



NORTHERN SONOMA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Minutes of the Regular Board of Directors' Meeting

Thursday, August 15, 2024

Geyserville Fire Station – 20975 Geyserville Ave, Geyserville, CA

1. Opening Greeting

a. Meeting called to order by President Scott Newman at 6:02 PM

b. Pledge of Allegiance

c. Roll Call

- Larry Heiges, Scott Newman, Pat Abercrombie, and Fred Peterson were present. Fire Chief Marshall Turbeville, Administrative Manager Anneke Turbeville, and Treasurer Michael Pigoni were present. Rob Stewart was not present during roll call, but Newman reported he was on his way.

d. Approval of the Agenda

- Anneke Turbeville asked to add two bills from Jarvis Fay to the Consent Calendar. Bell's and Cloverdale Ambulance Update will be moved to follow Public Discussion to accommodate Pam Bell. **A motion was made and seconded (Heiges/Peterson) to approve the agenda with those changes. All ayes.**

2. Public Discussion

- None.

3. Old Business

a. Strategic Planning

- The Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee reported that the second set of Strategic Plan edits have been submitted to CPSE. Chief Turbeville is working on his Chief's message. After completion, Abercrombie and Newman will compare the Strategic Plan to their action plan. Newman emphasized that the Ad Hoc Committee is there to support the Chief, and together they will determine how to implement the plan. Chief Turbeville noted that everything they do should be tied to the plan. Abercrombie agreed, reporting that he learned at the leadership symposium that everything on the agenda should also be tied to the plan.

b. District Collaboration

i. Bell's and Cloverdale Ambulance Update

- Bell's and Cloverdale Ambulance Update: Chief Turbeville reported that overall response times are down since ambulances are not coming from further away. Pam Bell reported twenty calls in Geyserville during the month of July. (*Director Stewart arrives here.*) Chief Turbeville explained how the program benefits the communities of Healdsburg, Fitch Mountain, and Windsor. It frees up firefighters, so they are available to respond to other calls. Director Heiges proposed doing a semi-annual review unless something comes up prompting a need to discuss the program sooner. This will be revisited during the January meeting, when the Board will hear its first semi-annual review. Chief Turbeville reminded the Board that it's a one-year contract ending July 1st.

ii. Sonoma County Winegrower's President Update

- Peterson and Newman met with the Sonoma County Winegrowers multiple times. The second meeting was with the winegrower board and Karissa Kruse. Newman noted that since the winegrowers have a lot on their plate, they want to keep things simple, but still wish to collaborate. Newman saw Kruse at lunch today and reported that she wishes to collaborate in a more formal way. He noted that there is a spirit of farmers and ranchers wanting to help others. He wants to nurture that relationship of mutual support so it's there when we need it.

iii. Communication Update

- Newman reported that there have been efforts to build the mailing list. Abercrombie praised Chief and Anneke Turbeville for grabbing the newsletter and going with it. He announced that he plugged the newsletter through the Fitch Mountain Association distribution list, which goes out to 500 people, most of whom are in our District. He asked that anyone with a communication channel send the newsletter out. Peterson said he likes the physical version of the newsletter, too. Abercrombie agreed, saying that sending out the physical version could result in more newsletter sign ups.
- Newman announced that the Sheriff's Office will visit home sites and discuss security with homeowners. Newman said he likes the support he feels as a member of the community and this board.

c. Measure H Planning

i. Legal Representation

- Abercrombie spoke with Ben Fay yesterday. Fay is currently slammed with issues related to the November ballot. He is working on our Measure H and liability issues but doesn't have deliverables yet. Abercrombie noted that these things are coming at us fast, and the Board needs to feel comfortable with what they are doing. If they don't hear back from Ben Fay they will need to escalate things.
- Newman reported that the topic of risk management came up at the symposium, and last month the Board questioned if we are covered from a liability standpoint. One of the instructors of the symposium is on the FAIRA board and has considered this topic before. Newman explained that his crusade is meant to support the leading-edge strategies of this board, and he feels optimistic they will come up with a great risk management plan. However, they need to be smart and thoughtful about it; this is what Ben Fay will look into. Fay has been brought up to speed with that FAIRA board member.

- Peterson asked Abercrombie about taking off for two months and wondered if Abercrombie wants him to follow up with Fay. Abercrombie thanked Peterson for the offer and suggested they coordinate this later.

ii. *Vegetation Management*

- Chief Turbeville said they are waiting for Bill Adams to send a document for Ben Fay to review. Chief Turbeville is working on a document detailing how projects will be delivered to us.

d. Facilities Planning

i. *Geyserville Fire Station Remodel*

- Chief Turbeville reported that around September 1 things will kick off.

ii. *Alexander Valley Fire Station Construction Status*

- The Northern Sonoma County Fire Foundation funded the remodel of the Alexander Valley Fire Station. The station received metal siding and a metal roof. The building will have the same use as always, with the addition of temporarily housing the fuels crew. The district is reimbursing the AVA for payment of the site's property taxes.

iii. *East District Fire Station*

- Director Stewart reported that Isaac's property and the two adjacent parcels are agriculture zoning, which allows public safety facilities. He noted that any proposal for parcels in that zoning cannot be detrimental to agriculture, so if we remove vineyards, we should plant vineyards somewhere else. Stewart noted that everyone is on board with the concept, but landowners are reluctant to give up their property.
- Abercrombie and Newman reported that they attended the last Cloverdale board meeting, which is another important aspect of their collaboration efforts. They said it felt good to be there and it gave them a good sense of their initiatives.
- Peterson reported that he went to the JPA meeting in Cloverdale with Stewart and Chief Turbeville. Nothing came of the meeting, but it was good to discuss topics together.

4. New Business

a. Board Development

- Important Takeaways from Board Attendance at the FDAC Leadership Symposium: Directors Abercrombie, Newman, Peterson, along with Michael Pignoni, went to the symposium. Newman asked each attendee to present their takeaways.

Director Abercrombie:

- Running a fire district is no less complicated than running a hospital, which he did for 32 years. There are many governing codes; don't do anything without checking to see if it's legal.
- Financial: Free fire engines from ABH (with strings attached); stipends for strike teams; reserves held by special districts are subject to seizure if not allocated.
- Agenda items should tie into strategic objectives.
- It was great talking to board members from FAIRA and people who have been doing it for decades.

Director Newman:

- He wants to know more about fire prevention responsibilities, including fire inspections.
- Board vs Staff: Involving staff in the master plan.
- Reserve balances with measure H: we need to have a master plan that works with the strategic plan; budget needs to show items we're committing to save for.

- Public discussions are for items not on the agenda.

Director Peterson:

- The symposium was very valuable, and he encouraged other board members and the Chief to attend.
- The master plan keeps Peterson up at night. Our budget is expanding, and the master plan should fit under strategic plan. Money won't come up as fast as we need it.
- We are in a good position to anticipate the costs of building stations, and we want to use money to provide better staffing and setting the bar.
- Closed sessions can be used to have discussions with the Chief. No minutes are taken during closed sessions, and you only report any action taken. During a closed session you can evaluate what is going on.
- District elections- do we need to separate? We are homogeneous in terms of population so is it still an issue to do separate elections? Michael Pigoni noted there are groups pushing areas of representation in elections, but they are primarily going after large districts. We are large in area but not in population. Rob Stewart asked if we could continue to operate at large. Michael Pigoni explained that they already represent certain areas, and you need diversity in the population for representation to work. Stewart pointed out that people are not beating down doors to sit on the Board- he has made some inquiries and its hard finding people who want to serve. If it goes to elections and no one runs, the Board of Supervisors can elect people to the Board.

Director Newman:

- Newman also learned that closed sessions include personnel discussions. At the symposium, they talked about having a standing closed session on each agenda so the chair can call for a closed session during any meeting. Michael Pigoni explained that closed sessions are only for evaluations, potential litigation, and real estate, and the reason for a closed session needs to be stated on the agenda.

b. Summit State Bank Account Signer Addition

- A motion was made and seconded (Stewart/Peterson) to make a motion to include Abercrombie as a signer. (Heiges left the meeting briefly and was not present, so he did not vote.) 4 ayes, 1 absent. Motion passed.

c. Vehicle Upfitting

- Chief Turbeville requested funding to make two vehicles fire-response ready and two vehicles fuel-vehicle ready. The fuels vehicle flatbed design will be a prototype for all fuels vehicles. Moving forward, these fuels vehicles will be used on Measure H projects. Eventually Measure H funds will pay for new fuels crew vehicles, or currently owned vehicles will be "rented" to Measure H at a daily state government rate.
- **A motion was made and seconded (Peterson/Stewart) to authorize \$52,000 to upfit four District vehicles. All ayes. (Heiges returned to the room for this motion).**

d. Health and Safety Code Compliance

- Chief Turbeville explained that he is trying to get all plans up to date, as required by law. The safety plans disclose hazards, what to do about them, and how to prevent hazardous situations. They explain how to document training and address topics such as workplace violence and heat illnesses. Newman applauded these risk management efforts. Chief Turbeville would like to have this company do our annual inspections, at the contract's hourly rate of \$125/hour, as well as train our paid staff to know what to look for. In addition, Chief will probably ask OSHA for a compliance visit. **A motion was**

made and seconded (Peterson/Heiges) to approve spending up to \$12,00 for the contract with North Bay Health and Safety. All ayes.

e. Draft Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget

- Michael Pigoni presented the draft budget. The finance committee will meet on September 5th to put the final touches on the budget. He asked that the agenda be on the light side, since there is a lot to go over. Revenue, in the form of property taxes, came in higher than expected. The surplus will roll into reserves. We are on track to use up all the grant money and won't need to return any to the County. The district will continue to lose Geysers revenue until the end of five years, when we will get full revenue. Measure H funds need to be put into reserve, so we don't have to give it back. Simple accounting is all that's needed for Measure H funds. One of the finance committee topics is our reserve policy. Heiges said the prudent move is to make sure we have enough reserves to pay bills and cushion for unforeseen circumstances.

f. Policies:

- The following policies were introduced:
 - 1) 601: AED Training
 - 2) 617: FF Health and Safety
 - 3) 712: Social Media
 - 4) 909: Health and Safety Officer
 - 5) 912: Ground Ladder Testing
 - 6) 918: Roadway Incident Safety
 - 7) 1037: HIPPA Release
 - 8) 1105: Fire Detection Systems

5. Minutes

- **A motion was made and seconded (Abercrombie/Peterson) to approve the July 18, 2024 minutes. All ayes.**

6. Financial Report

- Larry Heiges presented the financials.

7. Consent Calendar

a. July/August Bills

- A motion was made and seconded (Stewart/Heiges) to approve the bills. All ayes.

b. Authorization of \$2,951.39 (New Laptop for Michael Pigoni)

- A motion was made and seconded (Stewart/Heiges) to approve the laptop. All ayes.

c. Policies

- **A motion was made and seconded (Peterson/Stewart) to approve the following policies. All ayes.**
 - 1) 300: Incident Management
 - 2) 305: Tactical Withdrawal
 - 3) 306: Atmospheric Monitoring
 - 4) 307: Staging

- 5) 310: Elevator Entrapments
- 6) 311: Elevator Restrictions
- 7) 312: Swiftwater Rescue
- 8) 313: Confined Space Rescue
- 9) 314: High Rise Incident Management
- 10) 315: Wildland Firefighting
- 11) 316: Trench Rescue
- 12) 317: Carbon Monoxide Detector Activations
- 13) 318: Hazardous Materials Response
- 14) 319: News Media Relations
- 15) 321: Scene Preservation
- 16) 323: Traffic Collisions
- 17) 327: Abandoned Infants
- 18) 329: Line of Duty Death Investigations
- 19) 330: National Fire Incident Reporting System
- 20) 1001: Performance Evaluations

8. Chief's Report

- Chief Turbeville asked if there were any questions about his written Chief's Report. Abercrombie wondered about any takeaways from touring sites with Batchelder and Grabill. Chief Turbeville explained the reason for the tour was to show them the work done for our county funded grants. He also showed them around the Pocket Fire. Batchelder and Grabill support increased prescribed burning.
- Director Newman reported that he attended the Cloverdale grant meeting and was impressed with Martin Dreiling. He asked if we are establishing a template for future grants. Chief Turbeville explained that the wildland fire planning management unit is a model he is using to divide areas into units, so that each area is covered by a management plan. This will enable us to think big, instead of one road at a time. Dreiling is using planning units determined by access and community support.
- Abercrombie commended the Chief on saving interest by paying off the engine early.
- Margie Hanselman asked about the Chief's meeting with the new Pocket Ranch owners. Chief Turbeville said he met with the owners, who have property from Geysers to Pocket Ranch, but he cannot disclose the names.

9. Correspondence

- None

10. Good of the Order

- Director Peterson announced that there is a meeting of neighbors on Mountain View Ranch Road. The Cal Fire PIO is putting together a success story on the work done by the district and residents of that area.
- Director Abercrombie will miss the September board meeting. Peterson may miss the October board meeting. Heiges will miss the October meeting.

11. Adjournment of the Meeting

- **A motion was made and seconded (Heiges/ Stewart) to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 PM. All ayes.**

Minutes approved as written (Motion/Second): Stewart/Heiges

Clerk of the Board: Anneke Turbeville

Date: September 19, 2024

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