

ROSS VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT

Minutes of the Ross Valley Fire Workshop and Board Meeting of March 8, 2023

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

RVFD BOARD MEETING MINUTES

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

Board Present: Cutrano, Brekhus, Kuhl, Burdo, Hellman, Shortall, Finn, Colbert

Board absents:

Staff present: Weber, Mahoney, Irving, Politzer

Town Managers Present: Donery, Johnson, Abrams

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2. **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.**

No public comment concerning this item.

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

Colbert thanked the first responders that assisted him during his bike accident, particularly RVFD Captain Oscar Arenas and Engineer Justin Hanson.

No public comment concerning this item.

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

MWPA: Chief Weber reported that MWPA is developing the 23-24 plan and is currently working on budget. Also, Southern Marin Fire joined the Dspace program and the Dspace staff moved to the Marin Commons, which is where the MWPA Headquarters are.

Weather update: Chief Weber reported that there is concern of water movement countywide and first responders and rescue teams are ready to assist during any emergency.

No public comment concerning this item.

5. 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 Burdo/ Brekhus – roll call vote, eight ayes. Brekhus, Kuhl Colbert, Burdo, Finn, Shortall, Cutrano, Hellman.

No public comment concerning this item.

6. Receive Report on Opening of the FEMA Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program Application due March 17, 2023, Direct Staff as Appropriate

Chief Weber summarized the staff report and explained that the deadline to apply is March 17, 2023, which is before the next scheduled Board meeting. Chief Weber also explained that applying does not mean the Board is committed to if granted/awarded to accept the award. The recommendation is that the Board approves the submission of the SAFER Grant application.

Brekhus asked about the matching funds and the economic hardship and if the Department could obtain a copy of Santa Clara’s FEMA application. Chief Weber explained that if RVFD applies, as of right now the grant does not require any matching funds and 100% of the positions are fully covered by FEMA for the next three years, and that Interim Deputy Chief Mahoney has been working on gathering successful applications from other agencies.

Burdo asked what would happen if RVFD becomes a different entity. Chief Weber explained that the grant would be awarded to RVFD, but that if that were to happen, FEMA would most likely work with the agencies for changes. Finn asked if the department should disclose the organizations state, and Chief Mahoney said that that information has been shared in the application. Burdo thanked Chief Mahoney for the work done in the SAFER grant application and believes applying is a great opportunity. The Board directed staff to apply for the SAFER Grant.

No additional questions from the Board, and no public comment concerning this item.

7. Receive Presentation from Local Motion Solutions (LMS) on Leadership and Governance Study, and Direct Staff as Appropriate.

Chief Weber provided a background on the MCFD/RVFD Shared Service Agreement. Chief Weber also talked about the Board’s decision to contract with LMS to explore the different options for the RVFD Leadership and Governance. Also, as requested by the Fire Board, LMS has prepared a presentation to provide a more detailed. Chief Weber clarified that there should be a correction on the last page of the staff report to change from San Anselmo Fire Board to RVFD Fire Board. Finn clarified that there should be a correction on the second page of the staff report where it says that “Sleepy Hollow choose not to become a JPA member, while maintaining a non-voting seat on the Board.” Finn added that Sleepy Hollow was excluded from becoming a voting member by the two other entities that comprised the JPA at that time.

Irving explained that the current presentation is only a summary of the more detailed presentation given to the Board in January. Irving explained that the goal is to focus on Leadership, and cover

the two options that the Board should consider, (1) Stand Alone Fire Chief, and (2) Joint Powers Agreement.

Irving added that neither LMS nor RVFD have met with Corte Madera because they do not have the authority to meet with them without the RVFD Boards approval. Irving also provided a management organization comparison for the Marin County and surrounding areas. Hellman asked what it means to be on a Safety position. Irvin explained that it means that the person on the position can assist during fires if needed. Brekhus asked if LMS found any fire agencies that did not have a Fire Marshal, and Irvin responded that they did not. In addition, Irvin covered the cost saving for a non-safety Fire Marshal, and the impacts of proposition 13. Irvin added that prop 13 would not really influence the potential property tax because the cost would contribute a similar expense as they are currently contributing as a JPA member. Brekhus asked if the Towns would always have to contribute, and what would happen should the tax is not approved. Irvin responded that the contribution is permanent. Johnson explained to Brekhus how the safety property tax is separate from regular property tax.

Irvin provided a hypothetical Joint Power Agreement model organization between RVFD and Central Marin Fire. Chief Weber added that tonight's presentation included some of the questions asked during the Towns' Council meetings. Brekhus asked if LMS has officially conversed with Central Marin Fire Chief. Irvin added that there has no been an official nor has it been agendized.

Oscar Arenas, RVFD Captain and Firefighter Association President read a letter distributed to each RVFD JPA Member Agency, addressing the concerns and support to the Joint Powers Agreement RVFD Leadership and Governance long-term goals.

Burdo thanked LMS for the presentation and the work they have done collecting the information. Burdo is in support of moving forward with the Joint Powers Agreement with Central Marin Fire and requested to schedule a meeting with the RVFD Labor Management Subcommittee for further discussion. Finn concurred with Burdo, and added that not only are we running out of time, but also that we can show the Central Marin Fire our commitment. Cutrano and Hellman also agreed with Burdo and Finn. Hellman and Finn asked for a term sheet to keep discussion on track. The Board discussed approving LMS and RVFD to initiate conversations with Central Marin Fire. The Board directed staff to initiate discussions with Central Marin Fire.

No additional questions from the Board, and no public comment concerning this item.

8. Adjourn

The next meeting is scheduled for May 10, 2023, San Anselmo Town Council Chambers, at 525 San Anselmo Ave. San Anselmo, CA 94960, and via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

s/Mariana Gonzalez

Temporary Administrative Assistant