

HIGHLAND RESCUE TEAM AMBULANCE DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Highland Station
317 South Lookout Mountain Road
November 11, 2025
2:30 p.m.

Directors present: President Terry McCarthy, Director Kara Cooper, Treasurer Dan Kasinec, and Director Sharon Jones (via Google Meet).

Others present: Chief Bob Fager, Deputy Chief of Operations Damon Brown, Accountant Christina Jantzef (via Google Meet), and Administrator Laura Cardon.

Directors absent: Director Chris Garlasco (excused).

CALL TO ORDER

President McCarthy called the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

President McCarthy moved to approve the October 2025 board meeting minutes. Director Cooper seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (Laura Cardon)

October Medical Billing and Collections Report

For full details, please refer to the 2025-11 Admin Report - October 2025 pdf.

Highland transported 27 patients, billing \$40,123 in October 2025. \$16,032 in payments were received, \$10,436 was written off, and \$1,779 was sent to collections. The ending billing balance increased to \$130,630.

Federal Funding Update

Ms. Cardon reported that on November 4th, the district's billing company released all previously held Medicare claims for payment. Claims will be submitted normally moving forward. SDW is assuming add-on payments will be reinstated eventually and that claims

will be paid with them moving forward. Ms. Cardon added that she had not received another update from the billing company since the government re-opened.

FINANCIAL REPORT (Christina Jantzef)

October Financial Memo

Ms. Jantzef reported that as of October, the district is 83% through the budget year. Total expenses are at 70% of budget with every category below target except for training, as discussed in prior meetings. Total revenue is above target for the year.

The district keeps the majority of its cash balance in a COLOTRUST savings account. Throughout 2025, there has been approximately \$4,000 per month in interest.

2025 Audit

Ms. Jantzef presented the board with the engagement letter from the company who performs the district's annual financial audit. The company's fees have increased again, although Ms. Jantzef reported that Highland has the lowest fees compared to her other government clients.

President McCarthy asked Ms. Jantzef whether she wants to continue using the same company, since last year they caused our audit to be late. Ms. Jantzef answered that the company has committed to providing a different auditor this year to provide better service. She felt the company did definitely hear the district's complaints about the previous year's auditor.

President McCarthy asked if there was any reason to look at other providers. Chief Fager answered he looked around 2-3 years ago and didn't find any other options. Ms. Jantzef agreed.

Following this discussion, President McCarthy signed the engagement letter to send back to the audit company.

CHIEF'S REPORT (Chief Fager)

Chief Fager reported the district had 622 calls year-to-date. He stated he was concerned these year-to-date numbers aren't accurate and would discuss with Ms. Cardon.

Staffing Changes

There were no staffing changes in October 2025.

Whole Blood Program

Highland's Whole Blood Program will be going live on December 5, 2025. The district's Medical director is training the district's in-district members, paramedics, and administrators for blood banking and blood transfusing skills. Chief Fager remarked Highland may be the only agency in the state training every paramedic since most agencies only train an on-call supervisor.

President McCarthy asked how often Chief Fager anticipates the district will be giving blood. Chief Fager answered that a lot of demand will come from rural agencies that Highland will rendezvous with coming down I-70 to the major trauma hospital in Lakewood. This will give the patient blood a half an hour earlier than if rural ambulances drove straight to the hospital, based on data from New Orleans. Their study found it takes a hospital 18-19 minutes to actually administer blood after patients arrive via ambulance.

Director Cooper asked if Highland had to stay in-district for these rendezvous. Deputy Chief Brown answered that Highland does not have to stay in-district and can respond directly to neighboring districts like Evergreen.

Chief Fager added that exit 254 on I-70 will be the default rendezvous point. Jeffcom, the dispatch agency, knows that we will accommodate other requests further west of that point as well.

Director Kasinec asked if the district can bill for whole blood transfusion. Chief Fager responded that if Highland is transporting the patient, then yes, Highland will bill for the service. If Highland is not transporting the patient, the district will not bill.

Highland will not have additional cost for supplies because the hospital and Regional Emergency Medical and Trauma Services Advisory Council are paying for the blood. The Colorado Whole Blood Coalition also received funding from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which will reimburse Highland for supplies and equipment that will last several years.

President McCarthy asked if rendezvous would affect Highland's ability to cover its own district. Chief Fager answered that he does not expect a whole blood rendezvous will take crews out of district too often. A paramedic will rendezvous on their own, and if another paramedic is on duty at the station, then the district will still have EMTs on duty to respond.

Chief Fager answered that realistically, the district would only be administering blood once per month and he was unconcerned about covering the district.

The board commended the district for starting this innovative program that would save lives.

Chief Fager added that only 3% of agencies nationwide are doing whole blood. It was one of the main topics at every state and national conference he attended this year, making it an exciting opportunity for the district's volunteers and employees as well.

Director Kasinec asked what the press plan was for the program launch? Chief Fager answered that the district's PIO is working on a press release and PR plan to execute.

2026 Budget

Since the last board meeting, Chief Fager made three changes to the budget. He increased the budget for audit expenses after Ms. Jantzeff received the increased fees. The latest budget draft also reflects increased fees from Microsoft Office and one-time set up fees for a new electronic health record system.

Ms. Cardon asked the board for an additional \$2,000 to convert the upstairs conference room into a study room. The room is currently under utilized as extra meeting space, and many members are currently in school but have no dedicated study space in the office. Training Lieutenant Burke, who also leads the Peer Support program, also expressed the need for quiet space to decompress after difficult calls. The bulk of the cost would be for folding desks to preserve flexibility of the space to be both meeting and study space. The board agreed with adding an additional \$2,000 to the budget for this purpose.

OLD BUSINESS

Facility Update (Deputy Chief Brown)

Deputy Chief Brown reported that the new septic system is done and functional.

Per last month's board meeting discussion, Deputy Chief Brown re-engaged an engineer to get specific designs for the new parking lot to get more accurate bids. The architecture firm estimated \$850,000 for parking lot excavation and paving. Deputy Chief Brown will meet with an engineer the next day and report back.

Director Kasinec clarified that the latest quoted amount for the entire project was \$2.2 million. Deputy Chief Brown confirmed, but added he would like to get it below \$2 million.

Director Kasinec asked if it's possible for labor to be donated in-kind to the district. Ms. Jantzeff answered that the district can't accept donations but the foundation can. She recommended double checking with a lawyer.

Deputy Chief Brown said that he and Chief Fager talked to Trinidad Ambulance District about financing options. Trinidad split their agency into an enterprise and a district. The district collected tax revenue and the enterprise collected medical billing revenue. The enterprise is able to get a long-term loan.

Ms. Jantzeff added the advantage of an enterprise is that you don't have to get voter approval to apply for a loan since tax dollars aren't used for it. She added that it's very common in Colorado.

Director Kasinec asked if a lease purchase was possible. Ms. Jantzef answered she needs to reach out to lenders to confirm. The cost of issuance is a lot smaller for these loans.

Ms. Jantzef also added that establishing an enterprise probably would not be that difficult, but would involve legal fees. A lease purchase would likely be less effort and lower costs.

President McCarthy asked to clarify whether the change in fund balance reflects the revenue the district could use to pay back a loan. Ms. Jantzef answered that it was. Chief Fager added that part of that revenue is tax revenue, which is a much more predictable source of revenue than medical billing. A lease purchase would allow the district to repay the loan with that more predictable revenue source.

President McCarthy stated that the district wouldn't have to borrow the full amount, given the district has a healthy cash balance and the foundation's resources. He added that next steps were to look into financing options once the final budget is determined. He asked Deputy Chief Brown to report back with a finalized budget early in 2026.

Ms. Jantzef added that Trinidad is in a more rural, lower-income area than Highland, which also made it eligible for more federal funding opportunities than Highland. She added that interest rates will be lower for either financing options since the district would get government rates instead of private markets.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public attended the meeting.

ADJOURN

President McCarthy moved to adjourn the meeting. Director Kasinec seconded. Unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 3:38 p.m.