

ROSS VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT

Minutes of the Ross Valley Fire Board Meeting of June 8, 2022

Note: These are summary action minutes only. The zoom recording can be accessed by clicking [here](#)

1. 6:35 pm Call to order.

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

Board Absent: Hellman

Staff Present: Weber, Miller, Zuba

Town Managers Present: Donery, Johnson

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2. Announce action in closed session, if any.

None.

3. **Open time for Public Expression: The public is welcome to address the Board 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 the posting of the agenda.**

None.

4. **Board requests for future agenda items, questions, and comments to Staff, staff miscellaneous items.**

None.

No public comment concerning this item.

5. **Chief Report – Verbal Update by Chief Weber**

MWPA: Chief Weber reported that MWPA was awarded a \$3.5M grant for the Greater Ross Valley area. He also mentioned previous grants and that the FY22-23 MWPA work program was adopted. Additionally, all the RVPA ballot measures were supported.

PG&E: Chief Weber said that the Towns, the Fire Department, and other agencies are engaging with PG&E to improve communication to understand better how we can work together to resolve some of the ongoing challenges related to tree removals.

No public comment concerning this item.

6. Consent Agenda: Items on the consent agenda may be removed and discussed separately. Discussion may take place at the end of the agenda. Otherwise, all items may be approved with one action.

M/S Greene/Brekhus – roll call vote, six ayes, two absent.

No public comment concerning this item.

7. Receive Emergency Preparedness Draft Strategic Plan & Provide Feedback and Direction to Staff

Chief Weber summarized the Emergency Preparedness position goals and introduced the strategic plan and Miranda Miller, the RVFD Emergency Preparedness Coordinator.

Miller summarized the draft strategic plan and provided its goals, mission, and focus areas. The presentation provided data by Towns and District.

Dir. Finn stated that the data presented for Sleepy Hollow is not accurate. Miller will correct the information.

Miller mentioned that she would be partnering with multiple Marin County agencies and organizations for educational purposes. Additionally, she said that the [ReadyMarin](#) website is being updated and will have a section for Ross Valley to locate local and regional emergency coordinators and educational materials. Miller also talked about the CERT program.

Dir. Goddard thanked Miller for the presentation and said that seeing what the "Alert Marin" looks like is helpful. Next, Goddard asked about NRGs and Firewise and how they can work together. Miller responded that she has been working with FIRESafe Marin to start a new FireWise where there is a need while promoting NRGs. Goddard also asked how Miller would work with the "Fairfax Emergency Preparedness Committee." Miller responded that she could accommodate some time to work with Fairfax to establish the committee.

Dir. Greened thanked Miller for the presentation and asked what the distribution plan is to ensure it is utilized and if there is a "plan b" in the event of a disaster when there is no electricity to access any of the websites. Miller responded that her goal is to have quarterly educational events, Town newsletters, etc., and she has not yet worked on the "plan b" portion. Chief Weber said that Miller is working with other emergency coordinators to develop materials that can be distributed during inspections and marketing tools.

Resident Jody Timms thanked Miller for her excellent work and the Board for their support of the position.

8. Approve Resolution 22-11 Adopting Budget for FY2022-23

Dir. Greene pointed out the resolution number error, and Finance Director Jeff Zuba clarified that the staff report had the incorrect resolution number (22-13) and that the correct one is Resolution 22-11.

Zuba summarized the staff report and the changes from the proposed budget presented in May. Zuba said that the vehicle fund changed to \$262k, and the budget also includes an estimate for personnel costs depending on negotiations; the budget would have to be reviewed and amended.

M/S Greene/Goddard – roll call vote, six ayes, two absent.

No public comment concerning this item.

9. Receive Report and Direct Staff regarding ongoing funding source(s) related to the FEMA SAFER Grant

Chief Weber mentioned the SAFER Grant application to fund three (3) Firefighter positions for a three-years. Unfortunately, FEMA has not released the award information. However, the Labor-Management Subcommittee requested cost information to have some preliminary discussions before award decisions. Chief Weber also clarified that FEMA has not yet started awarding the 2021 grants, but if we do get selected, we have 30 days to respond to either accept or decline the grant.

Chief Weber explained how the grant works and said that the question is to determine how to fund the positions after the three years to ensure the Department keeps the positions. Further, he also mentions some of the challenges, such as the sta18 closure, Ross and Fairfax have a public Safety tax that expires in June 2025 and June 2031, respectively, and that plays a role in their projections and funding. Also, San Anselmo is considering a sales tax to collect funding for the position. Another factor is the current labor contract negotiations and the Department's governance and leadership transition from the existing shared service agreement with MCFD.

Dir. Shortall joined the meeting at 7:07 pm.

Dir. Greene mentioned the JPA and asked for allocations and funding information to determine contributions. The Board discussed the item and asked questions about cost and allocations. Goddard asked about the Labor-Management Subcommittee position regarding the SAFER Grant and when we should expect to get an answer from FEMA. Chief Weber mentioned what was discussed at the last Subcommittee meeting.

Goddard said that though there are many challenges and reasons to reject the grant, she would like the Board to look for options to possibly fund the positions since people are living in fear and leaving the area.

Chief Weber provided some cost estimates (annual increases) by the agency per the current JPA (2012)

San Anselmo: ~\$253k

Ross: ~\$145k

Fairfax: ~\$145k

Sleepy Hollow: ~\$77k

Greene asked the Board if the respective parties would commit to the annual increase according to the existing funds' allocation.

No public comment concerning this item.

10. Receive Presentation on RVFD Governance & Leadership High-Level Overview of Potential Options

Chief Weber summarized and explained the multiple options outlined in his report, provided some background, and mentioned that three (3) contractors had expressed interest in submitting a proposal. He talked about how the JPA has changed with mergers and services agreements over the years. Further, he also mentioned that LAFCO would be part of the process as there will be instances that require their approval.

Goddard asked when in the process would the Board know the cost differential for each option. Chief Weber said it would come once the Board selects the options they want to explore. He also mentioned that multiple factors must be considered when deciding on the best option.

Brekhus said that the idea of an independent Fire District unnecessarily complicates the discussion, and she does not believe it is a good idea for the scope of work the Department needs, and she also mentioned the additional cost for the SAFER Grant positions. Greene agrees with Brekhus regarding the Fire District. Kuhl agrees but said that we should wait to hear what the consultant has to say before deciding. Finn and Goddard agreed with Kuhl.

Brekhus added that Ross discussed the topic, not knowing that RVFD Management would change and that the Chief would step down, which would have been an essential part of the discussion, and this complicates the situation. Therefore, she would not support the district option. Kuhl added that the Board would advise the consultant so that they know each JPA member's position on the proposals. Brekhus said she would vote against the RFP if it expanded to the district discussion. Kuhl clarified that they were not voting for anything yet.

Shortall said that the staff report is meant to be a public document to outline the different options, so people can decide what option works for them. He knows that there are people from the public and Labor interested in learning about the possible options. Burdo agreed with Shortall.

Captain Oscar Arenas said that Labor would like to see the RFP with all the options. Further, he added that he has been a Fairfax resident since 2008, and as a Fairfax resident, he would like to see all proposals so that the Board and all residents can have the option.

No public comment concerning this item.

11. Announce adjournment to Closed Session

No public comment concerning this item.

12. Adjourn

The next meeting is scheduled for July 13 via zoom video conferencing.

Respectfully submitted,

s/Mariana Gonzalez
Administrative Assistant