date; on track for about 600 incidents annually.
- Higher-than-average transport rate (approximately 48%) with an ambulance, due to the call types selected for this trial.
- Primary response areas include Millcreek (majority), with additional responses in Holladay and northeast Taylorsville.
- 119 incidents represent calls that did not require a heavy apparatus response, preserving engine and

truck availability for critical incidents.

Board members asked questions regarding geographic coverage, time-of-day coverage, and whether inter-facility transfers are included. Board members also requested additional reporting in future meetings, including:

- Overlay of monthly incident counts with prior-year data on existing graphs.
- Expanded data on transport refusals and documentation practices in light of recent legal developments.

c. Recruit Camp 60 Update

AC Dern reported that Recruit Camp 60 currently has 20 recruits and they have completed week 12 of a 16-week academy, with graduation scheduled for November 13, 2025. Four recruits will remain for an additional five weeks of EMT training; the remainder will report directly to Operations for shift assignments.

Recruits have completed state Hazardous Materials Awareness, Operations, and Apparatus Driver/Operator testing, achieving a rare 100% pass rate on both the written and practical exams. Fire Training will prepare for the next Recruit Camp (Camp 61), anticipated to begin February 2, 2026.

d. Utah Task Force 1 Federal Funding Update

DC Case briefed the Board on the status of Utah Task Force One (UT-TF1) operations during the ongoing federal government shutdown. UT-TF1 is one of 28 FEMA-sponsored federal disaster response teams. Despite the shutdown, current UT-TF1 operations remain funded and staffed, and the team continues to maintain readiness. FEMA branch staff in Washington, D.C. have experienced some furloughs, but essential leadership functions continue. Staff may be recalled as needed for major events.

The FEMA GO grant management system has been impacted by furloughs, resulting in delays in accessing allocated funds. As a result, UT-TF1 is curtailing some discretionary expenditures. The full FY25 grant appropriation for the system was authorized prior to the shutdown, so funding itself is secure; the primary concern is the timing of reimbursements. UT-TF1 uses a reimbursement model through UFA, typically reconciling and billing quarterly.

DC Case also noted that 2025 has been relatively quiet system-wide, with limited flooding activations in New Mexico and Texas. Hurricane season continues through November, and the system remains prepared for potential responses. He reported that a FEMA review council convened in August, with strong support for the USAR system's essential role. He stated he does not anticipate long-term negative impacts from the shutdown.

Fire Chief Report-Chief Burchett

a. HB65 Update

Chief Burchett reviewed the status of House Bill 65, which provides three years of state funding for firefighter and retiree cancer screenings. Approximately 1,000 individuals are anticipated to be served statewide through a new clinic in Salt Lake City operated in partnership with Utah Fire Rescue Academy.

Funding is time-limited to three years; UFA and other stakeholders are exploring the creation of a trust or other mechanisms to support ongoing screenings and to bridge financial gaps between diagnosis and workers' compensation coverage. Legislative discussions with Representative Casey Snyder suggest that local entities will likely need to assume some ongoing financial responsibility. A few UFA employees have already been contacted as part of the early screening group, and thousands are queued statewide based on a risk scoring system that incorporates age and years of service.

The Board discussed the workers' compensation process following diagnosis and potential gaps in coverage. Chief Burchett reiterated that these issues are a central focus of ongoing legislative and policy discussions.

b. Station 103 Groundbreaking

Chief Burchett reported that Herriman City recently held the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Station 103, which will replace the existing 103 facility and be located slightly north and east to better serve the growing community. Herriman has chosen to use the same station design as UFA's Station 251 in Eagle Mountain. Construction is anticipated to take approximately 15 months, with crews moving in around late 2026 or early 2027.

c. 2025 Awards Ceremony Recap

Recognition of Civilian Employee of the Year (Madison – Training, Magna), Firefighter of the Year (Dustin Smith), and Fire Officer of the Year (Keith Bevan, USAR).

Presentation of several Awards of Courage for extraordinary actions on significant incidents, including rescues at structure fires and response to a plane crash in Alta.

A Medal of Gallantry awarded to multiple personnel for their response to the active shooter incident at West Valley WestFest, where crews treated patients while the threat was still active.

Reflections on the culture of humility within the organization, noting that firefighters generally view such actions as "just part of the job," and that the awards represent a small portion of the heroic work performed across approximately 36,000 incidents each year.

The Board was invited to attend future awards and promotion ceremonies, including an upcoming promotion ceremony scheduled for the first Monday of November 3 at the JATC Riverton campus.

d. Station 107 Opening

Chief Burchett reported that Station 107, serving the west side of Kearns, is scheduled to open for full-time staffing around mid-November 2025. Funding for the additional crew at Station 107 and Station 253 in Eagle Mountain was included in the 2025 UFSA-funded budget.

Closed Session/Adjournment

None

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Council Member Kathleen Bailey
Council Member Cheri Jackson
Mayor Paul Fotheringham
Council Member Tish Buroker
Mayor Kristie Overson
Mayor Dan Knopp
Mayor Tom Westmoreland

Mayor Dustin Gettel
Council Member Tyler Huish
Council Member Chrystal Butterfield
Council Member Catherine Harris
Council Member Trish Hull
Deputy Mayor Catherine Kanter
Council Member Jared Henderson

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Council Member Sheldon Stewart
Council Member Mike Weichers

Mayor Roger Bourke

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Dominic Burchett
CLO Brian Roberts

CFO Tony Hill
Clerk Micayla Dinkel

ATTENDEES

AC Dern
AC Russell
Ben Porter
Courtney Samuel
DC Widdison
Captain Adam Park
Captain Chet Ellis
Captain Barker

AC Robinson
DC Widdison
HR Director Day
DC Greensides
BC Fossum
FM Watkins
DC Case

Firefighter Kelly Bird
OC Kay
DOC Easton
IT Casey Bowden
Rachel Anderson
Firefighter Ben Porter
BC Torgerson