

# Rancho Adobe Fire Protection District

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**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
MAY 20, 2020 — 7:00 P.M.  
COTATI FIRE STATION - #1 EAST COTATI AVE.  
COTATI, CALIFORNIA**

**CLOSED SESSION WILL BE HELD AT 6:00 P.M. VIA TELECONFERENCE. THIS BUSINESS IS NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.**

**CLOSED SESSION WAS OPENED AT 6:00 P.M.**

**I. CLOSED SESSION**

- A. Pursuant to Government Code §54957.6, the Board will hold a closed session for the following reason: CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATORS. District Subcommittee: Michael Gadoua, Carla Grube and Leslie Cozad Employee Organization: Paid Firefighters Union Action Taken: None
- B. Pursuant to Government Code §54957.6, the Board will hold a closed session for the following reason: CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATORS. District Subcommittee: Michael Gadoua, Carla Grube and Leslie Cozad Employee Organization: Administrative Manager Action Taken: None
- C. Pursuant to Government Code §54957.6, the Board will hold a closed session for the following reason: CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATORS. District Subcommittee: Michael Gadoua, Carla Grube and Leslie Cozad Employee Organization: Battalion Chief's Action Taken: None

**CLOSED SESSION WAS ADJOURNED AT 7:00 P.M.**

**OPEN SESSION BEGAN AT 7:00 P.M.**

**MEETING WAS HELD VIA TELECONFERENCE FOR ALL BOARD DIRECTORS, STAFF AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

**II. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

President, Mark Hemmendinger, called the Regular Board Meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. The agenda for this meeting was posted on May 14, 2020.

Roll Call:

Directors Present: Mark Hemmendinger, Brian Proteau, Michael Gadoua, Nole Pacheco, Bret Herman, and Carla Grube and Leslie Cozad

Minutes Conducted by: Jennifer Bechtold

**III. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Citizen Business/Public Comments on Items not appearing on Agenda

There was no public comment.

B. Correspondence and/or Presentations

There is a letter to LAFCO from Mr. Hemmendinger and Chief Thompson in Board packets.

Mr. Hemmendinger requested the following emergency item be added to the agenda; discussion on renewal of casino contract. There was no objection from the Board and the item was added under unfinished business.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Regular Meeting of April 15, 2020

Motion moved by Mrs. Grube and seconded by Mr. Herman.

Motion Carried: Aye   7   No   0   Abstain   0   Absent   0  

Roll Call:

Mr. Pacheco – aye  
Mrs. Cozad – aye  
Mr. Herman – aye  
Mr. Proteau – aye  
Mr. Hemmendinger – aye  
Mr. Gadoua – aye  
Mrs. Grube – aye

**V. CONSENT CALENDAR**

A. Ratification of Claims and Journal Vouchers

Motion moved by Mr. Proteau and seconded by Mrs. Grube.

Motion Carried: Aye   7   No   0   Abstain   0   Absent   0  

Roll Call:

Mr. Pacheco – aye  
Mrs. Cozad – aye  
Mr. Herman – aye  
Mr. Proteau – aye  
Mr. Hemmendinger – aye  
Mr. Gadoua – aye  
Mrs. Grube – aye

**VI. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Chief's Report

- 1.) Total incidents: 159, EMS 76 (47.8%)
- 2.) Wildland refresher training has begun and task books have been issued. Personnel are also performing PAC tests.
- 3.) BC Assessment is still in the works and BC Wandel is waiting for a call back from the assessment developer to see if they are willing to move forward.
- 4.) Captain-level development training is continuing as the end of probation nears.

All staff members are doing well.

- 5.) A live fire training drill is in the works for the property north of SSU. Neighboring agencies will be invited and logistical assignments are being planned, including public media and direct mailings with immediate neighbors.
- 6.) Due to COVID procedures, multi-company drills have been cancelled.
- 7.) Discussion is being held about what kinds of trainings PFD and RAFD can offer to bring together companies in Zone 9.
- 8.) BC Weihman is working on vegetation management within the district. Cotati has enacted his recommendation to match the County's vegetation management program, so enforcement should be easier. "Courtesy letters" have been sent to 30 homeowners who are frequent violators.
- 9.) We have begun the hiring process for several volunteers who were SRJC interns as well as three new part-time employees.
- 10.) BC Weihman has received owner permissions to improve two emergency access roads on Sonoma Mountain and work will begin next month. There may be some expenses for gates and locks, which will be paid for by our prevention grant.
- 11.) Chief Thompson has met with the City Manager of Cotati and Petaluma to give them updates on the ambulance EOA, which expires in two years.
- 12.) We continue to operate under current COVID protocols as the state starts relaxing rules.

B. Director Reports

There were no reports filed.

A. Committee Reports

a. Finance/Budget

Mr. Hemmendinger commented that we are on track with the budget and at this point, we have projected a \$937,000 carry-over into next fiscal year if we don't spend large sums of money before June 30. The only larger expense approval was the replacement of the telephone system at station 2, which recently failed. Mr. Hemmendinger noted that we will need to carry over no less than \$500K otherwise we will be short dry period funding next fiscal year if the proposed budget is adopted.

b. Negotiations

Mr. Hemmendinger mentioned the committee met earlier in the evening.

c. Equipment

No report filed.

d. Legislative

No report filed.

e. Chief's Evaluation

No report filed.

f. Long Range Planning

No report filed.

B. Firefighters' Association Report

No report filed.

C. Firefighter's Union Report

No report filed.

**VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

A. Discussion on Board Committee Scope and Responsibilities

Mr. Hemmendinger commented that the committee scopes are in Board packets. Mr. Pacheco feels these are a good start. Mr. Hemmendinger noted he would like clarification in the negotiations scope identifying that the Board negotiates contracts specifically for the Fire Chief, Battalion Chief, Administrative Manager and Union.

B. Discussion on Property Liability Insurance Program

Mr. Hemmendinger commented that we went out to bid for our liability insurance but no other underwriters are willing to write a policy for us at this time. We attempted quotes with FAIRA and through a traditional market. Pooled policy plans such as FAIRA and SDRMA tend to cost 20% below traditional markets. Traditional markets were unwilling to quote because the claim on file is still open with SDRMA. We will need to stay with SDRMA this year, with a cost of \$60K more and a deductible of a \$25K. We have included one deductible in our budget for next year just in case something happens. Mr. Hemmendinger asked SDRMA why the claim was still open and it was because an attorney's bill was still outstanding.

C. Discussion and Direction on Crown Castle Lease Extension Offers

Mr. Herman commented that the lease extension is more complicated than he had originally thought. He met with Mr. Proteau to look over what contracts we have had in the past and looked at what Crown Castle is requesting in terms of modifications. Mr. Herman would also like to have a phone meeting with the person in charge at Crown Castle. Mr. Proteau hopes to reach out to him after Memorial Day and keep the ball rolling.

D. Discussion and Approval of Casino Agreement

Mr. Hemmendinger asked if everyone had read the proposed funding agreement for the casino and if there were any questions or concerns. The Board was satisfied with the agreement.

Motion proposed to adopt the agreement moved by Mr. Herman and seconded by Mrs. Cozad.

Motion Carried: Aye 7 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 0

Roll Call:

Mr. Pacheco – aye

Mrs. Cozad – aye

Mr. Herman – aye

Mr. Proteau – aye

Mr. Hemmendinger – aye

Mr. Gadoua – aye

Mrs. Grube – aye

**VIII. PUBLIC HEARING**

A. Presentation and Discussion on Preliminary Budget FY 2020/2021 (1<sup>st</sup> Reading)

There are no increases to salary factored into the budget but it does reflect increase to liability insurance. Mr. Hemmendinger commented that the budget looks ok with the exceptions because the budget is higher than originally anticipated in the five-year plan due to capital investments in buildings. This will not present a problem so long as we carry over at least \$500K from the current fiscal year. The rescue is thus far budgeted for replacement but they are looking to replace the chassis and keep the body of the engine. Chief Thompson said this is a good way to replace the rescue and also cuts costs by around 50%. Captain Bernal asked if the equipment committee could meet and go over this proposal and make sure there are no problems staff has. Mr. Hemmendinger and the Board feel we should reduce the parcel tax to an increase of 1%, instead of 2% due to the current financial conditions.

**Public Hearing was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.**

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Resolution R-5: Ordering an Election be Held and Requesting the Consolidation with the November 3, 2020 General District Election

Mr. Hemmendinger requested that in the month or so, any director considering not running, to let the Board know so we have time to look into replacements. Mr. Pacheco noted that he will not be putting in for a second term. Mrs. Bechtold commented that the process is changing this year for voting so please read through those documents and let her know if you have questions. The Board should be getting these communications from the County and Mrs. Bechtold is attending a meeting on June 3<sup>rd</sup> to find out more about the process.

A motion was made to order an election for directors to be consolidated with the Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup> general election.

Motion moved by Mr. Proteau and seconded by Mr. Herman.

Motion Carried: Aye   7   No   0   Abstain   0   Absent   0  

Roll Call:

Mr. Pacheco – aye  
Mrs. Cozad – aye  
Mr. Herman – aye  
Mr. Proteau – aye  
Mr. Hemmendinger – aye  
Mr. Gadoua – aye  
Mrs. Grube – aye

B. Discussion on Board Approval of Budget Expenditures

Mrs. Bechtold commented that the staff would like to have a policy written with specific direction on when we need to come back to the Board for approval to spend funds that were previously approved through the final budget process.

Mrs. Grube thought there was a policy for this already. Mrs. Bechtold commented that the policy we have is very outdated and doesn't lay out all the points we need to address. She would be happy to look into finding a policy that's out there and write it per the Board's instructions. Chief Thompson has approval to spend up to \$25K in Petaluma without going to the City Manager for approval. Mr. Pacheco feels that

if the expense was in the budget and approved, that should be enough. Mr. Proteau stated that we should have a policy due to bidding and contracts and the Board may need to review those first. There are many aspects of this policy that need to be addressed, so we need to incorporate these points. Mr. Pacheco will send Mrs. Bechtold the policy for Novato Fire and suggested we also look at the Petaluma policy so we have things more in par for Chief. We will write and review this policy next month.

C. Review of District Events and Exposure to Claims

Mr. Hemmendinger noted the district now has a property/liability policy that exposes us to a large deductible. We now need to look at the events we participate in and scrutinize them for risk and exposure. We should also not sign any contracts are not of our writing so we do not increase liabilities for punitive indemnification clauses or extension of our insurance to cover others unknowingly. Mrs. Bechtold commented that she usually gets the list of events to the Board to approve in June and will do so at the next Board meeting. Barring July events, most other events should be looked at as “on” for the year. Captain Bernal asked if we should consider having the association get their own policies so we can still attend events. Mrs. Bechtold replied that the Association can look into that, but it may be an issue since the apparatus belongs to the district. Mr. Hemmendinger also asked staff to come back to the Board with any additional insured parties we hold insurance for so they are aware of this.

D. Discussion and Action on Unpaid Parcel Taxes for FY 2019/2020 (Staff Report by Jennifer Bechtold)

Mrs. Bechtold commented that she inquired with the county about running a report on how many taxpayers did not pay their 2<sup>nd</sup> installment of property taxes. With the report, she subdivided the parcels into low or no-value and regular properties that have not paid. Looking closer at the low value parcels, Mrs. Bechtold found that they are HOA walkways, common areas or parking lots. The rest of the parcels are well and/or water sources. The 49 low value parcels add up to \$14,550. We should collect on the remaining 321 parcels. Mrs. Bechtold is seeking direction on how to proceed with the low value parcels that have not been paid since a policy was set requiring any property owner to go through the exemption process with the Board. She offered to write a letter requesting payment for FY 19/20 and then request they go through the exemption process in the fall for the 20/21 year should they choose to seek this exemption.

Extensive discussion ensued. Mr. Herman feels we should try and collect this year’s taxes since we did set specific guidelines for parcels that meet certain criteria. Mr. Pacheco explained that we should try to collect this year and tell them they need to go through the exemption process, since we had other property owners go through the process. The Board directed Mrs. Bechtold to send a letter to each property owner, requesting payment for this fiscal year. Mr. Gadoua feels that the HOAs may be going through a tough economic time too and maybe we should consider some leniency. Mr. Proteau feels that we should try and collect and assumes they recoup these costs as part of their fees.

A motion was made to require anyone believing that an exception should be made for their parcel tax to request such an exception for the 2020-2021 property tax period and that the District should notify any non-payers as to this process and related deadlines.

Motion moved by Mr. Pacheco and seconded by Mr. Proteau.

Motion Carried: Aye   7   No   0   Abstain   0   Absent   0

*New Business Continued:*

Roll Call:

Mr. Pacheco – aye  
Mrs. Cozad – aye  
Mr. Herman – aye  
Mr. Proteau – aye  
Mr. Hemmendinger – aye  
Mr. Gadoua – aye  
Mrs. Grube – aye

**X. DIRECTION ON FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- **Discussion on future formation of capital committee.**

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, the Regular Board meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Motion moved by Mr. Gadoua and seconded by Mr. Proteau.  
Motion Carried: Aye   7   No   0   Abstain   0   Absent   0  

Roll Call:

Mr. Pacheco – aye  
Mrs. Cozad – aye  
Mr. Herman – aye  
Mr. Proteau – aye  
Mr. Hemmendinger – aye  
Mr. Gadoua – aye  
Mrs. Grube – aye

Date Approved:   6/17/2020