

*Minutes*

## **WEST CENTRAL FIRE DISTRICT**

This meeting is a meeting of the West Central Fire District in public for the purpose of conducting the fire district's business and is not to be considered a public community meeting.

**June 9, 2026**  
**11329 Railroad Street, Arcola IN 46818**  
**6PM (-5 UTC)**

*This meeting was recorded with Video and Audio*

### **Board Attendees**

Chuck Dwyer-Present

Mike Meyers-Present

Lance Dafforn-Present

Chandler Branning-Present

David Guadnola-Present

### **Additional**

Gale Stelzer- Present

Chris Perez- Present

- **Opening and Administrative Items**
  - Meeting called to order at 6:00; Pledge of Allegiance conducted.
  - No minutes were taken for the May 12 meeting; a recording exists and will be transcribed for approval at the next meeting.
- **Chief's Report: Vehicles and Maintenance**
  - New ambulance delivery was delayed from early June to the end of June; no firm date despite follow-ups.
  - Engine 81 significant issues:
    - Defective steering gearbox; steering wheel off-center; vehicle “floats.”
    - Rear cargo section misaligned; Harris/Paris Engineering engaged (likely shimming solution).
    - McQueen to perform repairs; part ordered; pickup planned this week/next.
    - Costs covered by vendor; no charge to the department.
  - Vehicle 285:
    - Rear axle failed; discontinued parts required purchase of a remanufactured axle (from Michigan).
    - Repair cost ~6,000; work completed by Bell Truck Service (Auburn/Garrett); truck back in service.
  - Additional maintenance:
    - 85 was out for two weeks for gas tank repair; back in service now.
    - 185 currently out for rear brakes; work by Scott Russell's shop; axles must be removed to access rotors.
  - Preventive maintenance:
    - Brakes inspected every six months; proactive downtime limited due to small fleet (two buses).
- **Vendor Quality and Future Acquisitions**
  - Concerns raised about McQueen's quality control; consider other vendors (e.g., Pierce) for future purchases.
  - Priority is on-time delivery and correct specifications.
- **Treasurer's Report and Budget Status**

- Budget tracking on plan; fire budget at 74% due to the 1.2 million engine payment.
- Temporary negative cash balance pending receipt of spring property tax (advance received in May; remainder expected next month).
- EMS billing:
  - Budget increased based on last year's run volume.
  - EMS billing fees aligned with anticipated volume; no current financial concerns.
- Senate Bill 1:
  - No impact on current year's receipts; potential challenges next year.
- **Staffing and Promotions**
  - Staffing: full.
  - Battalion Chief promotion:
    - In-house application period ends the last week of June.
    - If necessary, expand beyond in-house after June.
    - Potential lieutenant backfill later in the year; timing uncertain.
- **Station Purchase Strategy (Old Business)**
  - Prior attempt stalled due to no second in county council.
  - Proposed approach:
    - Include a line item in the upcoming budget for station purchase and renovations.
    - Use an agreement-to-buy contract dated 01/01/2027 so Allen County Fire assumes payment responsibility starting then.
    - Discussed with Jeremy Bush; he supports a planning meeting.
  - Approval this summer may be unnecessary if the cost can be included in Allen County Fire's 2027 budget.
- **EMS Week Activities and Scheduling**
  - Donuts and lunch were well received; games postponed due to staff physicals and an ambulance swap (285 in service at the station).
  - Scavenger hunt deferred; target completion by end of June.
  - Cookout successful; intent to include everyone; continuation planned.

- **Union and Contract Planning**
  - Focus on a countywide CBA for 2027 rather than changes in mid-2026.
  - Intent to negotiate to the new district forthcoming.
  - Goal to consolidate diverse district policies into one budget-aligned contract; move away from the prior master contract with appendices.
- **Aboite Station Renovations**
  - Footprint being reduced for cost control; recent plan at ~4,600 sq ft estimated at 2.3 million.
  - Original footprint ~3,500–3,600 sq ft; EMS storage expanded; wall removed to increase space.
  - New addition to be pressurized.
  - Sleeping and facilities:
    - Eight additional bedrooms (existing upstairs remains untouched for now).
    - Jack-and-Jill bathrooms per bedroom; unisex bathroom and laundry in the workout room.
  - Request to share updated blueprints with all members; emphasize “doing it right” despite cost.
  - Acknowledgment that a full-station renovation will be needed eventually.
- **Community Events**
  - Music in the Park praised for attendance and quality; weekly through June and July.
  - Food vendors noted (ice cream truck; smoker trailer with fries and burgers); music 7–9 PM, arrivals from 6 PM.
- **Chase Vehicles Discussion**
  - No further discussion after the initial meeting with Paul.
  - Expect countywide adoption due to large geographic coverage needs; other states already use them.
  - Significant training requirements, especially for carrying plasma/blood products.
  - Potential inclusion in final station planning and future budgets aligned with county consolidation for 2027.
- **Closing**

- Motion to adjourn passed.
- Note: A board member will be in Europe and absent at the next second-Tuesday meeting.

## **Next Arrangements**

- **Vehicles and Maintenance**
  - Coordinate with McQueen to replace the steering gearbox on Engine 81 and correct rear alignment; confirm part arrival, repair scheduling, and post-repair verification before returning to service
  - Designate a point of contact to secure a firm delivery date for the new ambulance; establish an escalation path and contingency coverage plan
- **Administration and Finance**
  - Transcribe the May 12 recording into minutes for approval at the next meeting
  - Monitor property tax receipt next month to clear the temporary negative cash balance
- **Facilities and Planning**
  - Share updated Aboite Station blueprints/layouts with all board members
  - Define Aboite Station scope: target square footage, cost cap, and prioritized features to avoid scope creep
- **Station Purchase Strategy**
  - Schedule a meeting with Jeremy Bush to discuss the budgeting approach for station purchase effective 01/01/2027
  - Obtain legal review of the agreement-to-buy structure with Allen County Fire for the 01/01/2027 transition
- **EMS Week and Community Engagement**
  - Complete deferred EMS Week activities (including scavenger hunt) by end of June and ensure full participation
- **Union and Contract**
  - Prepare and send the intent to negotiate for the 2027 countywide union contract; align timelines with district consolidation
- **Strategic Initiatives**
  - Conduct a needs assessment and training plan for potential chase vehicles; develop a 2027 pilot proposal with defined metrics

**AI has identified the following issues that were not concluded in the meeting or lack clear action items; please pay attention:**

- 1. New ambulance delivery date remains uncertain; designate a point of contact, set an escalation plan, and define contingency coverage.**
- 2. Engine 81 rear alignment and gearbox replacement need a documented timeline and verification plan before placing the unit in service.**
- 3. Aboite Station scope and budget require alignment: define target square footage, a cost cap, and prioritized features to avoid scope creep.**
- 4. Station purchase strategy for 01/01/2027 needs a clear budgeting path and legal review of the agreement-to-buy structure with Allen County Fire.**
- 5. The chase vehicles concept lacks formal needs assessment, training plan, and budget; consider a pilot proposal with defined metrics for 2027.**