UNIFIED FIRE AUTHORITY BOARD MINUTES

September 15, 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. August 18, 2026, UFA Board Meeting Minutes
  Mayor Gettel made a motion to approve the August 18, 2026, UFA Board Meeting minutes as submitted. Mayor Jackson seconded the motion. 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 August Disbursements
  CFO Hill presented the August disbursements for the Board to review. He noted that the payment shown on page 13 of the report pays off the remaining balance of UFA's warehouse loan with Unified Fire Service Area. The loan was fully paid, and the UFA had no further obligation under it.

  Mayor Gettel made a motion to approve the consent agenda as submitted. Mayor Jackson seconded the motion. All voted in favor; none opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

- Operations Report
  Call Volume Report
  Assistant Chief Dustin Dern reported that year-to-date incidents exceeded 28,000, more than 1,200 above the same point in the prior year. Response performance remained in the mid-90th-percentile range, and the increase in overall unit hour utilization did not raise concern. August had slightly more than 3,700 calls, down 132 from July, and 782 fewer responses than the preceding month. Assistant Chief Dern attributed

part of the decrease to the end of summer. August performance and unit utilization were within expected ranges. He also noted that fire incidents fell from 156 to 108, with fewer grass, field, and brush fires following monsoon rain.

Assistant Chief Dern confirmed that year-to-date agencywide unit hour utilization of 9.7 percent measured the time units were committed to incidents. He explained that UFA monitors utilization by apparatus and has not yet adopted a specific acceptable utilization measure in its Standards of Cover. As general reference points, he cited approximately 25 percent for ambulances and 15 to 20 percent for heavy apparatus. Other duties, including training, inspections, and administrative work, are not included in incident utilization. Staff explained that higher incident utilization reduces unit availability and can require more distant units to respond. Discussion also addressed station response reliability of 79.1 percent. Assistant Chief Dern said the central performance measure is whether UFA meets the 90th-percentile response-time standards adopted in its Standards of Cover.

Magna Wildfire

Assistant Chief Dern reviewed the August 6, 2026 wildfire that started near 7300 West and State Route 201 in Magna. Conditions were hot, dry, and windy, with temperatures above 100 degrees. Medic Ladder 111 arrived first, established command, began suppression, and protected a nearby storage facility. UFA's response expanded to include partner agencies, State of Utah and Bureau of Land Management resources, and aircraft. Law enforcement assisted with evacuations and traffic control; Magna City and Salt Lake County Emergency Management established an evacuation center at the Broadway Center. Crews used helicopter bucket drops and aircraft retardant drops to contain the fire. Personnel stayed overnight and into the following day for mop-up. The fire burned approximately 22 acres, with no reported injuries or structural damage. Horses and personal property were moved from the area. UFA's fuels crew continued work for approximately two days, allowing first-arriving units to return to service.

Mayor Buroker noted the report's finding that the fire began at a homeless encampment and asked about reducing similar fires. Assistant Chief Dern confirmed the cause and said UFA sees other fires associated with encampments, particularly along the Jordan River Parkway. UFA works with law enforcement on patrols and with available resources to assist people and reduce the hazard as much as possible.

Recruit Camp Update

Fire Training Division Chief Steve Prokopis reported that the 14 recruits in Camp 62 were approximately seven weeks into a 15-week camp that began August 1. They were progressing as expected in firefighting skills, fitness, and teamwork. Training to date included protective equipment and SCBA use, hydrant operations, apparatus driving, fire behavior, ladders, extrication, and live fire evolutions. Remaining work includes additional practical scenarios and written and practical certification examinations in Firefighter I

and II, Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operations, Apparatus Driver Operator, and wildland Red Card qualifications. Graduation is planned for November 12, and he invited the Board members to attend.

Planning for Camp 63, scheduled to begin in February, was already underway. Division Chief Prokopis thanked the training staff and cadre for supporting the pace of recruitment and training.

- Administrative and Planning Report

Cancer Initiative Update

Assistant Chief Wade Russell presented an update on the Utah Firefighter Cancer Initiative. He described firefighters' occupational exposure to carcinogens in smoke, soot, contaminated equipment, and hazardous materials. He reported the initiative's figures that firefighters face a 14 percent higher risk of dying from cancer than the general population and that cancer accounted for approximately two-thirds of nationwide firefighter line-of-duty deaths from 2002 through 2019.

Assistant Chief Russell described the initiative as a partnership involving the Utah Fire and Rescue Academy, Professional Firefighters of Utah, Utah State Fire Chiefs Association, and Rocky Mountain Center for Occupational and Environmental Health. Its goals include early detection, research, education, advocacy, and support. He said 2025 legislation expanded Utah's presumptive firefighter cancer list to 15 cancers and provided $3.7 million annually through 2028 to screen at least 500 firefighters per year. The screening began in September 2025, is voluntary and available without cost to eligible firefighters, and is prioritized by age and years of service because demand exceeds appointments. It includes laboratory tests, a whole-body MRI, a low-dose lung CT, dermatological and preventive exams, and other targeted testing.

As of August 10, 2026, the initiative had screened 346 firefighters statewide, identifying 27 cancers, 18 additional possible cancers requiring further evaluation, and 170 other concerning health findings. Assistant Chief Russell said none of the firefighters diagnosed with cancer through the program had symptoms when their cancers were discovered. Approximately 70 UFA personnel had completed screening, and four of those personnel had received cancer diagnoses they did not previously know about. He emphasized that the statewide count of other findings includes volunteers, wildland personnel, and career firefighters; UFA personnel also receive annual physical examinations, which may identify conditions such as heart disease or diabetes separately.

Board members asked how diagnoses are tied to service, whether affected personnel receive care and emotional support, and how the initiative will continue. Assistant Chief Russell said presumptive cancer coverage is based on research associating cancers with firefighting, while individual workers' compensation claims still require documentation of exposures and circumstances. HR is working through claims for the four UFA personnel and improving exposure reporting to support future claims. He said diagnosed personnel are receiving treatment through UFA's insurance. UFA also provides an employee assistance

program, an in-house therapist, and external clinicians, with mental health services available to families under state law.

Assistant Chief Russell said many additional UFA firefighters would like screening. Alongside the primary priority list, a supplemental cancellation list can fill openings when appointments are missed or canceled. He explained that the current legislative funding runs through 2028. Fire service organizations and the initiative's executive board are working to sustain the program, including through legislation and possible philanthropic support. Board members expressed support for continued advocacy.

- Fire Chief Report

  Chair Fotheringham noted that Fire Chief Dominic Burchett was on vacation with family and that Assistant Chief Dern was presenting the Fire Chief report in his absence.

  Promotional Update

  Assistant Chief Dern reported 34 promotions in 2026 to date, including three Battalion Chiefs, 13 Captains, 11 Engineers, and other specialist positions. Interviews for three additional Captain positions had taken place the preceding day, with promotions expected to take effect September 16. He noted that lateral moves into staff and day positions also created development opportunities that were not counted in the promotion figures. He said these changes support leadership development, anticipated retirements, organizational growth, and changing service needs.

  Paramedic Mandatory/Response Model

  Assistant Chief Dern described a paramedic staffing gap that began in the spring and has increased the need for mandatory overtime. He cited retirements, promotions, and additional apparatus placed in service over recent years. UFA has temporarily used captain paramedics and other paramedic-qualified specialists to cover positions, although that draws them from their usual duties. Mandatory shifts averaged approximately 0.3 per day in 2025 and 1.5 per day in 2026 to date, an approximately fivefold increase. Many occur at the paramedic rank. Assistant Chief Dern said the added shifts affect rest, family time, fatigue, and morale, particularly after a busy and unusually hot summer.

  Assistant Chief Dern reviewed UFA's one-on-one response model, introduced in 2018, which assigns a paramedic to every engine, ladder, and ambulance. He said it expanded paramedic coverage, reduced reliance on part-time EMS staffing, limited the need to send multiple heavy apparatus to a single-patient incident, allowed employees to move among apparatus, and integrated with partner agencies and dispatch systems. UFA continues to value the model but is evaluating whether a temporary adjustment could relieve mandatory staffing while additional paramedics are hired or trained. Any adjustment would need to preserve patient care, advanced life support transport, two-paramedic coverage for the most critical calls,

geographic coverage, availability, and service delivery. Chief Burchett would bring proposed changes forward in the coming months.

UFA needs approximately 37 paramedics on duty each day and aims to have approximately 143 in its overall staffing complement, including coverage for vacancies. Assistant Chief Dern estimated a current shortage of approximately 30 paramedics. A recently closed lateral recruitment process had approximately 10 qualified applicants, seven of whom were scheduled for interviews. A paramedic-only hiring process had opened the day before the meeting, and UFA planned another process for part-time employees who recently obtained paramedic credentials. Staff hoped those hires would be available for the February 2027 recruit camp. Nine UFA personnel began paramedic school in August and were expected to finish around March 2027; up to six more might begin in January. Seventeen personnel had completed or were taking prerequisite courses with tuition reimbursement. Assistant Chief Dern said UFA might add approximately 20 to 25 paramedics by March through lateral hires, new hires, and current personnel completing school, though these were potential outcomes rather than confirmed additions.

In response to questions, Assistant Chief Dern explained that UFA previously operated a paramedic school but discontinued it when only a few UFA employees enrolled each year and full-time instructional staffing was costly. UFA now sends students to local programs, including Gold Cross, Weber State University, and Utah Valley University. He acknowledged that higher pay can help recruit paramedics in the short term amid a wider shortage. He also explained UFA's mandatory staffing procedures, including a periodic draw through which personnel can select available days and a separate staffing matrix that considers seniority, hours worked, and prior mandatory assignments. Vacation, sick leave, and other policy exclusions can remove personnel from availability; limited exclusions and advance entries for significant personal events also exist. When personnel remain eligible and are assigned a mandatory shift, they are expected to work it.

E-bike Video

Director of Communications Nile Easton presented UFA's new e-bike and e-scooter safety video in response to serious injuries and fatalities involving riders, especially youth. The video stresses that electric bikes and scooters can reach high speeds quickly and should be treated as vehicles. It encourages age-appropriate equipment, helmets, safe speeds, compliance with traffic rules, visibility, lights, and caution at intersections and crosswalks. The presentation cited 536 people treated in Intermountain Healthcare emergency departments in Utah for e-bike and e-scooter injuries in 2025. Staff planned to distribute the video through social media, municipal liaisons, and communities and to consider sharing it with schools. Additional education is planned in the fall and spring, with discussions underway with the Utah Department of Public Safety and UDOT about broader outreach.

Board discussion addressed helmet use, speed, classes of electric bikes, and the difficulty of local enforcement. Deputy Mayor Kanter described a recently adopted Salt Lake County ordinance applying to trails and parks in unincorporated areas, including a 20-mile-per-hour limit for pedal-assisted bikes and restrictions on throttle-powered use. The Board asked whether injury data could be broken down by age to inform future education or legislation. DOC Easton agreed to explore additional data and to email and distribute the video.

DOC Easton also noted upcoming Pancake Breakfast events in Taylorsville on October 3, 2026, at Station 118 and Midvale on October 10 at Station 126.

Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Award

CFO Hill reported that UFA received the Government Finance Officers Association Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its fiscal year 2026–2027 budget. UFA first received the award in 2018, making this its ninth award. For the first time, all reviewers gave the budget an outstanding score for its presentation of strategic goals and strategies, resulting in special recognition. CFO Hill credited Chief Burchett, Command Staff, division leaders, and the Finance team for strengthening the connection between the strategic plan, performance measures, accomplishments, action items, and budget. Board members congratulated the team and praised the document's quality, detail, and ease of use.

- Possible Closed Session

  No closed session was held.

- Adjournment

  Mayor Gray moved to adjourn the September 15, 2026, UFA Board Meeting. Mayor Jackson seconded the motion. All voted in favor; none opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mayor Cheri Jackson	Mayor Dustin Gettel
Mayor Paul Fotheringham	Mayor Jared Gray
Mayor Gay Lynn Bennion	Councilmember Catherine Harris
Councilmember Chrystal Butterfield	Councilmember Jared Henderson
Councilmember Kathleen Bailey	Mayor Roger Bourke
Mayor Scotty John	Deputy Mayor Catherine Kanter
Mayor Kristie Overson	Mayor Tish Buroker

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Mayor Mick Sudbury	Councilmember Sheldon Stewart

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

CFO Tony Hill
CLO Brian Roberts
Clerk Micayla Dinkel

ATTENDEES

AC Dern	DC Fossum	HRD Day
AC Russell	FM Watkins	DOC Easton
Specialist Rivera	DC Greensides	Captain Costin
DC Prokopis	Rachel Anderson	Digital Media Specialist Samuel