
**BIG BEAR FIRE AUTHORITY
MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF
January 13, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER

A Regular Meeting of the Big Bear Fire Authority was called to order by Board Chair Rowe at 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at 41090 Big Bear Boulevard, Big Bear Lake, California.

MOMENT OF SILENCE AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Moment of Silence: Observed

Pledge of Allegiance: Led by Director Melnick

ROLL CALL

Present: Board Chair JoKay Rowe
 Vice Chair Kendi Segovia
 Director Rick Herrick
 Director Charles Hicks
 Director Perri Melnick
 Director Randall Putz
 Director Bob Rowe
 Director John Russo
 Director Larry Walsh
 Director Al Ziegler

Absent: None

Also Present: Luke Wagner, Fire Chief
 Sherry Wentz, Interim Board Secretary
 Nicholas Norvell, Assistant Authority Counsel

ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

Chair Rowe made the following announcement:

The Fire Authority's Administrative Office will be closed:

- Monday, January 19, 2026, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day and will reopen on Tuesday, January 20, 2026, at 8:00 a.m.

PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations.

DIRECTORS' GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Director Rowe read the following prepared statement, "The CSD (Community Services District) would formally object to the budget adopted by the Board in September, and will continue to do so. Under the adopted budget, it's mathematically impossible for the CSD to meet revenue targets and places it in a position of violating the terms of the JPA (Joint Powers Authority) agreement, which the CSD has no intention of doing. The CSD continues to advocate for the amendment to the adopted budget, so the parties can ensure compliance with the JPA language and establish a realistic financial framework moving forward. On behalf of the CSD, I request the Minutes reflect this continuing objection to all expenditures approved in this meeting."

Director Herrick acknowledged Chief Wagner as a presenter at the Rotary Club meeting noting he learned a lot about the Chief and that he did a nice job.

Director Hicks noted past discussion regarding the Administrative Office being open five days per week, and asked if that was going to happen.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Rowe opened the Public Comments portion of the meeting.

Dan Gulbranson provided a series of handouts (on file in the Administrative Office) and commented on New York Democrat socialists and building occupancy postings within Big Bear Lake's City Hall; stated he's going to be following up on the trees, potholes, and donkeys; announced he'll be passing out Grand Jury complaint forms; and concluded by stating the City of Big Bear Lake's General Plan is a nightmare.

Chair Rowe closed the Public Comments portion of the meeting.

CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Wagner presented his report, which included an overview on department progress, provided an update on records requests initiated by Daniel Gulbranson, and introduced Legal Counsel Nicholas Norvell, who provided a briefing on the use of individual lease agreements for facilities utilized by the Authority.

Dan Gulbranson offered public comments on his concerns associated with fire department inspections specific to Big Bear City Hall/Performing Arts Center and the Big Bear Visitors Center.

Director Putz called for a point of order to ask Legal Counsel Norvell's opinion concerning public comments protocol. Legal Counsel Norvell stated the public has the right to offer comments on business items listed on the agenda, which would include the Chief's Report.

Action: The Board directed Chief Wagner and Legal Counsel Norvell to work with the Community Services District and Fire Protection District to develop a Facilities Use Agreement template and return the document to the Board for its review and approval.

FINANCE OFFICER’S REPORT

There was no Finance Officer’s Report.

FIRE AUTHORITY CONSENT CALENDAR

FA1. Approval of Demands – Check Issue Date 11/1/2025 through 11/30/2025 in the amount of \$640,287.02.

FA2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from the December 9, 2025, Regular Meeting of the Big Bear Fire Authority.

The public offered no comments.

The Directors pulled no items for separate consideration.

Action: On motion by Director Hicks, seconded by Director Herrick, the Board approved the Consent Calendar by the following vote:

- AYES: Herrick, Hicks, Melnick, Putz, Rowe, Russo, Walsh, Segovia, Ziegler, Chair Rowe
- NOES: None
- ABSENT: None
- ABSTAIN: None

PUBLIC HEARING

There were no Public Hearings.

NEW BUSINESS

BIG BEAR FIRE AUTHORITY DISCUSSION ITEMS

FA3. Appointment of a Fire Code Appeals Board

Daniel Gulbranson offered public comments noting his desire for this Board to discuss grandfathering code concerns, Charter City overreach, changing fire laws, and public safety. He offered his assistance to the Fire Chief, and thanked the Authority Board for working hard.

Director Hicks asked the Board Chair if Chief Wagner would clarify the purpose of the Fire Code Appeals Board, so there would be no confusion by the public on its responsibilities. Chair Rowe agreed with the request, and called on Chief Wagner.

Chief Wagner explained the Fire Code Appeal Board's purpose is to act as a hearing body for anyone who has been cited by the Fire Department and wished to challenge the citation.

Action: Board Chair Rowe selected four directors, Director Hicks, Rowe, Segovia, and Walsh, to serve along with her as Board Chair, as the Fire Code Appeals Board, for a period of one year, pursuant to Section 108.1 of Ordinance No. BBFA2023-001.

FA4. Appointment of a Standing Finance Committee

The public offered no comments.

Action: Board Chair Rowe selected four directors, Directors Herrick, Hicks, Rowe, and Walsh, to serve as the Finance Committee for a period of one year, to assist staff in the further development of Department strategies.

FA5. Annual Assignment of Board Representative to CJPIA

The public offered no comments.

Action: Board Chair Rowe re-appointed Director Walsh as delegate and Director Segovia as alternate authorizing them to act as official representatives of the Big Bear Fire Authority on the California Joint Powers Insurance Authority (CJPIA) Board for 2026.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no Committee Reports.

DIRECTORS' CLOSING COMMENTS

Director Herrick requested agendizing the discussion of the Joint Powers Authority's agreement.

Director Putz requested, at its next Board meeting, the question be put before the Board whether the Board continue with the JPA and work to clean it up or dissolve the JPA over time, and what that action may look like.

A brief discussion ensued regarding withdrawing rights by individual agencies, common practice by Boards to have discussions regarding agreement amendments, and ultimate action resting with individual agencies.

Legal Counsel Norvell cautioned the Board to limit its discussion on non-agendized subjects, and stated he and the Chief would bring forward the JPA agreement for consideration at the Board's next meeting.

Director Melnick suggested that should CSD wish to register its continued objection to the budget that they come forward with its budget recommendations.

CLOSED SESSION PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS:

Daniel Gulbranson offered unrelated comments to the Closed Session items listed on the agenda: his opinion on the "Barbie" lawsuit, City of Big Bear Lake's recent meeting cancellations and special meetings, and the City of Big Bear Lake's spendings.

CLOSED SESSION

- 1. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL—ANTICIPATED LITIGATION**
Significant exposure to litigation pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(2): One (1) potential case
- 2. PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT**
Title: Board Secretary
- 3. CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATORS (GOVERNMENT CODE § 54957.6)**
Agency Designated Representative(s): Luke Wagner, Fire Chief
Unrepresented Employee: Board Secretary
- 4. CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATORS (GOVERNMENT CODE § 54957.6)**
Agency Designated Representative(s): Luke Wagner, Fire Chief
Employee Organization: Big Bear Professional Firefighters' Assoc., IAFF, Local 935
- 5. PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION (GOVERNMENT CODE § 54954.5)**
Position: Fire Chief

At the hour of 5:47 p.m., Board Chair Rowe adjourned to Closed Session.

At the hour of 6:44 p.m., Board Chair Rowe adjourned Closed Session.

At the hour of 6:44 p.m., Board Chair Rowe re-opened Regular Session, with no public present.

REPORT ON CLOSED SESSION

Attorney Norvell stated there were no reportable actions from Closed Session.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Fire Authority at this session, Board Chair Rowe adjourned the meeting at 6:44 p.m.



Sherry Wentz
Interim Board Secretary