

**ELK MEADOWS SPECIAL SERVICE DISTRICT  
ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL BOARD  
July 9, 2026  
COUNTY COMMISSION CONFERENCE ROOM**

**APPROVED MINUTES**

**Members Present** – Dee Draney; Chairman, Ken Barney; Member, Rich Gurrola; Member, Scott Chamberlain; Member, Wade Hollingshead; Member

**Electronic Participation** – Phil Emerson; Member, Shane Gadbow; Member,

**Members Absent** –

**Officers Present** – Leo Kanell; District Attorney, Heidi Eyre District Secretary, David White; District Treasurer, Brandon Jensen; District Manager, Brady Derbidge; Assistant District Manager,

**Electronic Participation** – None

**Officers Absent** – None

**Audience** – Janelle Braithwaite, Kevin McNeill, Jack Erwig, Marc Raines, Kallie Goff, Steve Mayer, Ellen Barney, James Penny, Carrie Penny, Steve Reeser, Joh George, James Leavitt, Jon Caldwell, Amy Caldwell, Louis Helton, Mark Tucker, Lane Tucker, Becky Vandermeer, Matt Strerzer, Paul Foy, Trent Owen, Mark Tucker

**9:00 a.m.**

**Call to Order** – Dee Draney called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**Review and Approve Monthly bills and Accounts Payable** – David presented the financial reports and reported that quarterly statements would normally have been sent on July 1; however, due to current circumstances, statements were sent only to those property owners who had outstanding fees as of that date. No other property owners were billed on July 1.

David reviewed the District's funds held in the Utah Public Treasurer's Investment Fund. He reported that approximately \$578,000 is currently held in the Water System Improvement Fund. These funds have been collected through the \$110 per unit quarterly assessment and are designated for repayment of the approximately \$4 million water system improvement loan.

David reported that the current year's loan payment will be approximately \$167,000 and is due near the end of August.

David also reported that approximately \$110,000 remains in the Special Assessment Area Improvement District account. The current year's payment of approximately \$137,000 has already been made. He noted that the account does not currently contain sufficient funds to make next year's payment.

David stated that the Water System Improvement Fund contains sufficient reserves to make the current year's payment and approximately two additional annual payments without continuing to collect the \$110 quarterly assessment. He suggested that the Board consider temporarily suspending that assessment. David further reported that approximately \$465,000 remains from the Community Impact Board loan and is available to complete previously identified project priorities. Brandon noted that project priorities may change, but the identified infrastructure needs remain.

David also reported that approximately \$136,000 remains from the Division of Drinking Water loan and may be used to complete work associated with the Special Assessment Area project. He further reviewed the outstanding loan associated with the maintenance shop.

#### **Loan and Obligations Discussion.**

The Board discussed whether loan payments could be deferred. Janelle with the Rural Water Association advised that a request could potentially be made to use reserve funds or obtain special approval if the district experienced difficulty making a required payment.

Wade reported that he has been in contact with several individuals regarding the Community Impact Board loan, including Senator Vickers and Representative Carl Albrecht. He stated that Senator Vickers recommended that the district request placement on a CIB agenda and present its financial circumstances directly to the Board. Wade stated that there may be a possibility of converting a portion of the loan to a grant or obtaining some level of loan forgiveness. He recommended that he and a member of the Board attend the CIB meeting. Dee indicated that he would be willing to attend with Wade.

David asked whether he should proceed with the August loan payment. Wade recommended waiting until additional information is received regarding available options. David clarified that funds for the Division of Drinking Water loan have already been collected and that the current year's payment on that loan has been made.

#### **Projected Expenses and Operations.**

David presented anticipated expenses through the end of the year. He discussed wages for Brandon and Brady and estimated that retaining both employees through year-end would cost approximately \$63,000, plus benefits. Brandon reported that the planned chip seal project would

be cancelled. David noted that remaining expenditures would primarily consist of normal operating expenses.

Shane asked about propane expenses associated with pumping water and stated that once water is no longer needed for firefighting hot spots, the Board should evaluate whether both springs need to continue operating. Dee stated that retaining Brandon and Brady is important so they can continue monitoring conditions on the mountain.

Brandon reported that generators had been operating nearly continuously to keep the tanks full, repair leaks, and support firefighting activities. He stated that the tanks are now full and that the generators can be shut down for several days at a time. Brandon estimated that shutting the generators down for approximately four days and back on for four days could save about \$1,500 in propane and significantly reduce fuel costs.

Shane asked whether the SCADA system had survived, and Brandon confirmed that it had. Brandon explained that the primary SCADA control equipment is located in the maintenance shop, which currently does not have a backup generator. He stated that he could contact the SCADA installer regarding options for a larger generator.

Brandon also reported that he had spoken with Rocky Mountain Power representatives, who were expected to meet and develop a plan for restoration of electrical service. He stated that additional information would be provided once available.

Brandon explained that if Rocky Mountain Power is unable to restore electrical service before winter, the Puffer Spring would need to be shut down and winterized because propane delivery trucks would be unable to access the site. He noted that this would require increased operation of the Triple Chair Spring to maintain adequate water supply.

Brandon further reported that he contacted the water meter company and that meter-related fees will be suspended until the district has a better understanding of the current situation and the number of meters remaining. David stated that sufficient funds are currently available to maintain District operations through the end of the year.

#### **Quarterly Billing and Fire-Damaged Properties.**

The Board discussed billing for the upcoming quarter. Shane noted that approximately 145 condominiums and cabins had been destroyed and discussed the difference between the regular quarterly fee for an occupied structure and the standby rate for an undeveloped or inactive property. He suggested that, given current access restrictions and the extent of the damage, the Board should carefully consider whether fees should be assessed during this period and stated that a decision should not be rushed.

Brandon reported that Shane's employees had been assisting the district with water system repairs. He explained that many cabins and structures in the Grizzly Ridge area did not have exterior water shutoffs. When those structures burned, water continued flowing from damaged service lines, creating significant problems for the system. Shane's employees have assisted with locating service lines, capping lines, and installing curb stops where necessary. Brandon stated that substantial progress has been made.

Brandon estimated that approximately 80% of the immediate water system problems had been addressed. He identified remaining work in the Village and along Ponderosa, generally from Birch to the end of Ponderosa. He reported that the Village is currently isolated from the remainder of the system while those issues are addressed.

Dee stated that the district must continue evaluating its responsibilities, outstanding loans, and available sources of assistance. He emphasized the importance of working together as the district responds to the difficult circumstances and expressed appreciation to everyone who has provided assistance.

#### **Forest Service Water Agreement.**

Leo reported that an agreement had been entered into with the Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Forest Service for the purchase of District water. He explained that the initial proposed payment was approximately one cent per gallon; however, because of the district's propane costs associated with pumping and maintaining water in the tanks, a higher rate was negotiated and accepted. Leo stated that Dee had signed the agreement and requested that the Board ratify his signature. A motion was made regarding the ratification of the agreement.

**Motion** – Ken Barney made a motion to ratify Dee's signature on the Forest Service Water Agreement Rich seconded. All approved without objections.

#### **Easement Agreement.**

Leo reported that, prior to the recent emergency, he had been working to obtain an easement through Evan Chapman's property in order to provide water service to another lot that could not otherwise be accessed. He explained that an earlier easement had been obtained for approximately \$5,000 and that an additional easement was subsequently negotiated for approximately \$15,965.70.

Leo stated that the original arrangement contemplated applying the easement amount toward fees owed by the property owner. Following recent events and anticipated changes to fee collections, the agreement was revised so that approximately \$15,000 would instead be paid from remaining project funds and credited toward the owner's assessment. Leo noted that the engineer confirmed that remaining project funds could be used for the easement. He requested authorization for Dee and Heidi to sign the revised agreement. A motion was made regarding authorization to execute the easement agreement.

**Motion** – Rich Gurrola made a motion to authorize Dee and Heidi to sign the Easement Agreement. Ken Barney seconded the motion. All agreed without objection.

**Federal Assistance and FEMA Discussion.**

Dee introduced James Leavitt, District Director for Congresswoman Celeste Maloy. James discussed federal disaster assistance and explained that Fire Management Assistance Grants are currently available for certain wildfire response and mitigation activities. He stated that more substantial federal assistance for special service districts may depend on issuance of a major disaster declaration by the President.

James explained that current federal disaster laws tend to favor heavily populated areas and can create challenges for rural communities affected by wildfires. He stated that congressional offices may be able to assist by working with federal agencies when local entities have trouble obtaining responses or navigating programs. He encouraged the district to contact his office if assistance is needed with FEMA, NRCS, or other federal agencies. James also noted that efforts are underway to obtain a major disaster declaration, although requirements related to primary residences may present challenges for the area.

**Water Fees and Assessments.**

Phil asked David to clarify the proposed approach to billing properties affected by the fire. David stated that his preliminary recommendation would be to continue charging the regular rate for structures that remain standing and connected to the water system, while properties without a structure or active water connection would be billed at the standby rate.

Leo stated that he did not believe the Board needed to make a final decision at the current meeting and recommended revisiting the matter at the next meeting when additional information may be available. David confirmed that no assessments had been issued for the quarter beginning July 1, other than notices to property owners who had outstanding balances prior to the fire.

A motion was proposed to waive assessments for the quarter beginning July 1 and ending September 30 while the Board gathers additional information. Following discussion, the Board determined that no action would be taken on the matter at this time. The discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

**Fire Department**

Scott stated that he sent Heidi an application for Post Wildfire Rehabilitation. It is not for structures, but it is strictly for rehabilitating your forested land. The board asked Heidi to forward the email to the community members.

**Board Comments.**

Ken expressed sympathy to those affected by the fire and thanked George and others involved in emergency preparation and response. He noted that the situation could have been significantly

worse without those efforts and expressed confidence that the community would recover and rebuild. The other Board members expressed their agreement with Ken's comments and joined him in thanking everyone involved for their efforts and support during the fire and its aftermath.

**Motion to Adjourn-** Scott Chamberlain made a motion to adjourn.

**Motion** – Shane Gadbaw made the motion to approve the financial reports, bills paid and the accounts payable. Rich Gurola seconded. All approved without objection.

**Water System Status –**

**Roads –**

**Fire Department Update –**

**Water Rights –**

**Resort Update -**

**Old Business** - The board discussed holding the June meeting on the mountain at the Lodge.

**Motion** – Shane Gadbaw made a motion to adjourn.

The next EMSSD meeting will be held on Friday, May 29, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in the Beaver County Commission Chambers.