

**ROSS VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
Minutes of the Ross Valley Fire Board Meeting of February 10, 2021

**1. 6:30 pm Call to order. Announce action in closed session, if any.**

**Board Present:** Hellman, Kuhl, Greene, Finn, Goddard, Burdo, Brekhus

**Board absent:** Shortall

**Staff present:** Weber, Yeager, Yu-Scott.

**Town Managers Present:** Toy, Chinn, Donery.

Agenda – February 10, 2021.

**2. Open time for Public Expression: The public is welcome to address the Board at this time on matters not on the agenda. Please be advised that pursuant to Government Code Section 54954.2, the Board is not permitted to take action on any matter not on the agenda unless it determines that an emergency exists and that the need to take action arose following posting of the agenda.**

None

**3. Board requests/comments to staff:**

Dir. Goddard requested to present the different models available for fire services, such as fire district. Dir. Finn asked about horses used for grazing for fire hazard reduction purposes; he would like to know if that is advisable or not. Chief Weber responded many species are grazers, and horses can be used.

Dir. Greene asked if the board meetings are recorded and available for the public to ensure compliance with the Brown Act. Chief Weber responded that they are. Further, Greene also requested a more organized board packet; he would like to have the headings, footers, and item numbers to match the agenda items. Deputy Director Yeager responded that we could make the changes requested to make it easier to read. Dir. Burdo made some suggestions regarding the organization and made himself available should the Department need any assistance.

**4. Report from Chief Weber:**

**MWPA Update:** MWPA Executive Officer Mark Brown reposted that they have had a very successful year; the chipper day has exceeded expectations, and we are looking to extend the days, red flag signs program has been implemented, NOAA weather radio is a VHF system that works, AM radio stations. However, all these tools are secondary; when there is an evacuation, law enforcement and fire will be knocking at your door. FIRESafe Marin has done a great job with public education. Implementing Zone haven will be a great tool. Additionally, MWPA is launching its proposal for environmental compliance to ensure all of our projects are environmentally compliant. Dir. Finn complimented Brown and the outstanding job he is doing with MWPA.

Dir. Hellman asked about the Zone Haven application and how it updates to notify residents to locate exit routes. Brown responded that it does update and provides that information.

Dir. Greene asked how the application works when there are power outages and what AM stations are used to broadcast. Brown responded that same, as the tools previously mentioned, this application is supplementary, and residents will get a knock on the door from law enforcement or fire, and the AM stations are KGO and KCBS.

Dir. Goddard asked about the environmental consultant and if that would replace the current process where MWPA meets regularly with different environmental groups county-wide. Brown responded that it would not, the consultant would focus on interpreting the law in the federal jurisdiction, and the environmental groups would continue working on best management practices.

Chief Weber covered the local MWPA projects and a breakdown of how the revenue funds are distributed: 20% goes to local funding, 20% goes into the defensible space category, and the 60\$ goes toward the core. This year, the funds were used for local projects and defensible space; we completed 463 inspections in Ross, 808 San Anselmo, 665 in Fairfax, and 785 in Sleepy Hollow. Here, compliance was in the 30-50%, and this showed the importance of educating the community before we start the enforcement piece. Further, since the MWPA membership lies with each JPA member agency, the Department's focus for this year was to work with the Towns on evacuation routes. Chief Weber recommended a collaboration approach from the council and MWPA board for core projects.

Dir. Hellman asked for clarification from Dir. Greene to formally ask questions, and Green responded that since they are a small group, they can ask their questions when they see an opening. Hellman asked if the compliance rate changes after inspections. Here, Chief Weber responded that Sleepy Hollow had a higher compliance rate, but they had done their inspections two years prior. Currently, we are not doing re-inspections, but we are hoping to get to a point where we can start doing them while educating the community. Chief Weber mentioned that CALFire has a grant available for seniors that don't have the financial means to comply with the inspection findings.

Dir. Goddard asked about the start of chipper days. Kathleen Cutter from FIRESafe Marin responded that they are waiting to get the calendar approved by the MWPA, and once that happens, they will release the dates six to eight weeks before it starts.

**Ross/ Station 18 update:** Chief Weber reported that Ross is still discussing different ways to get funding, and one of the options is private funding. Ross should have an answer sometime in March or April regarding any potential impacts. We will be back to the Board with associated impacts when they become available.

**Labor Management Committee update:** Chief Weber reported that the committee met last month, and the meeting covered different structures. We wanted to get a historical perspective to understand previous consolidations and all the steps taken to do so, such as survey studies. Moreover, it was explained what a district is, the challenges and benefits around it. The

committee's primary focus continues to be budget, staffing, and the future of Ross Valley Fire. A future meeting has not yet been scheduled.

Dir. Goddard requested that when items such as the Municipal Services Review (MSR) meeting with LAFCO are mentioned, some background can be provided to be well informed. Manager Toy said that the MSR is on hold until Ross decides what they will do with station 18.

**Covid/Vaccination update:** Chief Weber reported the opening of a superpod drive-thru site at the Larkspur Ferry Terminal in the next two weeks which will increase capacity. Moreover, vaccination is being opened for people 65 and older, but seniors are frustrated with everything being online. Our staff has done a great job assisting at the vaccination sites.

Dir. Burdo asked about the Department's legal counsel and why they are not at every Board meeting; all the other Boards he is part of have their counsel present. Manager Toy responded that the legal counsel is not present at every meeting as a cost-saving measure. Still, they are brought on as needed, and Manager Chinn added that it is also due to having a small Board and fewer legal issues.

#### 4. **Consent agenda:**

M/S Burdo/Kuhl – roll call vote, six ayes for a-d. Dir. Brekhus had to step away before roll call, and Dir Shortall was absent.

M/S Burdo/Kuhl to move items e and f

#### 4e. **MOA Agreement:**

Dir. Hellman had questions about the MOA Agreement; she asked for a summary of it. Chief Weber responded that the agreement was created so that FEMA can reimburse for all the support provided during Covid. The reimbursement is retroactive to January 1st, 2021, especially for those working at the vaccination sites.

#### 4f. **Resolution 21-03 Wildfire Mitigation Specialist – Defensible Space Lead:**

Dir. Greene asked about the position's fiscal impact; he would like some clarification regarding funding for the position. Chief Weber responded that we would take the 10k inspections and divide them by the total program cost, and we get a per cost per inspection. Then, the Towns get the money from the MWPA, and RVFD invoices the Towns to cover the cost of the position.

With regards to items 4e and 4f. M/S Kuhl/Goddard – roll call vote, six ayes, one abstain.

#### 5. **Resolution 21-02 Disaster Preparedness Coordinator:**

Chief Weber reported that this took a while because we had to work with our legal department (RWG) on the best approach. The person working on this will be in charge of general disaster preparedness, organizing NRG's, working with other disaster council coordinators. Further, the focus will be on evacuations, get-ready bags, go-bags, evacuation drills, etc. Funding is available through MWPA.

Dir. Goddard asked about the disaster coordinator's job responsibilities will be; her Town just approved the formation of a citizen's disaster preparedness committee. She asked if the Disaster Coordinator will work with the Town. Chief Weber responded that we would be in a good position if we can duplicate the Southern Marin NRG program. For instance, 32.5% of the time allocated from this position is for Fairfax. Manager Toy mentioned that the duties are specified in the job description.

Dir. Hellman pointed out the job description was well written and asked about the salary and if it was full-time. Chief Weber responded that it is a full-time job and salary ranges from \$65k to \$68k yearly; Hellman added that the job description asks for a lot of skills for a low salary. Chief Weber responded that the salary was decided after many dialogues with the managers and reviewing the funds available.

M/S Goddard/Brekhus– roll call vote, all ayes

#### **6. Resolution 21-04 Midyear Budget Report:**

Deputy Director Yeager reported that the budget adjustments are simple this year; the Department received unanticipated revenue of \$960k due to the fires last fall, so that money is revenue to the state. Still, it is considered a one-time revenue because it is not ongoing. However, that revenue comes with additional expenses such as overtime (~\$460k), fleet repairs, etc. Further, Yeager added that the management team would come back to the Board with any recommendations for the net fund balance of \$480k to ensure all engines and equipment are taken care of.

Dir. Hellman requested to either have a footnote or two-three lines summarizing the \$960k revenue, and Yeager responded that we are always open to adding more detail if needed.

M/S Brekhus/Burdo – roll call vote, all ayes

The next meeting is scheduled for March 10<sup>th</sup>, via zoom video conferencing.

Respectfully submitted,

s/Mariana Gonzalez  
Administrative Assistant