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SOUTHERN PARK COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Guffey, Colorado • Established 1987
1745 County Road 102, Guffey, CO 80820 • (719) 689-9479 • www.guffeyfire.net

POLICY NO. 200-2.08 PUBLIC COMMENT POLICY

Southern Park County Fire Protection District • Administrative Policy

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Effective Date:	<i>Upon Board adoption</i>	
Adopted:	<i>Pending Board vote — March 2026</i>	
Reviewed / Revised:	—	<i>Next Review: Annual or upon change in law</i>
Approved By:	Board of Directors, SPCFPD	
Classification:	PUBLIC POLICY DOCUMENT	
Cross-References:	BAM §4.4 (primary public-input authority) • Policy 200-2.07 §5(c) (binding time limits) • District Bylaws (Articles I–X) • C.R.S. § 24-6-402 (Colorado Open Meetings Law) • C.R.S. § 32-1-903 (notice) • C.R.S. § 32-1-809 (Transparency Notice) • C.R.S. § 32-1-1001 (Board authority) • HB21-1278 (virtual/hybrid meetings) • ADA • 29 U.S.C. § 794 (Section 504) • First Amendment, U.S. Const. • SOG 110 (Administration)	

This is a public policy document of the Southern Park County Fire Protection District. Copies are available at Station §1 and at www.guffeyfire.net.



1. PURPOSE

The Board of Directors (“Board”) of the Southern Park County Fire Protection District (“District”) values public input as essential to transparent and accountable governance. This policy establishes clear, viewpoint-neutral procedures for public participation at Board meetings to ensure orderly, efficient proceedings while providing meaningful opportunities for residents, property owners, and other interested parties to address the Board. The policy complies with the Colorado Open Meetings Law (C.R.S. § 24-6-402), the Colorado Special District Act (C.R.S. Title 32, Article 1), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and applicable First Amendment principles.

Relationship to Governing Documents. This policy supplements and is subordinate to the Board Administrative Rules, Practices and Procedures Manual (“BAM”), which is the primary governing authority for public input at BAM §4.4. This policy also supplements Policy 200-2.07 (Board Meeting Procedures Policy) §5(c), which establishes the binding time limits for public comment. In any conflict between this policy and the BAM, the BAM controls. In any conflict between this policy and Policy 200-2.07, Policy 200-2.07 controls. All three documents are subordinate to the District Bylaws (March 2014).

2. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all open meetings of the Board as defined in BAM §3.1, including regular meetings, special meetings, work sessions, emergency meetings, and organizational/annual meetings. Public comment is a standing agenda item (item 9 per BAM §3.5.2) at all regular meetings; no advance submission by the public is required. At other meeting types, public comment is at the Board’s discretion subject to the following:

- a. Special Meetings:** Public comment shall be included when the agenda warrants it. Business at a special meeting is limited to items stated in the notice.
- b. Work Sessions:** The Board Chair may take public comment at work sessions at the Chair’s discretion. No formal action is taken at work sessions.
- c. Emergency Meetings:** Public comment shall be accommodated to the extent practicable given the time constraints that gave rise to the emergency meeting.
- d. Required Public Hearings:** For budget adoption hearings and any other proceedings where public comment is required by law (e.g., C.R.S. § 32-1-903(7)), a public comment period must be provided prior to final action. The Board may not waive or curtail a legally required comment period.
- e. Quasi-Judicial Matters:** The Board may limit or decline general public comment on quasi-judicial matters pending hearing (e.g., certain appeals) to avoid prejudicing the proceeding. The Chair shall announce any such limitation on the record.

3. COMMENT PERIOD STRUCTURE



Public Input appears as item 9 in the BAM §3.5.2 standard order of business, following reports and old and new business, and before any executive session. The Chair may adjust placement for good cause stated on the record, but may not eliminate the public comment period at a regular meeting without unanimous Board consent.

- a. Duration:** Each regular meeting shall include a public input period of at least fifteen (15) and up to thirty (30) minutes total, unless waived by unanimous Board consent. This is the binding floor and ceiling established by BAM §4.4.1 and Policy 200-2.07 §5(c).
- b. Individual Speaker Time:** Each speaker is limited to three (3) minutes. The Chair may extend an individual speaker's time for good cause stated on the record. The Board may not alter the three-minute limit by motion at a single meeting; any permanent modification requires formal amendment of this policy, the BAM, or Policy 200-2.07.
- c. Group Spokespersons:** A designated spokesperson speaking on behalf of an identifiable group may be granted up to six (6) minutes at the Chair's discretion, provided the group notifies the Board Chair or Secretary before the meeting begins. Multiple speakers on the same topic are encouraged to consolidate their remarks.
- d. Overflow:** If the number of registered speakers would require more time than the allotted period, the Chair shall offer remaining speakers the opportunity to submit written comments for inclusion in the record (see Section 8).

4. SPEAKER REGISTRATION

Persons wishing to address the Board during the public comment period shall sign in prior to or at the start of the meeting using the sign-in sheet provided by the Board Secretary, or via an electronic form if the meeting is virtual or hybrid. The sign-in shall include the speaker's name, address or connection to the District (e.g., property owner, resident, business owner), and topic if known.

- a. Order of Recognition:** The Chair shall recognize speakers in the order in which they signed in. If the number of registered speakers is large relative to available time, the Chair may use a random lottery for order of recognition, announced at the start of the comment period.
- b. Walk-In Speakers:** Speakers who did not sign in in advance may be recognized at the Chair's discretion after all pre-registered speakers have been heard, time permitting.
- c. No Advance Submission Required:** Public comment is a standing agenda item at regular meetings. No advance submission or prior notice may be required of members of the public as a condition of participating in general public comment.

5. PROCEDURES FOR SPEAKING

When recognized by the Chair, speakers shall:



- a. State their name and, if applicable, their connection to the District (e.g., “I am a resident at [address]” or “I own property in the District”).
- b. Direct comments to the Board as a whole, not to individual Directors or to members of the audience.
- c. Speak only during their allotted time and cease when time expires or when directed by the Chair.
- d. Limit comments to matters within the District’s jurisdiction — fire and EMS operations, budgets, policies, and related matters. The Chair may redirect a speaker whose comments are not relevant to District business.
- e. **Virtual and Hybrid Participation:** Speakers participating remotely shall remain muted until recognized by the Chair; clearly state their name before beginning remarks; and comply with the same time limits as in-person speakers. Remote public participation shall comply with BAM §3.3.3 and HB21-1278, which require that all participants can hear and be heard simultaneously. If a remote speaker’s audio is unintelligible, the Chair shall allow one reconnection attempt before moving to the next speaker. The Chair may request that a remote speaker use video for identity verification where practicable.
- f. **Written Comments in Lieu of Speaking:** Members of the public who cannot attend in person or virtually may submit written comments as provided in Section 8.

6. RULES OF DECORUM

All restrictions on public comment in this policy are reasonable, viewpoint-neutral, and applied equally to all speakers. All speakers and attendees shall conduct themselves in a civil and respectful manner. The following conduct is prohibited:

- Personal attacks on Directors, staff, or other members of the public.
 - Profanity, threats, intimidation, or conduct intended to disrupt the meeting.
 - Directing remarks to individual Directors or to the audience rather than to the Board.
 - Speaking outside a recognized turn or continuing to speak after time expires.
- a. **Chair Authority:** The Board Chair may issue a warning for violations, interrupt or terminate a speaker’s remaining time if rules are violated after warning, and may direct the removal of persistently disruptive individuals from the meeting with law enforcement assistance if necessary, consistent with applicable law.
 - b. **Board Conduct During Comment:** Board members shall not engage in debate or extended responses during the public comment period. Questions may be noted for follow-up.
 - c. **No Action During Comment:** No Board motion, vote, or formal action shall occur during the public comment period unless the matter is a separately noticed action item on the agenda.



7. BOARD RESPONSE

Consistent with BAM §4.4.2, the Board is not required to take action or respond to public comments during the meeting. The Chair may direct staff to follow up with a commenter, or may place a matter raised during public comment on a future agenda for Board consideration. Any commitment to a specific follow-up action shall be noted in the minutes.

8. WRITTEN COMMENTS

The public may submit written comments at any time via email, mail to Station §1 (1745 County Road 102, Guffey, CO 80820), or through the District website (www.guffeyfire.net).

- a. **Pre-Meeting Submission:** Written comments received before the agenda packet deadline (seventy-two (72) hours before the meeting per BAM §4.1.2) shall be included in the agenda packet distributed to Directors. Comments received after the packet deadline but before the meeting shall be noted at the meeting and made available to Directors.
- b. **Post-Meeting Submission:** Written comments received after a meeting may be distributed to Directors and retained in the District's official records at the Board Secretary's discretion. They do not constitute part of the record of the preceding meeting unless accepted by Board vote at a subsequent meeting.
- c. **Record Log:** The Board Secretary shall maintain a log of written comments received and shall note in the minutes any written comments made available to Directors or accepted into the record.

9. RECORDING AND MINUTES

Public comment periods are part of the official open meeting record and are subject to the minutes and records requirements of BAM Chapter 5.

- a. **Minutes:** Minutes shall record the names of speakers and a brief summary of the general topics addressed. Verbatim transcription is not required. Minutes are governed by BAM §5.1 and shall be posted on the District website (www.guffeyfire.net) within thirty (30) calendar days of approval, or before the next regular meeting, whichever is sooner (BAM §5.1.2).
- b. **Audio / Video Recordings:** If audio or video recordings of the meeting are made, they shall include the public comment portion and shall be retained for a minimum of ninety (90) days, or longer if litigation is anticipated or pending, consistent with Policy 200-2.07 §7(c) and BAM Chapter 5.
- c. **Written Submissions:** Written comments accepted into the record may be attached to the meeting minutes or posted on the District website at the discretion of the Board Secretary.

10. ACCOMMODATIONS

The District shall provide reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities to ensure meaningful participation in public meetings, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act



(ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794). Accommodations may include sign language interpretation, large-print agendas, assistive listening devices, or other reasonable modifications.

- a. **Advance Request:** Requests for accommodations should be made at least forty-eight (48) hours before the meeting. Contact the District Chief at (719) 689-9479 or via the District website (www.guffeyfire.net).
- b. **Late Requests:** Requests received less than forty-eight (48) hours before a meeting shall be accommodated to the extent reasonably practicable.
- c. **Virtual Access as Accommodation:** Virtual and hybrid meeting formats (BAM §3.3.3) provide an additional means of access and participation for persons with mobility or transportation limitations.

11. COMPLIANCE AND TRAINING

This policy is adopted to ensure compliance with the Colorado Open Meetings Law (C.R.S. § 24-6-402) and First Amendment viewpoint-neutrality principles. All restrictions on public comment are content-neutral and apply equally to all viewpoints.

- a. **OML Violations:** Actions taken in violation of the Colorado Open Meetings Law may be declared invalid under C.R.S. § 24-6-402(8). The Chair and District Chief share responsibility for ensuring meeting procedures conform to this policy, Policy 200-2.07, the BAM, and applicable law, consistent with BAM §5.4.1.
- b. **Training:** All Board members and key District staff shall receive initial training on this policy and the Colorado Open Meetings Law within ninety (90) days of adoption of this policy, or within ninety (90) days of joining the Board or assuming a key staff role, consistent with BAM §5.4.2. Annual refresher training is strongly recommended. Training may be obtained through the Colorado Division of Local Government, Special District Association of Colorado webinars, or District legal counsel. The Board Secretary shall record completion of initial training in the official records and shall include a training review item in the annual Q1 agenda required by BAM §10.1.
- c. **Severability:** If any provision of this policy is held to be invalid or unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions shall continue in full force and effect.

12. IMPLEMENTATION

Upon adoption by the Board, this policy shall be:

- Posted on the District website (www.guffeyfire.net) within thirty (30) calendar days of adoption, consistent with Policy 200-2.07 §10.
- Distributed to all Board members, the District Chief, and appropriate District personnel within thirty (30) calendar days of adoption.
- Referenced in future Board meeting agendas and notices for public awareness.



- Incorporated into the annual Transparency Notice filing per C.R.S. § 32-1-809 and BAM §3.3.2.
- Incorporated into orientation materials for newly elected or appointed Board members.

13. REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

This policy shall be reviewed at least annually, or as needed to reflect changes in Colorado law, advances in meeting technology, or changes in District operations, consistent with the Q1 review cycle established in BAM Chapter 10. Any proposed amendment shall be brought before the Board for consideration at a duly noticed public meeting and shall be approved by Board vote, documented in the minutes, and adopted by resolution.

14. CERTIFICATION AND ADOPTION

This policy is effective upon adoption by the Board of Directors of the Southern Park County Fire Protection District at a duly noticed public meeting. The Board Secretary is authorized to record the adoption date in this document.

Sean English

Board Chair — Board of Directors, SPCFPD

Date: _____

Mike Parrish

Board Member — Board of Directors, SPCFPD

Date: _____

Jennifer Taylor

Board Member — Board of Directors, SPCFPD

Date: _____

Mike Brandt

Secretary/Treasurer — Board of Directors, SPCFPD

Date: _____

Mike Smith

Board Member — Board of Directors, SPCFPD

Date: _____

Notes

Version V0.3 is a working draft prepared by the Board Chair. Version v1.0 is issued for Board adoption. Upon Board adoption, enter the adoption date in the cover page metadata table and the Section 14 signature block, and re-issue as v1.1 or as directed by the Board.

This policy shall be cross-referenced with and interpreted consistently with: District Bylaws (March 2014, Articles I–X); Board Administrative Rules, Practices and Procedures Manual (BAM v1.3) — especially §§4.4, 5.1, and 5.4; Policy 200-2.07 (Board Meeting Procedures Policy) §5(c);



SPCFPD Policy Manual (new series, Policies 200-2.x et seq.); SOG Manual (SOG 110); C.R.S. § 24-6-402 (Colorado Open Meetings Law); C.R.S. § 32-1-903 (notice); C.R.S. § 32-1-809 (annual Transparency Notice); C.R.S. § 32-1-1001 (Board authority); HB21-1278 (virtual/hybrid meetings); ADA; 29 U.S.C. § 794 (Section 504); First Amendment, U.S. Const.

— END OF POLICY 200-2.08 —

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