
DATE: May 21, 2026

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Wes Norman, Fire Chief

PREPARED BY: Ron Phillips, Phillips Consulting Services

SUBJECT: HEARING: Recommend the Board: (1) Approve the Introduction (First Reading) of Ordinance 2026-03 “An Ordinance of the Garden Valley Fire Protection District Which Adopts New Fire Prevention Service Fees and Charges”; (2) Waive reading of the full ordinance and read by title only; (3) conduct a public hearing to hear and consider all oral testimony, written materials, and written protests or objections concerning the establishment and imposition of the new Fees; and (4) Continue the matter to June 23, 2026, for the final passage (Second Reading) of the ordinance.

BACKGROUND

The primary mission of the Garden Valley Fire Protection District (District) is to protect life, property, and the environment through emergency response, fire prevention, and public education. The District actively works to prevent fires and accidents by enforcing safety codes, conducting inspections, and educating the public about fire safety practices and emergency preparedness. This is accomplished through plan review of all new construction projects, annual inspections of businesses, inspection of residential properties for compliance with defensible space regulations as required by the California Civil Code, and state-mandated inspections of certain occupancies as required by the California Health & Safety Code. The District fuel management crew is also integral in the prevention effort by reducing hazardous vegetation and restoring forest health to lower wildfire risk near the communities we serve.

District staff is recommending to the Board of Directors that it

1. Consider the adoption of Ordinance 2026-03 to establish a schedule of fees for fire prevention services provided by the District to certain business and residential property owners; and
2. hold a Public Hearing and First Reading of the proposed ordinance; and
3. hear and consider any objections or protests to the proposed schedule of fees.

The proposed fees provide a specific government service or product directly to the payor that are not provided to the remainder of the taxpayers of the District. The proposed fees do not exceed the reasonable costs to the District for providing the services listed. The District has provided notice and is conducting this public hearing in accordance with the provisions of California Health & Safety Code section 13916 and California Government Code section 6066.

DISCUSSION

Staff is recommending to the Board that it consider, via this ordinance, the creation of a Fee Schedule to recover the costs the district bears in providing certain fire prevention services in the community. The proposed fee schedule includes costs associated with the District's fuel management program. These fees are based on actual salary and benefits for staff members providing these services, operating costs specific to fire prevention including equipment and vehicles, and administrative expenses.

The primary purpose of reviewing architectural, engineering, and life safety system plans is to ensure all new construction is designed and built in compliance with adopted codes and standards. Plan review fees include an initial plan review and all associated site inspections to obtain final occupancy certification. Annual business and multi-family residential inspection fees include an initial site inspection and one additional reinspection to correct violations. The primary purpose of yearly inspections is to educate the community about the benefits of proper safety practices and identify and eliminate hazardous conditions that pose a threat to life and property.

The primary purpose of fuel management is the reduction of hazardous fuels on both public and private lands that may increase the wildfire risk in the community. The elimination of these hazardous fuels can reduce the potential threat to nearby homes and structures. These services include personnel using hand tools and mechanical equipment, vehicle usage such as Type 3 and 6 fire engines and heavy equipment usage such as the recently acquired "Firebot".

Government Code sections 50075 and 50076 govern the authority of special districts to create and establish fees. Section 50075 provides that it is the intent of the Legislature to provide all cities, counties, and special districts with the authority to impose special taxes pursuant to the provisions of Article XIII A. Section 50076 then excludes from the definition of special tax "any fee which does not exceed the reasonable cost of providing the service or regulatory activity for which the fee is

charged and which is not levied for general revenue purposes.” The exclusions to the special tax description include the following:

(1) A charge imposed for a specific benefit conferred or privilege granted directly to the payor that is not provided to those not charged, and which does not exceed the reasonable costs to the local government of conferring the benefit or granting the privilege.

(2) A charge imposed for a specific government service or product provided directly to the payor that is not provided to those not charged, and which does not exceed the reasonable costs to the local government of providing the service or product.

(3) A charge imposed for the reasonable regulatory costs to a local government for issuing licenses and permits, performing investigations, inspections, and audits, enforcing agricultural marketing orders, and the administrative enforcement and adjudication thereof.

(4) A charge imposed for entrance to or use of local government property, or the purchase, rental, or lease of local government property.

(5) A fine, penalty, or other monetary charge imposed by the judicial branch of government or a local government, as a result of a violation of law.

(6) A charge imposed as a condition of property development.

(7) Assessments and property-related fees imposed in accordance with the provisions of Article XIII D.27 of CA Proposition 218.

See Figure 1 for a brief analysis of how each of the fees proposed by the district meets the intent of one of the seven exemptions listed in Section 50076 that supports the cost recovery for services not rendered to the community in its entirety.

Service Type Category	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Specific Benefit	Govt. Service	Permits & Insp.	Govt Property	Fines & Penalties	Prop. Develop.	Prop 218 Exempt.
Development Plans	X		X			X	

Service Type Category	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Constriction Permits			X			X	
Occupancy Permits			X			X	
State Mandated Inspections			X				
Defensible Space Inspections		X	X				
Fuel Management		X		X			

Figure 1: Government Code § 50075 Analysis of Proposed Service Fees

The District also completed an analysis of the fees surrounding fire districts in the area collect for fire prevention services. The following agencies were contacted and their fees evaluated in comparison to the proposed fees described in the ordinance:

- Amador County Fire Protection District
- Cameron Park CSD Fire Department
- Diamond Springs Fire Protection District
- El Dorado County Fire Protection District
- El Dorado Hills Fire Department
- Pioneer Fire Protection District
- Rescue Fire Protection District

A workload analysis was performed by the District utilizing the available data collection sources currently available. The analysis evaluated the average number of staff hours normally provided to support fire prevention services. The labor cost used was typically at the average hourly rate of pay for the Fire Captain position. In addition vehicle costs and administrative costs are added into the proposed fee for each category.

The costs described in the ordinance related to fuel management come from two sources. The equipment and vehicle costs are from the 2025 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) equipment schedule that is used by State and Federal agencies to reimburse public and private agencies and organization for the utilization of those assets during emergencies. The District has also identified the current labor costs for each position assigned to program within the fee program.

The proposed fees for service by the District are described in Attachment A of the draft ordinance for review. The existing fees for each fire agency, the average cost for service rendered, and the proposed fee by the District, are described in Tables 1 and 2 of Exhibit B of the draft ordinance for review. The proposed fees for service by the District are described in Attachment A.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact is unknown and cannot be accurately predicted due to fluctuations in the construction industry and economy. Still, it is anticipated that the District will see an increase in revenue if this fee schedule is adopted. Based on the analysis, the District would be closer to cost-neutral with these revenue increases. When reviewing the fee schedule each year, a continuous cost-of-service analysis should be considered by the Board.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Ordinance 2026-03 (with fees attached)

ALTERNATIVES

1. Take no action – the ordinance does not continue going forward
2. Recommend 2nd reading with no changes
3. Recommend 2nd reading with amendments
4. Continue the hearing to another date and take additional public comment

RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 2 or 3 - Staff recommends that the Board conduct adopt Ordinance 2026-03 with either no changes or amendments and move the item to a second reading during its regularly scheduled meeting on June 23, 2026.

End of Memo