

## ROSS VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT

Minutes of the Ross Valley Fire Workshop and Board Meeting of May 10, 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, Zuba

**Town Managers Present:** Donery, Johnson, Abrams

#### Agenda – May 10, 2023

#### 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.

Brekhus provided a statement explaining that she could not attend the Board meeting in person due to being exposed to covid-19.

No public comment concerning this item.

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

Colbert talked about measure J that allocates \$300k in funding for Fire that will become available on FY2025-26.

No public comment concerning this item.

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

**Shared Services Agreement with CMFD:** Chief Weber reminded the Board that the current shared service agreement with MCFD expires on June 30, 2023, but he remains committed to RVFD as the transition moves forward, and explained that Chief Mahoney took the role of Interim Deputy Chief on November 2022, and as such, he has been working on administrative functions.

Interim Deputy Chief Mahoney reported that the initial discussion with CMFD started, and Chief Mahoney and Chief Martin drafted an agreement for review and feedback from the RVFD

Management Committee and Sleepy Hollow Fire District. Chief Mahoney will provide additional information at the June Board meeting.

Hellman asked about LMS's role during the negotiation process. Chief Mahoney responded that LMS was on a need basis, was not assisting with the draft agreement, and only created the report previously shared with the Board.

**MWPA:** Chief Weber reported that the Greater Ross Valley area received state funding that complimented the MWPA Core projects funding, and we are currently working on additional grants. Chief Weber also explained the covered areas for the MWPA projects, Chipper program, and Defensible Space program.

Burdo asked for an update on the SAFER Grant and asked if Chief Weber would notify the Board if the Department was awarded the grant. Chief Weber responded that we had not heard back, but that if the Department was awarded the grant, the Board would have 30 days to accept or reject the grant. Chief Mahoney added that he has been checking and FEMA reviewed the application, and it is now re-reviewing the application before providing a decision.

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

No public comment concerning this item.

- 6. Review Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Proposed Budget & 5yr Budget Projection**

Chief Mahoney summarized the staff report and asked for recommendations to staff for the FY23-24 Budget.

Zuba gave a presentation about the budget preparation process. The increase will be \$715,522, the increase includes the 4% MOU increase, PEPRAs employer contribution increase, health insurance increase, workers compensation liability rate increase. Zuba also provided a proposed budget impact per agency.

Finn asked if item eight on the agenda is included in the proposed budget. Zuba responded that it was not, but he would revise the budget if item eight is approved.

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

**7. Adopt Recruitment Enhancement Program Authorizing the Fire Chief & Executive Officer to Implement as Needed for Hiring**

Chief Mahoney summarized the staff report and explained the reasoning behind adopting the recruitment enhancement, which is an incentive to attract lateral recruitment. The idea is to develop a framework to give the Fire Chief and Executive Officer the ability to offer the enhancement. The financial impact would depend on what the incentive applied is. Chief Mahoney explained that offering the enhancement will decrease the overtime cost due to the training time it takes to train a lateral firefighter which is from three to six months versus a new firefighter which is about a year. In addition, the enhancement would also be offered to any positions within the Fire Department.

Cutrano asked if the enhancement would be used as a tool to provide flexibility to hire more staff. Chief Mahoney explained what some of the incentives would be. Burdo thanked Chief Mahoney for bringing this item forward.

M/S Cutrano/Burdo – roll call vote, eight ayes. Brekhuis, Kuhl Colbert, Burdo, Finn, Shortall, Cutrano, Hellman.

No public comment concerning this item.

**8. Authorize Use of Reserves for Partial Funding of Capital Outlay at Three Ross Valley Fire Stations**

Chief Mahoney summarized the staff report and provided the amounts allocated to stations 19 (\$200k), 20 (\$300k), and 21 (\$300k) for a total of \$800k, a historical background for each station, and the need for improvement at each station some related to station 18 closures in 2025. Chief Mahoney explained that the Management Committee has met to discuss the cost and station 20 and station 21 has met with architectural firms for the remodel, and we are currently working on station 19. Chief Mahoney also talked about the fiscal impact, and each JPA Member Agency is responsible for the maintenance and repair of their respective Fire stations.

Chief Mahoney explained that the reserve account was funded in part by Out of County assignments that RVFD Fire personnel have assisted with over the past five years, with the funding being around \$1M.

Chief Weber mentioned that Zuba could provide additional information regarding the fiscal impact, and reminded the Board the amended JPA that includes the amount which is about \$210k each member Agency is contributing for updating the stations as a result of the closure of station 18.

Zuba mentioned that RVFD did not have a use of reserve policy and recommended implementing one. Zuba also added that if this item were to be approved, the Department's reserve funding would be at 13.5% which is more than the 10% required. Zuba also mentioned that the longer the Department waits to do the upgrades, the more expensive they will be.

Hellman asked about other Fire Departments reserve funding. Zuba did not know, but Chief Weber responded that most agencies have 20% reserve funding, but that RVFD is funded by the member agencies. Chief Weber also explained why other agencies have a higher reserve funding threshold.

Burdo agreed with the implementation of a reserve funding policy, and supported the use of the reserve funding. **Amendment:** Cutrano and other Board members also supported the creation of a reserve funding policy, and the use of reserve funds to provide for additional improvements to the remaining fire stations (sta19, sta20, and sta21) given that these reserve funds were generated by Out of County deployments of RVFD personnel.

Brekhus did not question the need for repair, but had some concerns about the fairness of Ross using the reserve funds for other stations upgrades and repairs, and questioned if the utilization of reserve funds can be requested this way given that it is contrary to the JPA.

The Board responded to Brekhus's concerns, and discussed the fiscal impacts, the need for station repairs, and the implementation of a reserve funding policy. Brekhus asked if this item was reviewed by RVFD Legal Counsel. Chief Weber responded that the item was not reviewed by Legal Counsel and requested to have the item be further reviewed for the legal implications to the amended JPA.

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

No public comment concerning this item.

**9. Approve a Five-year Agreement with the County of Marin (Auto Aid Agreement) for Ross Valley Fire Department to Provide Fire Protection Services to the Unincorporated Areas Adjacent to the Department's Jurisdiction**

Chief Mahoney summarized the staff report, provided a historical background for the creation of the Auto Aid agreement, the benefits of renewing the contract, and the fiscal impact of \$258,021 billed to MCFD for FY23/24.

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

No public comment concerning this item.

**10. Adjourn**

The next meeting is scheduled for June 14, 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