

Public Trust & Transparency Rebuild Plan

Valley Fire & Rescue

Chief's Statement of Accountability and Leadership Intent

Valley Fire & Rescue has always existed to serve our community with integrity, professionalism, and pride. In recent months, changes were made regarding how openly we share information with those we serve. These events have made it clear that transparency is not merely a matter of compliance—it is the foundation of public trust.

On August 4th, without prior consideration or explanation, the President of the Board of Directors removed public online access to our meeting minutes. A week later, the Board of Directors concurred that this action was in the best interest of the organization and offered their support without member input or discussion. Despite raising concerns, neither the President nor the Board of Directors were willing to engage in dialogue or hear any objections. This moment underscored the urgent need for a renewed commitment to openness and accountability.

Moving forward, Valley Fire & Rescue will operate with full transparency and accountability at every level. This plan represents a long-term commitment to rebuild any trust lost, strengthen relationships with our community and funding partners, and ensure that every decision we make reflects the values of honesty, openness, and service.

We cannot change what has already occurred, but we can define what happens next. This plan sets that direction. It is a promise to our citizens, our donors, our grant partners, and our firefighters that Valley Fire & Rescue will always be worthy of the trust placed in us.

Zach Adkins
Fire Chief, Valley Fire & Rescue

Background and Context

In 2025, the public availability of departmental meeting minutes and related documentation was abruptly suspended without notice, cause or member input, limiting access to information that had previously been made openly available online. This decision led to concerns regarding transparency and community accountability.

Although the decision has since been reversed, the incident highlighted the need for a stronger, institutionalized commitment to openness. The resulting uncertainty may have influenced external confidence in the organization, including potential loss of funding opportunities.

This plan serves as both a roadmap and a renewed commitment to transparency, communication, and ethical leadership across all levels of Valley Fire & Rescue.

Mission of the Rebuild Plan

To rebuild public trust and strengthen organizational accountability through transparent operations, responsible communication, and proactive community engagement.

Our goals are simple:

- Restore confidence among the community, donors, and grant partners.
- Rebuild a culture of integrity and openness within the department.
- Ensure every member of Valley Fire & Rescue understands their role in maintaining trust and being accountable to their community.

Core Principles of Transparency

- **Accessibility:** Business and Board of Directors meeting minutes will be available to the community in clear and convenient online formats, as well as by request.
- **Honesty:** Communication—internal and external—will be accurate, factual, and complete.
- **Accountability:** Decisions will be documented, explained, and open to review.

- Responsiveness: Community inquiries will be acknowledged and answered in a timely, professional manner.

Strategic Objectives

- Restore Public Access: Reestablish a permanent digital archive for public meeting minutes, policies, annual reports, and financial reports.
- Rebuild Partner Confidence: Re-engage with local donors and federal grant agencies to reaffirm Valley Fire & Rescue's operational integrity.
- Institutionalize Transparency: Create a formal transparency and ethics policy, reviewed annually by leadership.
- Promote Public Engagement: Establish recurring communication and community updates to keep citizens informed of progress and activities.

Key Initiatives

Digital Transparency Archive

Recreate and maintain a dedicated section on the department's website where meeting minutes, policies, financial summaries, quarterly and annual reports, and other public reports are stored. The archive will be organized by year and searchable for ease of access.

Annual Public Accountability Report

Each year the Chief will issue a yearly report summarizing departmental activities, accomplishments, financial transparency updates, and progress on this plan's goals.

Stakeholder Engagement Program

Rebuild relationships with funding and donor partners by initiating annual update letters, quarterly progress briefings, and open-house discussions on community initiatives and operational performance.

Board Transparency Policy

Develop and adopt a written board policy establishing requirements for public information release, meeting documentation, and communication standards, ensuring future consistency and compliance.

Board Reform

Reform board policies to limit individual authority and require collaborative review before major decisions are made. Align board practices with the department’s mission, community expectations, and operational needs to ensure balanced leadership and prevent unilateral actions in the future.

Implementation Timeline

Phase	Timeframe	Focus Area	Milestones
Stabilization	0–6 months	Restore transparency online and begin communication reset	Launch Digital Archive; issue initial public update
Reconnection	6–18 months	Rebuild donor and partner confidence	Conduct stakeholder outreach; draft Board Transparency Policy
Institutionalization	18–36 months	Formalize culture and accountability systems	Annual Report, policy adoption, and staff training
Sustainability	36–60 months	Long-term evaluation and continuous improvement	Public trust survey; policy revisions based on outcomes

Oversight and Evaluation

Transparency Oversight Committee: A small committee will monitor compliance with this plan, ensuring documents are posted, reports are completed, and public feedback is reviewed.

Annual Review: Each year, the Chief will review progress with the board and the public to measure transparency outcomes and set new goals.

Public Feedback Mechanism: A dedicated online form will allow residents to ask questions, suggest improvements, or request clarification.

Commitment to the Public

Valley Fire & Rescue is built on the trust of the people we serve. Every decision made under this plan will reflect that trust. We will not hide from our past—we will learn from it, grow through it, and emerge as a stronger, more accountable organization.

This plan is not just about restoring what was lost; it is about setting a new standard for openness and professionalism that defines our future, and that of our community.