

Rancho Adobe Fire Protection District

11000 Main Street
P. O. Box 1029
Penngrove, California 94951

Telephone: (707) 795-6011
Fax: (707) 795-5177
www.ranchofire.com

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING
DECEMBER 15, 2021 — 6:30 P.M.
COTATI FIRE STATION - #1 EAST COTATI AVE.
COTATI, CALIFORNIA**

Closed Session was opened at 6:30 p.m.

I. CLOSED SESSION

- A. Pursuant to Government Code §54957.6, the Board will hold a closed session for the following reason: CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATORS. District Subcommittee: Mark Hemmendinger, Brian Proteau, Carla Grube
Employee Organization: Fire Chief Contract
Action Taken: The Board of Directors has Approved the hiring of Interim Fire Chief, Tony Gossner

Closed Session was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

II. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President, Mark Hemmendinger, called the Regular Board Meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. The agenda for this meeting was posted on December 10, 2021.

Roll Call:

Directors Present: Mark Hemmendinger, Michael Gadoua, Leslie Cozad, Bret Herman, Brian Proteau, Ray Peterson

Directors Absent: Carla Grube

Minutes Conducted by: Jennifer Bechtold

III. BOARD REORGANIZATION

Item followed the close of New Business.

- A. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman, and Passing of Gavel to New Chair

Chairman: Michael Gadoua

Motion moved by Mr. Proteau and seconded by Mr. Herman.
Motion Carried: Aye 6 No 1 Abstain 0 Absent 1

Vice Chairman: Brian Proteau

Motion moved by Mr. Herman and seconded by Mr. Gadoua.
Motion Carried: Aye 6 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 1

Board Reorganization Continued:

B. Appointment of Board Secretary/Clerk

Board Secretary/Clerk: Jennifer Bechtold

C. Appointment of Fiscal Officer

Fiscal Officer: Mark Hemmendinger

D. Appointments to Committees and Charges to Meet Regularly:

1. Budget/Finance Committee: Chief, Fiscal Officer and 2 Directors

Mr. Hemmendinger (Chair), Mr. Peterson and Mrs. Cozad

2. Negotiation Committee: 3 Directors (*meeting as necessary*)

Mr. Hemmendinger (Chair), Mr. Proteau and Mrs. Grube

3. Equipment Committee: 2 Directors to serve on committee otherwise composed of staff members (*meeting as necessary, but at least once quarterly*)

Mr. Proteau (Chair) and Mr. Herman

4. Legislative Committee: Chief, Board Chairman (*meeting as necessary*)

Mr. Gadoua

5. Chief's Evaluation Committee: 2 Directors (*meeting as necessary*)

Mr. Hemmendinger (Chair), Mr. Proteau

6. Long Range Planning Committee: 3 Directors to serve on committee otherwise composed of staff and members of the public (*meeting as necessary*)

Mr. Hemmendinger (Chair), Mr. Gadoua and Mr. Peterson

7. Capital Improvement Committee:

Mr. Proteau (Chair), Mr. Herman

E. Confirm Calendar of Meetings for 2022: Third Wednesday of Every Month: January 19, February 16, March 16, April 20, May 18, June 15, July 20, August 17, September 21, October 19, November 16, December 14

The Board has confirmed all meeting dates.

VI. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

A. Citizen Business/Public Comments on Items not appearing on Agenda

There was no citizen business.

B. Correspondence and/or Presentations

There was no correspondence.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting of November 17, 2021

Motion moved by Mr. Herman and seconded by Mrs. Cozad.
Motion Carried: Aye 6 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 1

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Ratification of Claims and Journal Vouchers

Motion moved by Mr. Proteau and seconded by Mr. Herman.
Motion Carried: Aye 6 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 1

VII. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Chief's Report

BC Taylor noted he had a meeting with SSU and their facilities staff and are working toward changes to their alarm system; in hopes, the alarm calls can be decreased. He feels that not much will likely change in the coming months. Mr. Proteau asked how many calls we have responded to this school year, and BC Taylor replied from August 15 to yesterday, we have responded to the campus 251 times. This equates to 24% of our total call volume. Mr. Herman commented this has cost the District over \$200K at an average billing rate of \$800 per call. Mr. Proteau feels this is needs to be addressed on how we can recover these costs. Mr. Gadoua said he had a meeting with Dr. Eyler a few days ago and they discussed cost recovery and how we bill. He is hoping to build a better relationship so that we will be able to recover some of these funds down the road. Their next meeting will be in January.

B. Director Reports

Mr. Hemmendinger commented that the county sales tax poll has shown skeptical public support. There has been some debriefing from members of FSWG to the SCFDA on this. Mr. Hemmendinger has not heard back on how they are planning to split the requests from the agencies. He feels there still is a lot of controversy on the sales tax itself and how the funding of agencies will work. There is a lot of distrust for the County as well.

Mr. Hemmendinger also noted the other issue the County's agreement to pay out \$8 million in disbursements to various agencies. This appears to be moving forward.

Mr. Proteau, Mr. Gadoua and Mr. Hemmendinger met with Petaluma City Manager, Peggy Flynn today to discuss operations, past sharing of a fire chief and and the future of both agencies. Mr. Proteau said he was encouraged that Ms. Flynn would like to keep dialog open with RAFD and keep going with the current shared services we have in place. Mr. Hemmendinger said they also discussed limitations of a chief sharing and the fact we had no control over this. He said we do not object to any future of chief sharing but we would want to have as much control over this as they do. Such full sharing would only be useful if it led t full consolidation. For the time being, we will not be doing anything other than the operational cooperation we currently have. This is between the command staff at both agencies.

C. Committee Reports

a. Finance/Budget

Mr. Hemmendinger said there was not much to report about the budget. We are currently 10% over budget on salaries and benefits due to strike teams. At the same time, we budgeted \$300K in strike teams, and our projected billings are

over \$1 million. This covers us on the overage in salaries.

b. Negotiations

No report filed.

c. Equipment

Mr. Proteau said this item be deferred to later in meeting.

d. Legislative

No report filed.

e. Chief's Evaluation

No report filed.

f. Long Range Planning

Mr. Hemmendinger said we would address this in Item F of New Business.

g. Capital Improvements

Mr. Proteau said the committee met Monday evening and reviewed the Strata contract that was approved at the last Board meeting. He asked how we would fund the project at station 2 moving forward. The estimate is around \$1 million and we have \$878K total between the 8510 budget and in capital reserves. We do have time, as the project will not begin until the fall. Mr. Hemmendinger noted the spending of reserves is to be a Board decision. We will have about \$700K more to add to reserves this year from strike team revenues. Mr. Hemmendinger will update the five-year plan and instead of using budgeted strike team revenue, he will put in the total billed amount and see what this will do for our budget. This will give the Board a look at the five-year plan and figure out what to do. Mr. Peterson took the opportunity to get a tour through station 2 last week, and he walked away with an observation there is a lot of stuff stored in hallways and other areas. He wondered where all this stuff will be placed and does not understand how this will improve the living spaces. Mr. Proteau commented the plan for revisions of the station has all been vetted by the Union and storage will be addressed.

Mr. Proteau said we need to come up with a contract template for Rancho Adobe to issue to contractors instead of signing theirs. The other project is the HVAC system at station 1 and in talking to the City of Cotati, that because this is a commercial building, the contractor will pull permits and submit plans to the city for review. Mr. Proteau will work on a sample contract for us. Mr. Hemmendinger will update the five-year plan, share this with the Board so they can study this, and come up with a plan.

D. Firefighters' Association Report

Engineer Morgan DeJong mentioned the Crab Feed has to be canceled due to COVID and the commercial crab season being put on hold. In addition, the Association approved purchases of air monitors for \$6000. This is an essential item especially with all the calls to SSU for alarms. All first out engines and the BC truck have an air monitor. Engineer DeJong also commented the Association bylaws should be completed within the next two months.

E. Firefighter's Union Report

Captain Gromala said there is a lot of testing going on for promotions and a Captain's test will be conducted tomorrow.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Discussion and Action on Reserve Policy (3rd Reading)

Mr. Hemmendinger noted the verbiage changes brought forth last month have been updated in the Reserve Policy.

Motion moved by Mrs. Cozad and seconded by Mr. Peterson.

Motion Carried: Aye 6 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 1

B. Discussion on Purchase of Body Armor

BC Weihman has prepared a staff report outlining what body armor will need to be purchased along with the costs. Mr. Peterson asked why staff will not be assigned their own helmets and if there is a fit for everyone. BC Weihman replied the body armor would be used seldom unlike structure helmets, so the need for individual helmets is an unnecessary expense.

Motion moved by Mr. Gadoua and seconded by Mrs. Cozad.

Motion Carried: Aye 6 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 1

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion and Approval of FY 2020/2021 Audit

Auditor, Ms. Blake Goranson provided an overview of the draft audit. The main points she shared are:

- 1.) A remote audit was completed this year. These are a lot of work for Mrs. Bechtold and Ms. Goranson thanked her for all efforts in addition to great job overall.
- 2.) Cash and investments increased \$1.4 million – large increase was due to strike team revenue and property taxes.
- 3.) Increases to compensated absences and net pension liability.
- 4.) Incoming expenses were up for personnel due to strike teams.
- 5.) Statement of cash flows – cash was higher this fiscal year. Operationally, increase of \$1.6 million in cash, did buy some items, and made payments to loans.
- 6.) Subsequent footnotes, on page 33, mentioned that we acquired the pension obligation bonds in October 2021.

Mr. Hemmendinger asked about the increase to compensated absences and what caused this. Ms. Goranson responded there is an increase because staff seemed to have more time on the books this past year. He also asked about pension liabilities being higher than the amount we paid off and she responded this has to do with timing of the audit. Ms. Goranson also added that much of this has to do with unrealized gains based on what is happening in investments and with other non-profits. Mr. Hemmendinger asked who prepares all the information for the audit and Ms. Goranson responded that this year she prepared our audit, which then goes through a tech to review the information.

Motion moved by Mr. Herman and seconded by Mr. Gadoua.

Motion Carried: Aye 6 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 1

B. Discussion and Approval of Easement Agreement with Petaluma Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency

Mr. Hemmendinger mentioned that the parcel the park and ride lot is on in Penngrove was never formally subdivided by the County many years back. The County does not want to go through this process, so the lot will now be back in our hands come January. The Sonoma County Water Agency is now requesting space to build a groundwater well on the property. BC Wandel has walked the site with the water agency and identified a spot to put the well so it will not affect future growth on this space. This is a 15-year contract. Mr. Hemmendinger noted that the indemnification agreement is weak and does not indemnify if something were to happen to anyone outside of the staff of the District. He wants to see the public included in this indemnification clause. They are also expecting to use the site for no fee. We are getting \$200/month for station 3 for the generator space. Mr. Proteau agrees the indemnification agreement must include the public. He is also concerned about what has happened on this property since it has been a park and ride. What if there are containments out there and how do we protect ourselves from this. There are many concerns to address before the Board will approve this agreement. The Board feels we should run this past our counsel for review and input. It was requested that the Board Chair follow up with PVGSA regarding the requested changes. If these conditions are met, then the agreement can be signed at our January Board meeting.

C. Discussion and Approval of Contract for Services with Ridgeline Municipal Strategies

Mr. Hemmendinger noted that Ridgeline Municipal Strategies is the company owned by Dmitry Semenov, who led us through the pension obligation bond process. This contract for services is assist Mrs. Bechtold with the required pension obligation bond filings for the first year.

Motion moved by Mr. Gadoua and seconded by Mrs. Cozad.

Motion Carried: Aye 6 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 1

D. Discussion on Interim Chief's Appointment

In front of the Board, this evening is a copy of a resolution we must adopt tonight. The hiring of Tony Gossner as Interim Fire Chief has been approved by staff and discussed in Closed Session. The language in the resolution is very specific to CalPERS and states that he must only have a one-year contract and serve no more than 960 hours per fiscal year. Chief Gossner would help the District assess our options and lead us forward. A posting has been made on the web site for a fire chief. Engineer DeJong asked what is meant by "actively looking for a new Chief." Mr. Hemmendinger replied we are looking for a permanent Fire Chief while simultaneously planning whether this means hiring one or partnering with others. We should have a better idea in the next five to six months. We have to do this as a legal step to comply with CalPERS.

Motion moved by Mr. Gadoua to adopt Resolution R-6 and seconded by Mrs. Cozad.

Motion Carried: Aye 6 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 1

Roll Call:

Mr. Peterson – aye
Mrs. Cozad – aye
Mr. Herman – aye
Mr. Proteau – aye
Mr. Hemmendinger – aye
Mr. Gadoua – aye
Mrs. Grube – absent

E. Discussion of Purchase of Chief's Vehicle

A staff report was provided by BC Wandel concerning the purchase of a new Chiefs vehicle. Mr. Proteau mentioned that the capital committee members discussed this purchase Monday night. They feel the best thing to do is go with the ¾ ton trucks we currently use. Mr. Hemmendinger also looked around at what was on car lots and there is just not much out there at this time. Prices were significantly more than we pay with the government discount as well. It makes the most sense to purchase a pickup truck similar to those we currently use.

Motion moved by Mr. Proteau and seconded by Mr. Herman.

Motion Carried: Aye 6 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 1

F. Discussion on Results of Long Range Planning Committee Meeting

Mr. Hemmendinger said the LRPC committee has held two meetings and we have gone through the SWOT analysis. We may want to add to the SWOT after we reconvene in January. The committee is attempting to identify what we need to do to move forward both short and long-term. We need to tackle some of the harder issues that we have identified; one of the big issues always comes back to money. We are healthy but we are struggling to continue to give raises that catch up with our neighboring agencies. Mr. Hemmendinger has been impressed with all the work from this committee.

X. DIRECTION ON FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- **Station 1 HVAC Replacement Bid**
- **Contractor Template**
- **Review and comment on Five-Year Plan**

XI. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the Regular Board meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Motion moved by Mr. Hemmendinger and seconded by Mr. Proteau.

Motion Carried: Aye 6 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 1

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Bechtold, Board Clerk

Date Approved by Board:

January 19, 2022