

BIG BEAR FIRE AUTHORITY
Finance Committee Meeting of March 12, 2026

Staff Notes

OPEN SESSION

CALL TO ORDER

A Finance Committee meeting of the Big Bear Fire Authority was called to order by Board Chair Rowe at 2:00 p.m., on March 12, 2026, at 41090 Big Bear Boulevard, Big Bear Lake, California.

Committee Board Members Present: Director Herrick, Director Hicks, Director Rowe, Director Walsh, and Board Chair Rowe

Committee Board Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Fire Chief Luke Wagner, Director of Business Services Kristin Mandolini, Board Secretary Dakota Cotton, Interim Board Secretary Sherry Wentz, and Special Counsel Andriana Ochoa.

MOMENT OF SILENCE Observed

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Director Walsh

INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEE

Chief Wagner introduced newly appointed Board Secretary Dakota Cotton, and thanked Interim Board Secretary Sherry Wentz for her service.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

Dan Gulbranson stated that he had not received proper noticing of meetings, departmental phone system message needing to be updated to reflect new administrative office hours, and his observations and concerns regarding City Hall's code compliance and occupancy posting requirement.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Fiscal Year 2025-2026 4th Quarter Budget Discussion

Discussion was held regarding the following:

- Reviewed the current adopted budget with a positive bottom line of \$1,244,292.
- Compared an amended budget scenario reflecting 50/50 invoicing, resulting in a projected deficit of \$128,091.
- Discussed the impact of 50/50 invoicing on property tax contributions:
 - CSD: \$6.2 million (maximum available)

- Fire Protection District: \$7.1 million
- Total: \$13.3 million (versus \$14.7 million in the original budget)
- Reviewed reserve policy goals, projected fund balance scenarios, and the potential need for Tax Revenue Anticipation Notes (TRANs) under different funding approaches.

Vice Chair Segovia raised a point of order from the audience. She stated the Board Chair was not an appointed member of the Finance Committee. That the Committee's prior make-up has always been limited to two representatives from each agency. Board Chair Rowe, in an abundance of caution, recused herself from any further participation. Chief Wagner stated staff would research and report back its findings concerning the membership of the Finance Committee.

- Members discussed the importance of maintaining full fire protection services and avoiding operational cuts.
- Consensus developed around using funds normally allocated to reserves to cover the \$128,091 deficit, resulting in a zero-balance amended budget.
- Staff confirmed that revised Q4 invoices would reflect actual amounts payable, with CSD paying its \$6.2 million, and the Fire Protection District covering the additional \$128,091.
- Necessity of the forensic audit.

Special Counsel Adriana Ochoa wished the record reflect the proposed action would not resolve Community Services District's shortfall associated with the current JPA agreement's 50/50 cost sharing.

Action: On motion by Director Hicks, and second by Director Herrick, the Finance Committee recommend the Board of Directors adoption of an amended FY 2025-26 budget with a zero-bottom line by redirecting approximately \$1.2 million from planned reserves to operations and covering the \$128,091 deficit through additional Fire Protection District funding. Motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Action: By consensus, the Finance Committee recommended the Board of Directors terminate the forensic audit, and directed staff to review the contract for termination of services.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business the Finance Committee adjourned at 3:02 p.m.



Sherry Wentz
Interim Board Secretary