

ROSS VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT

Minutes of the Ross Valley Fire Board Special Meeting of January 12, 2024

Note: These are summary action minutes only. The zoom recording can be accessed by clicking [here](#). The passcode is Rvfd011224#

RVFD BOARD MEETING MINUTES

1. 2:05 pm Call to order.

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

Board Absents:

Staff Present: Mahoney (Remote)

Town Managers Present: Donery, Abrams

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2. Chief Report – Verbal Update by Interim Fire Chief Mahoney

SAFER Grant: Officially notified that we did not receive the SAFER Grant.

Two New Recruits Started: The two new recruits we hired a few months ago to fill the two vacancies from the retirements that occurred last year, have started. They've started their training, which is expected to end in October, and they'll then be counted towards our minimum staffing.

Firefighter Paramedic Recruitment: We opened recruitment to fill three Firefighter Paramedic positions that were approved by the Board. The application process closes January 31, 2024. We're still on track to get them onboarded with a start date of July 1, 2024 to begin their training.

Toy Drive: Successful toy drive this year. With COVID these last couple of years, there were some difficulties gathering enough toys. Toys were brought to the Fairfax San Anselmo Children's Center and distributed to families in need throughout Marin County. Would like to recognize community members for their generous donations.

Breakfast with Santa: In conjunction with the Town of San Anselmo, hosted pancake breakfast at Station 19. Fire Department staff were on hand to cook and San Anselmo staff were present to help with logistical needs. The event was a huge success.

No public comment.

3. **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.**

Cutrano commented there have been a number of Special meetings because of conflicts, often times with Fairfax Town Council Meetings, that get moved due to holidays. Cutrano looked ahead the next couple of years to see if there would be conflicts and they're usually in January and July. It appears that there will also be a conflict next January. The public should be given as much advance notice as possible if a standing meeting is moved.

Burdo added that if a meeting date is moved, to do our best to keep the meetings in the evening time when the regular meetings typically happen. Hellman added that if we do have a day time meeting, to think

about parking.

Brekhus highlighted that Board meeting times are Item 5 on the agenda.

No public comment.

M/S Brekhus/Robbins to approve consent agenda – roll call vote, eight ayes: Brekhus, Robbins, Colbert, Burdo, Shortall, Finn, Hellman, Cutrano.

4. Appoint President and Vice President to the Ross Valley Fire Department Board of Directors for 2024 – Interim Fire Chief Mahoney

Chief Mahoney summarized the Staff Report - a new President and Vice President are appointed in January of each year, serving a one year term.

No public comment.

Shortall nominates Finn to be President. Colbert nominates Burdo to be Vice President.

M/S Shortall/Brekhus to appoint President and Vice President for 2024 Board year – roll call vote, seven ayes: Brekhus, Robbins, Colbert, Burdo, Shortall, Hellman, Cutrano. One Abstain: Finn.

Finn took over running the Board meeting as President and acknowledged Hellman for the work she's put in over the past year as the former Board President.

5. Adopt Resolution 24-01 Updating the Meeting Location for Regular Meetings of the Ross Valley Fire Department Board of Directors. Board to Consider Adopting New Regular Meeting Dates and Providing Guidelines on Adding Items to the Agenda. – Interim Fire Chief Mahoney

Chief Mahoney summarized the Staff Report, which included a recommendation to replace Resolution 12-09 with Resolution 24-01. Updates included meeting location, the addition of August and December meetings as regular monthly meetings, and guidelines to adding agenda items.

Robbins endorsed setting the meeting schedule in advance and sticking to the dates. If a conflict is known ahead of time, make changes in advance. With respect to putting items on the agenda, Robbins recommended lowering the number of Directors from a majority down to two Board members. Robbins is unsure if the President alone should be allowed to put something on the agenda. If there's a critical item to be addressed, the Executive Officer and Fire Chief would know about the item and be able to add it to the agenda. Brekhus concurred with Robbins and brought up the risk of possibly violating the Brown Act if quorum was reached in the process of explaining why an item should be added to an agenda with the majority of Board members guideline.

Finn agreed the majority is too high, but feels two people is too low. Finn's suggestion is three people sign off on adding an agenda item. He is in favor of the President having the ability to add items to the agenda in consultation with the Executive Officer.

Hellman added if the Board chooses to go with the option of two members being able to add items to the agenda, that they should be from two different agencies or towns.

Burdo concurred with Finn about three people being a good number to add items to the agenda.

No public comment.

The Board agreed to lower the threshold for placing new items on the agenda from the majority of the Board to three Board members. With respect to the President having the ability to place items on the agenda in consultation with the Executive Officer, Finn requested Brekhus write a proposal so concerns can be addressed.

Chief Mahoney recommended a motion to approve the resolution with the exception of removing the agenda item portion, so that we fall in line with the Brown Act on Meeting Location. We can come back to the next meeting, and if need be, we can update the resolution to include whatever is decided upon regarding the agenda items. Ultimately, the Executive Officer sets the agenda.

Finn clarified that until Brekhus and anyone else have provided input and guidelines, the Board should continue to follow the customary practice of everything goes through the Executive Officer. Chief Mahoney would like to make sure the Meeting Location correction is made as of January 12th, 2024, so we are within Brown Act requirements.

Cutrano offered a substitute motion that captures everything excluding the President of the Board from adding agenda items and to amend the number of Board members it takes to get an item on the agenda from majority to three people.

Robbins motioned to approve Resolution 24-01 with the exception of condition number two (“By the President of the Board through written communication to the Executive Officer”) and with the amendment from majority of Board members down to three Board members. Hellman seconded.

Took public comment a second time since there were slight changes. **No public comment.**

M/S Robbins/Hellman to approve Resolution 24-01 with the exception of condition number two and amending majority to three Board members – roll call vote, eight ayes: Brekhus, Robbins, Colbert, Burdo, Shortall, Finn, Hellman, Cutrano.

6. Receive Update on Shared Services Discussions with Central Marin Fire Department and Direct Staff as Appropriate. – Interim Fire Chief Mahoney and Executive Officer Dave Donery

Chief Mahoney summarized Staff Report.

Shortall believes the future of the organization to be Shared Services and probably beyond that, a Central Marin Fire Department, which is consistent with the layout in the County as a whole. He requested the Board be cautious not to create a long-term contract for standalone fire services. Colbert and Cutrano seconded Shortalls comments. Cutrano asked what a timeline would look like with CMFD to move into another discussion with them around senior leadership.

Donery stated the wildfire component will benefit RVFD since they have a structure we can meld with easily. This would most likely be our first attempt at Shared Services, and would happen sooner than later. Life and safety fire prevention would be looked at later this year or early next year. In the meantime, talks are still being had about the potential for command; it’s not off the table.

Hellman asked if there is redundancy in the staffing around the MWPA and fire prevention. Donery explained having cross-jurisdiction would make the system we have in place more robust. Additionally,

with local funding, smaller towns are finding it hard to make sure there's good coordination on how money gets spent every year. The program would be much better if it was managed Valley wide.

Hellman requested some type of study in order for the Board to develop a point of view on what a district model might look like. Donery stated there was work done in relation to a potential larger department, not what a district would mean. With a district it's giving up property tax that we pay now and both Ross and Fairfax have special safety taxes, which make it complex.

Chief Mahoney requested the Board provide him the autonomy to provide what a stand-alone organization would look like with supporting staff and the fiscal impacts, which he would present at February's meeting.

No public comments.

By consensus, the Board directs Chief Mahoney to pursue the LMS study related investigation.

Finn requested Hellman conceptualize the entity level issues she was talking about and bring it back to the Board.

7. Board requests for future agenda items, questions, and comments to staff, staff miscellaneous items.

Cutrano asked what the timing is on backfilling the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator position. The Managers are currently looking at the job description and are setting up a meeting with Shortall to further discuss. The job description will be shared with the Board to be able to get to a point where recruitment can begin in the next couple of months.

8. 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.

9. Adjourn

The next meeting is scheduled for February 14, 2024, San Anselmo Town Council Chambers, at 525 San Anselmo Ave. San Anselmo, CA 94960, and via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,
s/Samantha Stettler
Administrative Assistant