

## ROSS VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT

Minutes of the Ross Valley Fire Board Special Meeting of March 10, 2021

1. **5:30 pm Call to order. Announce action in closed session, if any.**

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

**Board absent:**

**Staff present:** Weber

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

Agenda – March 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.**
3. **Receive report on the submittal of an application for the FEMA Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant due March 12, 2021 and direct staff, as appropriate**

Dir. Greene gave a brief introduction about the purpose of the special meeting regarding the submission of the SAFER Grant application; the special meeting was called so that the Department could give notice to the Board about the Department's intentions to submit the grant application. He also mentioned that while the Board can ask some questions today, staff will provide a detailed report at a later meeting to address the grant's specifics. Dir. Burdo joined the meeting at 5:37 pm.

Chief Weber provided a summary of the application process and what the SAFER Grants covers. He mentioned that last year, FEMA extended the submission dateline due to covid. We were under the impression that it would happen again; unfortunately, it was not the case and had to be submitted on March 12, 2021. Further, Chief Weber explained that after discussing it with the Town Managers, they decided to submit the application as a placeholder, and to notify the Board. Chief Weber explained that the SAFER Grant gives funding to hire firefighters to meet the standards set by the Citygate Standards of Coverage study; the grant runs for three years, and many Bay Area agencies apply for it. If awarded, we have about five months to implement it. Historically, the grant funds 75% year one and two and 35% the third year, but FEMA is currently funding 100% of the cost. Chief Weber recommends we apply for the grant to cover three firefighter positions, the approximate cost for these positions \$1.8 million. If awarded, the Department must keep current staffing positions, but as previously stated, the specifics and financials will be discussed at a future meeting.

Dir. Greene asked if approval was needed to move forward with the application, and Chief Weber responded that approval was not needed but that the Board could ask any questions.

Dir. Goddard asked that since it was mentioned that we have five months to implement it, giving that fire season is approaching, she was wondering how fast can it be implemented. Chief Weber responded that the process is that we first apply, then FEMA reviews it, and if granted, a letter of intent is sent to the Department. Once that happens, we bring it to The Board for discussion and approval. Once received, we have 30 days to accept or decline. As previously mentioned to the Board, we are opening an open and continuous recruitment this spring, but unfortunately, it will not happen by the start of fire season. Dir. Goddard also asked what is excluded from funding and Chief Weber responded that overtime is not covered and that he would provide cost estimates at a future meeting.

Dir. Burdo asked if Chief Weber was writing the grant application, and Chief Weber responded that he is working with RVFD BCs and Admin; this is all a team effort. Dir. Burdo offered his help reviewing any of the answers.

Dir. Hellman expressed that it was a great idea to apply for the grant, but if awarded, how long we have to discuss the cost and put together a plan to continue funding beyond year three. She also asked what FEMA looks at to grant funding. Chief Weber responded that he expects to have a deeper conversation that includes cost and requirements with the Board in the next couple of months.

There was no public expression, and Dir. Greene expressed that he is glad we are applying.

Dir. Shortall requested an item added to a future agenda; he would like a summary of new Fire Ordinances. He mentioned that many residents have asked about the recent ordinances in San Rafael and Southern Marin, and they would like to know more about them to see if RVFD needs to update any of its Fire ordinances.

Next meeting is scheduled on April 14<sup>th</sup>, via zoom video conferencing.

Minutes Respectfully submitted,

s/Mariana Gonzalez  
Administrative Assistant