

# Rancho Adobe Fire Protection District

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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  
JULY 21, 2021 — 7:00 P.M.  
COTATI FIRE STATION - #1 EAST COTATI AVE.  
COTATI, CALIFORNIA**

**I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

President, Mark Hemmendinger, called the Regular Board Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The agenda for this meeting was posted on July 16, 2021.

Roll Call:

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

Minutes Conducted by: Jennifer Bechtold

**II. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

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

There was no public comment.

B. Correspondence and/or Presentations

There were two items of correspondence in Board packets.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Regular Meeting of June 16, 2021

Motion moved by Mr. Proteau and seconded by Mr. Herman.  
Motion Carried: Aye 7 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 0

**VI. CONSENT CALENDAR**

A. Ratification of Claims and Journal Vouchers

Motion moved by Mr. Herman and seconded by Mr. Gadoua.  
Motion Carried: Aye 7 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 0

## V. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

### A. Chief's Report

BC Herb Wandel reported the following on behalf of Chief Thompson:

- 1.) 163 total responses, 83 EMS (51%)
- 2.) We currently have one candidate for the paramedic position in background, psych and polygraph. We also have one in-house candidate. The District is just waiting on final approval of our paramedic program from the County.
- 3.) The Captain's Assessment process for four candidates has started and written assignments have been turn in. The next portion of the assessment is being worked on.
- 4.) The new BC91 truck has been built and they are waiting on the processor chip. The estimated time of arrival is 2-3 weeks and from there it will be a few weeks for the up fitting. We are also working on finding an additional BC vehicle.
- 5.) The station 3 generator installation has been completed.
- 6.) The Engineer Academy is on schedule with discussions and practices to conserve water and perception of the public have occurred.
- 7.) BC Weihman and Captain Deurloo are currently deployed as strike team leader trainees. There is a commitment from staff to back-fill positions.
- 8.) Our EMS training has been approved for continuing education in-house.
- 9.) Multi-Company - There is continuing development on combined engine company standards including times standards with a lot of work from both sides.
- 10.) Annuals have been completed on apparatus.
- 11.) HVAC plans have been received and we are awaiting engineer's assessment to determine the best pricing. Modernization of station #3 bathroom will be timed with HVAC project.
- 12.) The Kessing Ranch subdivision project continues and BC Taylor believes all units have been sold.
- 13.) Captain Caldwell continues to work with the group that is updating the Sonoma County Disaster Plan.
- 14.) Rescue tools have arrived and are being placed into service. BC Taylor will be ordering turnouts at the beginning of September to ensure they arrive within the current budget year.

Mr. Gadoua asked if we track calls to SSU and BC Wandel responded yes, we do. Mr. Hemmendinger asked if we are getting many calls there. BC Wandel said we are not seeing as many but there has been an increase in fire alarms lately and we will continue to see an uptick in calls.

### B. Director Reports

Mr. Hemmendinger noted that on August 5, he and Chief Thompson will attend the FSWG meeting to propose Rancho Adobe's financial needs from the future sales tax measure. Our request will surround salary increases into parity with like districts as well as Petaluma Fire. The salary disparity hinders our ability to work towards consolidation long-term with PFD. There are also some infrastructure items BC Wandel is working on that would increase our request as well. There will be requests from all departments to see how far over budget they are versus the expected funds the sales tax will generate.

Additionally, Mr. Hemmendinger commented that by now, most folks have seen the Press Democrat article in today's paper discussing the funding for some of the County fire agencies. Interestingly, the funding to support Bodega Bay is for two years, which assumes that the fire sales tax will pass allowing them to consolidate with Sonoma County Fire. Additionally, \$2.9 million is being allocated to Gold Ridge to take on the VFCs and Kenwood will receive money as well. The County is also offering about \$1.2 to Northern Sonoma County Fire District, which they are turning down because they want a tax exchange agreement for the areas they consolidated. This amounts to about \$1.5 million.

Mr. Peterson noted he joined the Board of Supervisor's meeting a bit late but did not feel there was much discussion on the Zone 9 consolidations and left out RAFD and PFD. Mr. Hemmendinger commented that there are a lot of hurdles to get through to consolidate with PFD. He has sent an email to Peggy Fleming, City Manager for Petaluma, to discuss these hurdles. Tomorrow night there is an SCFDA meeting via Zoom and Mr. Hemmendinger welcomed Board members to join. The biggest issue that will likely be discussed is the North Sonoma County FD issue wanting a tax exchange agreement.. It ensures a biannual payment of the taxes and you not beholden to the BOS. Each of the financial agreements made last night also were under the guise they would support the fire sales tax. A tax exchange agreement would also come with a CPI based on the County increases, which was not offered on the other funding given.

C. Committee Reports

a. Finance/Budget

Mr. Hemmendinger asked if the budget report for 6-30-21 was final and Mrs. Bechtold said the County still has not closed the fiscal year. We do have teeter funds that will be deposited to our account. With where we are currently at, there is \$1,099,142 in rollover funds.

b. Negotiations

There was no report filed.

c. Equipment

BC Wandel noted that the chassis for the squad has been ordered, though we have no ETA for delivery. In addition, the Type 1 engine has a rough draft of the build plans so this project is continuing to move forward.

d. Legislative

There was no report filed.

e. Chief's Evaluation

There was no report filed.

f. Long Range Planning

Mr. Hemmendinger commented that we have been working on consolidation issues, so there has been no LRPC meeting. Once we know more about where we stand with Petaluma, he suggests that we resume meetings.

g. Capital Improvements

Mr. Proteau said that Strata is doing the overall plans for construction at station 2. We do not have HVAC plans yet to send out for bids. Station 3s generator has also been installed. BC Wandel noted that we have the HVAC plans but not the engineer's budget.

Mr. Hemmendinger has been doing work on the five-year plan. Not knowing what we are going to spend on the capital improvements has been a bit of a hindrance so to have some better ideas of what we need for the future would be helpful. This would include any large items in the next five years we may need to purchase.

D. Firefighters' Association Report

No report filed. Mr. Hemmendinger did ask if the 5<sup>th</sup> Tuesday dinner would be held in August. Firefighter Bunch was unsure. Mr. Hemmendinger noted the Association has been removed from the District's insurance policy. As such, we will want a certificate of insurance endorsing the District on the Association's insurance policy and a written contract agreeing to the use of the equipment and stations.

E. Firefighter's Union Report

No report filed.

**Public Hearing opened at 7:34 p.m.**

**VI. PUBLIC HEARING**

A. Presentation and Discussion on Final Budget FY 2021/2022 (1<sup>st</sup> Reading)

Mr. Hemmendinger noted the following changes since adoption of the preliminary budget:

- 1.) 5910 – this number includes the expected payout for a Captain retiring in December.
- 2.) Unfunded liability payments reduced from \$412K to three monthly payments, due to the pension obligation bonds being completed by September. We can either pay the UAL in full and then have the debt reduced on the bond, or include this money into our bonds. We were concerned that paying outright in full would dig into our reserves this year
- 3.) There are some funds rolling over from last fiscal year, which includes accounts 6595, 6180, 8510 and 8560. These funds are being carried forward under a new revenue account 4000. Of the \$1,099,000 rollover, we are putting \$562,000 into this fiscal year and carrying over \$537K into our reserve accounts.
- 4.) Revenue – property taxes are based on 3.5% increase, but we do feel that will be more. The parcel tax has been calculated with a 3% CPI and Mr. Hemmendinger noted the Federal Labor Statistics show a CPI for our County of 4.5-5% . our parcel tax has a CPI that caps at 3%.
- 5.) We have been told that Pension Obligation Bond will not carry a principal payment the first year, but in February 2022, we will owe an interest payment that we now understand will be around \$66K. This another reason we backed down on our UAL payoff.
- 6.) Mrs. Bechtold and BC Wandel looked more closely into expenditures for 8510 and 8560 and updated those figures to \$390,000 and \$295,000 respectively. These figures include turnout racks at all stations and a BC pickup in addition to the one currently being built.

**Public Hearing was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.**

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Resolution R-1: Set Rate for Special Tax – 53110 at \$312.00 Per Parcel for FY 2021/2022

With a CPI of 3%, our new parcel tax will go up to \$312.00 per parcel.

Mr. Peterson noted that last year our parcel tax increased from \$300 to \$303. He feels that it is important to show rationale for a \$9 increase this year and commented every \$3.00 the parcel tax goes up, we generate \$19K in revenue. Mr.

Hemmendinger noted that we need about 50% of our total budget in reserves to get through from July to December without having to take out a loan. With what we are seeing now, we can eat up the \$69K in the blink of an eye. Our reserves need to go up much more. BC Wandel clarified that we have many liabilities we cannot estimate, so that \$69K can disappear in one crash. Mr. Hemmendinger also noted that we are seeing many costs increasing such as personnel. We will never be flush on cash so we turn to relying on the CPIs to keep afloat.

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

Motion Carried: Aye   7   No   0   Abstain   0   Absent   0  

Roll Call:

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

B. Resolution R-2: Resolution Adopting Prop IV Limit for FY 2021/2022

Mr. Hemmendinger commented the Prop IV limit ensures we do not overspend. For FY 21/22, the Prop IV limit is \$7,132,624.00

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

Motion Carried: Aye   7   No   0   Abstain   0   Absent   0  

Roll Call:

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

C. Discussion and Approval of Rate Term for Pension Obligation Bonds

Mr. Hemmendinger stated that the Board just needs to be aware of what our payments will be at the rates listed in the pension obligation bond documents. The sweet spot is somewhere between 15-20 years per our consultants. At 15 years, we will have less annual overhead and more interest and at 20 years, it will be the reverse. We will not need to vote on the term until August at which time we will have the term rates as well as our five-year plan updated. Mr. Herman asked if we are going to look at a 17-year term and Mr. Hemmendinger replied we could look at this as well. We will get this information out to the Board prior to the August meeting and he recommends that finance committee meet to review the information once we have it.

D. Discussion on Special Districts Leadership Foundation's Certificate of Transparency Awarded to District

Mr. Hemmendinger noted this project was completely spearheaded by Mrs. Bechtold. He does not know how many special districts have this honor but it is a great show to our community that we are transparent. Mrs. Bechtold felt that it is

very important to provide our citizens with information pertinent to our District and an easy way to find that information through our website. It was a lot of work to put together the documentations but it is a great honor to have been awarded the Certificate of Transparency.

BC Wandel said that we are the third largest district in Sonoma County, with a part-time Chief, and have just one person working in the office, where most other districts have multiple people in this position. He credited Mrs. Bechtold with her hard work to keep things running smoothly.

Mr. Hemmendinger also commented that he, Chief Thompson and Mr. Gadoua met with the LAFCO Commissioner a while back and he was significantly impressed with the sophistication of our District, especially with respect to our capital budgeting, five-year plan, replacement schedule, etc. He oversees all the Districts in the County and was impressed with what our District does. Mr. Hemmendinger stated Mrs. Bechtold has a huge impact on this as do the BCs, as well as our fiscal conservatism with having a part-time Chief as opposed to having a full-time Chief for a district of our size.

**VIII. DIRECTION ON FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- **Five Year Plan Review**
- **Weed Abatement and Liability**

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, the Regular Board meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

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

Motion Carried: Aye 7 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 0

Date Approved: 8/18/2021