

Minutes of the Public Safety Committee and Firewise Board Meeting for the Village of Taos Ski Valley, New Mexico held at 10am on Monday, October 6th, 2025, via Zoom.

The meeting was called to order by James Woodard at 10:00am. Notice of the meeting was properly announced. Members present were Kent Kiehl, Bob Thomas, Michael Chandler, and Jim Woodard.

The agenda for today's Public Safety Committee and Firewise Board Meeting was approved (Motion: Kent, Second: Michael, Unanimous). The minutes for the September 8th, 2025, Public Safety Committee and Firewise Board Meeting was approved (Motion: Kent, Second: Michael, Unanimous).

Public Safety Committee:

Kachina Park/ PARC Grant Update

As part of the match for the Trails+ Grant, the Village committed to do work on Kachina Vista Park to make it safer for users, less prone to vandalism, and to generally improve its aesthetics and use. It is, above all, still a required evacuation route in case of an emergency, so there is a limit on what we can do as nothing can impede its use as a pedestrian and vehicular evacuation route. So, we are going to have to be a bit creative, given its narrowness, steepness, being prone to slides of snow, rock and mud, and the impact whatever we do will have on the properties and houses below it. The plan is to create both parking and picnic areas at the top and parking below. Cameras are to be installed to monitor the top and bottom entrances to the park. Public Works has completed about one third of the rock cleanup along the length of the park. Due to other priorities and the coming of winter the work planned will not be completed until spring.

Williams Lake Overuse Solutions Update

Rick reported that the Village, TSVI and the Forest Service are moving to a position which revolves around year-round public use of the Gondola to allow the Village to restrict vehicles on Twining Rd and Kachina Area parking. Rick is working on an inter-jurisdictional operational plan which might be available in November 2025. Until the Gondola is available, the plan will include actions the Village will take to improve Hiker Parking and the enforcement of parking regulations during busy periods. The Village also plans to use its electronic sign to announce that hiker parking is full and encourage parking in the main skier lot during busy periods.

Meeting Frequency Discussion

There was a short discussion regarding meeting in the winter. Sentiment was expressed that Safety is a year-round issue. However, Rick encouraged us to meet in November and develop a Safety and Firewise priority list and report it to the Village Council. Then with Village Council support and approval Rick will develop an integrated priority list for the Village Administration. Rick encouraged us to maintain the regular first Monday of the month schedule, but cancel the meeting if there is nothing new to discuss, as P&Z has been doing. The priority list and strategy will be discussed at the next meeting.

Miscellaneous Items

Firewise Board:

CWPP/NFL Grants Status Update

Garrett reported that there was no change from last month's report. Rick reported that Garrett is working on several grants to continue the CWPP and NFL-like work next year.

Underground Power Status

Robert Wooldridge reported that they have completed about halfway of what they planned in Amizette, but still expect to complete the lower half of Amizette, 8/9 Coyote Lane, and as much of Upper Twining Road as time and money will allow.

Microgrid/Battery Power Status

Rick stated that tariffs and a better understanding of winter conditions in the Village have delayed the project. The units are designed and being fabricated, but it will probably be Spring before construction really begins. The Village has prepared the site with twice the area required to provide the option of increasing the coverage from 6 or 8 to a full 24 hours. The installation will improve the quality of the power for the Village because the units act as a large surge protector. Rick believes that recent announcements of Government funding cuts in this area would not affect this project.

Natural Gas Line Extension of Upper Twining

Jim reported that the trenching estimate from the Village contractor was higher than hoped. Jim is trying to get an estimate from NM Gas for the whole project including trenching. Bob stated that Chris mentioned two Taos contractors which might be interested. Michael raised the broader issue of how some of the other gas lines (like Phoenix Switchback) were funded. Jim agreed to ask Chris Baca about the funding for other projects. Rick suggested that if he had all the addresses remaining to be supplied with natural gas in the Village, he might be able to get legislative funding for the project.

Miscellaneous

Adjournment/Next Meeting

The Meeting was adjourned at 11:00am.

The next meeting will be at 10am on November 3rd, 2025, via Zoom.

James B Woodard