

# Rancho Adobe Fire Protection District

---

11000 Main Street  
P. O. Box 1029  
Penngrove, California 94951

Telephone: (707) 795-6011  
Fax: (707) 795-5177  
www.ranchofire.com

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
JULY 20, 2022 — 7:00 P.M.  
COTATI FIRE STATION - #1 EAST COTATI AVE.  
COTATI, CALIFORNIA**

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

Vice President, Brian Proteau, called the Regular Board Meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. The agenda for this meeting was posted on July 15, 2022.

Directors Present: Mark Hemmendinger, Michael Gadoua (joined via Teams at 7:15), Bret Herman, Brian Proteau, Ray Peterson

Directors Absent: Leslie Cozad

Minutes Conducted by: Jennifer Bechtold

**II. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

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

There was no comment from the public.

B. Correspondence and/or Presentations

Items of correspondence were located in Board packets.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Regular Meeting of June 15, 2022

Motion moved by Mr. Herman and seconded by Mr. Hemmendinger.  
Motion Carried: Aye 3 No 0 Abstain 1(Mr. Peterson) Absent 2

**IV. CONSENT CALENDAR**

A. Ratification of Checks Issued

Motion moved by Mr. Hemmendinger and seconded by Mr. Peterson.  
Motion Carried: Aye 4 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 2

## V. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

### A. Chief's Report

Chief Gossner made the following comments:

- 1.) Paramedic/FF recruitment has been reopened. We have one paramedic on staff, one attending medic school and we have two positions open. Hiring in the past has been unsuccessful and if are unable to fill these positions, we will look into sending interested staff to medic school. This is a time-consuming process.
- 2.) Met with Supervisor Rabbitt on July 1 to discuss funding request and promised he would have more information in two weeks. Two weeks have elapsed with no further information. SCFD agreed upon joint funding letter at their board meeting last night.
- 3.) Received eight applicants for Fire Chief position and we are evaluating and ranking these candidates. Will interview the top candidates in the next month.
- 4.) August 8-10, Chief Wandel, Captains Deurloo and Gromala will go back to Louisiana for final inspection of new Type 1. Mobile radios will possibly tie up process as there is a supply issue.
- 5.) Met with Chief Schach and Chief Heine to talk about ambulance service in and around Rancho Adobe. Some significant liability issues were identified in our BLS program, so there will be changes made moving forward. All BLS employees will become Petaluma employees but there will be no changes to services currently being provided. We currently have no written contract on the ambulance that would protect either entity. Next steps will be discussed at the budget meeting.
- 6.) Met with SSU Police Chief Nader and Rohnert Park Chief Mattos. Basic message is that we are driving by a staffed station to get to SSU and the hope is to work together more unanimously We will be doing more joint training with the two entities in the near future. SSU is still working on ways to cut down on false alarms. Rohnert Park is going to redistrict their lines so Aaron Johnson will be moving to the fire side soon.
- 7.) Chief met with Damien O'Bid and updated him on the consolidation process and discussed the cannabis businesses going into the city. City did approve a five-story hotel to be built. We do not have a ladder truck to access this building.
- 8.) Had five candidates for the BC test and all passed and have been ranked.
- 9.) The pancake breakfast was held on July 2<sup>nd</sup> and was well-attended. Everyone had a great time and parade went well the following day. Chief Gossner commended the staff for their hard work.
- 10.) Chief attended a badge pinning for Petaluma recently and had the opportunity to meet Peggy Flynn in person. She seems excited where Rancho is going and wanted us to keep her informed on the process.
- 11.) Last week a controlled burn was held at the top of Sonoma Mountain Road. A group called Fire Forward put this on with help from CalFire and some of our staff members.
- 12.) July 28 is the next SCFDA meeting and Rancho Adobe is hosting this at Sally Tomatoes. No host bar starts at 6 p.m.
- 13.) Redcom Director seat is open. Nominations are being taken for this seat and must be filled by a District not a city.
- 14.) July 30 – August 6 Chief out of town.

Mr. Herman asked about paramedic staffing and why this is so difficult to fill. Chief Gossner responded that there are many places hiring throughout the state – bigger agencies than us, with a dedicated ambulance service. Most of these entities pay quite a bit more than we do, so it is difficult to compete. We need to have the three medics on staff before we can roll out our ALS program and have lost two paramedics within the past six months.

### B. Director Reports

No report filed.

C. Committee Reports

a. Finance/Budget

Mr. Hemmendinger noted that we have a revised final budget report for FY 21/22 which shows that we underspent by \$532K and received unanticipated revenues totaling \$238K, amounting to a rollover of \$770K. Wages were under by .12%, supplies and services were under by 16% and capital expenses were 44% of budget. In total, we underspent by 7% versus what was budgeted and received 3% more in actual revenue than anticipated. The \$770K is a bit less than what was shown last month.

b. Negotiations

No report filed.

c. Ad-Hoc Equipment

BC Wandel commented the engine would be completed by July 27 and the chassis for the squad will be ready by November. All pickups have come in - we are just missing radios and we are working on a couple different options. Also, the fuel trailer arrived today so we'll be conducting training and outfitting in the next couple weeks.

d. Ad-Hoc Legislative

No report filed.

e. Ad-Hoc Chief's Evaluation

No report filed.

f. Long Range Planning

Mr. Hemmendinger noted that Chief Gossner addressed the next steps in the Chief hiring process., which will take place in the next month.

g. Ad-Hoc Capital Improvements

Mr. Proteau said he received a response from the architect today about the remodel plans for station 2, which are about ready to go to the County for permitting purposes. The HVAC bid documents have still not been received, as David Rapp had to take a leave of absence. The work on station 2's remodel will cost about \$1 million and the committee is working on costs for interval housing.

h. Ad-Hoc Fire Chief Selection

Mr. Hemmendinger noted that as the selection process moves forward, more work will be done by staff than the Board. The process will proceed slowly.

D. Firefighters' Association Report

Engineer Ikalani introduced himself as the new Association President and commented how successful the pancake breakfast was. The Community was very happy to see this and the parade return. Engineer Ikalani also noted the Association has accepted an offer on the property at 319 Ely Road and it is now in escrow.

E. Firefighter's Union Report

Captain Gromala thanked everyone for their work on the capital improvements and also mentioned a letter was sent to Board members regarding consolidation.

**Public Hearing was opened at 7:43 p.m.**

**VI. PUBLIC HEARING**

A. Presentation and Discussion on Final Budget FY 2022/2023 (1st Reading)

With no comments from the public, the hearing was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Mr. Hemmendinger noted the final budget in packets still has \$353K and \$90K plugged into capital assets. The \$90K can be removed and the \$352K has been reduced to \$217K. Additionally, an error was found in the CalPERS calculated, and this has been corrected, which increased the liability by \$200K. The \$550K budget includes \$64K in new unfunded liability. With these changes, we will likely end up in a slight surplus.

Mr. Proteau said we are taking a big hit on healthcare and property liability because we increased our building value and contents. Mr. Hemmendinger responded that the healthcare is increasing due to new positions being filled.

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Resolution R-1: Set Rate for Special Tax – 53110 at \$321.00 Per Parcel for FY 2022/2023

Mr. Peterson asked if the parcel tax increased from last year and Mrs. Bechtold said it increased by 3% to \$321 per parcel.

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

Motion Carried: Aye   5   No   0   Abstain   0   Absent   1  

Roll Call:

Mr. Peterson – aye  
Mrs. Cozad – absent  
Mr. Herman – aye  
Mr. Proteau – aye  
Mr. Hemmendinger – aye  
Mr. Gadoua – aye

B. Resolution R-2: Resolution Adopting Prop IV Limit for FY 2022/2023

Motion moved by Mr. Hemmendinger and seconded by Mr. Peterson.

Motion Carried: Aye   5   No   0   Abstain   0   Absent   1  

Roll Call:

Mr. Peterson – aye  
Mrs. Cozad – absent  
Mr. Herman – aye  
Mr. Proteau – aye  
Mr. Hemmendinger – aye  
Mr. Gadoua – aye

C. Candidate Interviews and Appointment of New Board Member to Replace Director Grube

Mr. Bob Moretti introduced himself to the Board of Directors and shared his experience and interest in serving the District. After a brief interview, the Board moved to appoint him to the vacancy.

Motion moved by Mr. Hemmendinger to appoint Bob Moretti to the vacant position and seconded by Mr. Peterson.

Motion Carried: Aye   5   No   0   Abstain   0   Absent   1  

D. Discussion on Funding Request to Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Chief Gossner shared that the letter before the Board tonight is an official request to the County of Sonoma and CAO Bratton for \$2 million to fix the funding gap for consolidation with SCFD. Chief Heine met with Supervisor Rabbitt on another matter and consolidation did come up in the discussion. He has also met with the CAO and she is in support of the consolidation conceptually. Chief Heine said it is not likely the Board of Supervisors will address the funding request until their mid-year budget review in March. The County is currently working through a difficult contract negotiation with SEIU and another fire consolidation with Kenwood and Sonoma Valley. The County has been advised not to enter into any long-term agreements until the recession concerns are over. They are looking at all the revenue streams and how to help us. Supervisor Rabbitt thinks the funding request letter is a good idea and shifts the responsibility on the County to respond to us. He will keep in touch with Chiefs Heine and Gossner. Chief Gossner feels this is an important formal request from us and puts the request squarely in the County's hands.

Mark Hemmendinger suggested that the close of letter should include a request for a response within a months' time. We need to keep moving forward with our plans as well and a delayed timeline puts us out two years. Mr. Peterson said he is confused by the tone of this letter and feels it indicates the Board has decided to merge with SCFD. He states it is important to see if consolidation is mutually responsible for both agencies to move forward. Once we make a commitment to move forward then the public loses its input. He does not feel the financial report addresses multiple issues, among them what happens to our current parcel tax. He also wants to know more about the first responder fee that our residents would be paying, if all our employees become employees of SCFD or will there be a vetting process. Additionally, Mr. Peterson asked if our relationship with Petaluma Fire would continue, as this has been a very positive change for the community. Also, what path will the RAFD residents have in governing of the district moving forward. Has SCFD been holding meetings in new districts they have annexed? How do they reach out to their citizens? Mr. Peterson requests that if we move forward with this letter, he would like clarification that as we stand today, we wish to move forward with exploring consolidation, but this is not set in stone. Mr. Proteau does not feel the letter is approving the consolidation tonight. He said the funding is a piece of the consolidation we need to make happen before we go to the public. Chief Gossner said we have not made a decision on consolidation and in order to make up our mind, we would need the funding. Mr. Hemmendinger agrees with the comments Mr. Peterson has made. He does not want this process to be held up, but he does believe that we need some phrase changes to clarify we need the funds before we can make the commitment to consolidation.

Chief Heine said if we are not making any substantial changes in the letter, it would not need approval from his Board. He does not know what to expect from County but does feel we need to get the letter sent. Afterward, he will set up a meeting with Supervisor Rabbitt to discuss and follow up.

*New Business Continued:*

Mr. Gadoua commented that we might go to the public and find out their interest in giving up local government control. Mr. Hemmendinger feels that we need to see what the County is willing to provide for funding in order for us to move forward.

The Board agreed upon language changes in the second to last paragraph, which will now read "to continue planning" consolidation. We also need to formally request a response date in closing the letter.

Motion moved by Mr. Peterson and seconded by Mr. Hemmendinger.

Motion Carried: Aye   5   No   0   Abstain   0   Absent   1  

**VIII. DIRECTION ON FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- **Discussion and Review of Bids for HVAC systems at Stations 1 and 3.**

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, the Regular Board meeting was adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Motion moved by Mr. Hemmendinger and seconded by Mr. Gadoua.

Motion Carried: Aye   5   No   0   Abstain   0   Absent   1  

Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jennifer Bechtold, Board Clerk

Date Approved by Board:

August 17, 2022  
\_\_\_\_\_