

Rancho Adobe Fire Protection District

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**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING
JANUARY 15, 2025 — 7:00 P.M.
COTATI FIRE STATION - #1 EAST COTATI AVE.
COTATI, CALIFORNIA**

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

President Bob Moretti, called the Regular Board Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The agenda for this meeting was posted on January 10, 2025.

Directors Present: Mark Hemmendinger, Bob Moretti, Bret Herman, Michael Gadoua, Brian Proteau

Directors Absent: Pete Albini, Ray Peterson

Minutes Conducted by: Jennifer Bechtold

II. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

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

Mr. George Barich of Cotati commented he would like to see more emergency preparedness in the city, as he feels we are woefully unprepared. He would like to see training offered to the community and consider bringing back the CERT program.

B. Correspondence and/or Presentations

A letter was sent from the Rohnert Park – Cotati Rotary Club thanking the fire district for their participation in the annual toy drive. Chief Veliquette also noted this year may have been one of the highest toy donations we have ever had. Donations included multiple truck loads of toys from the Laugh A Lot Car Club, who held an event at the Penngrove station in December and assisted with toy delivery. Chief Veliquette credited Captain Mike Porter with leading the toy drive again this year.

C. Oath of Office Administered to Brian Proteau

Board Clerk, Jennifer Bechtold administered the Oath of Office to Director Proteau.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Board Meeting of December 18, 2024

Motion moved by Mr. Herman to approve the minutes of December 18, 2024 and seconded by Mr. Hemmendinger.

Motion Carried: Aye 4 No 0 Abstain 1 (Mr. Proteau) Absent 2

IV. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Ratification of Checks Issued

Motion moved by Mr. Hemmendinger to approve the consent calendar and seconded by Mr. Herman.

Motion Carried: Aye __5__ No __0__ Abstain__0__ Absent __2__

V. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Firefighter's Union Report

Captain Gromala said the Union is welcoming the new year and looking at any changes they need to make internally.

B. Firefighters' Association Report

Holiday dinner last month and good turnout. Crab Feed on February 1 and still have tickets available.

C. Chief's Report

Chief Veliquette reported the following information:

- 1.) District activities: completion of the new hire academy, presentation to the RP/Cotati Leadership Program, a conditional job offer has been made and accepted for the mechanics position, Impact Fee Program approved by the City of Cotati (goes to BOS on 1/28), 9132 chassis remount project continuing, Van Pelt presentation scheduled to Capital Improvement committee on Tuesday 1/21.
- 2.) 2024 Calls for service: 3,079. This includes 1368 EMS calls, 1069 good intent, 196 general service, 166 false alarms, 133 hazardous conditions, 132 fires, 8 over pressure, 5 special and 2 severe weather events. 472 of these calls were to SSU. This is a 4.3% increase over 2023 and a 28% increase over a five-year period.
- 3.) Upcoming events: crab feed on Feb 1st, FDAC annual conference April 2025, Strategic Planning tentative date is February 21.
- 4.) Operational Update: BC Deurloo reported that RAFD sent one Type 1 engine and a BC to fires in Los Angeles and Sonoma County sent out four strike team's total. Additionally, there was a house fire last night near Lombardi's BBQ and one patient was rescued from the structure, crews finished a large collaborative training with Gold Ridge, Sonoma Valley and Petaluma Fire at the former Cattlemen's building.

D. Director Reports

No reports filed.

E. Committee Reports

a. Finance/Budget

Mr. Hemmendinger suggested we schedule a finance meeting for mid-March to begin budget preparation. The budget appears to be on target, though he is concerned about how much we will be charged for the election, since we did not budget for this expense.

Chief Veliquette provided further comments regarding the budget. Salaries and benefits are on track, though we will be over budget on overtime this year. Some contributing factors to this include the engineer and firefighter academy as well as our mutual aid responses. In supplies and services, the uniform category is

high because we have picked up new staff, allocated more t-shirts to employees and purchased additional Class A uniforms. December property taxes received were \$4,169,418. The County has notified us they will no longer fund defensible space inspections, which has funded us with up to \$60K per year. We will need to look at how we can fund this going forward. Additionally, revenues budgeted for the BLS agreement with SCFD will likely not be received in full due to the delayed approval process with Coastal Valleys EMS. We had anticipated hiring the mechanic's position sooner so we may not see that revenue this fiscal year. However, as an offset, we won't be paying a full year of salary and benefits to this position either. At this time, we have \$4.7M in cash, \$1.7M in reserves, for a total of \$6,496,000. We do have some outstanding strike team revenue totaling \$150K.

Mr. Hemmendinger commented that a couple of years ago he did a deep dive into the County budget. Prior to the consolidations, the County was paying \$40M per year towards the fire service and now they only pay \$11M. It's disappointing to see the weed abatement revenues cut now too. Mr. Gadoua asked how much of a deterrent cutting the weed abatement funds is for our District. Chief Veliquette replied that we have been inspecting about 400-500 parcels per year so moving forward we may have to do a focused area in high hazard areas of the District. He will work with staff and come back to the Board with some ideas. Mr. Barich asked who is responsible for weed abatement – the fire district or city, as this was a topic of debate years ago. Chief Veliquette said isn't sure where that ended up years ago, but the fire district is in charge of weed abatement unless we can't get compliance. At that point, we enlist help from Cotati's code enforcement officer.

b. Ad Hoc Capital Improvements

Mr. Proteau noted there is a capital improvements meeting Tuesday, so he will provide a report next month.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Discussion on Consolidation with Sonoma County Fire Protection District

Chief Veliquette shared an update regarding consolidation and noted that efforts continue with securing funding from the County. The LAFCO application is due by March 1st and the funding must be identified at that time. We continue to focus on RAFD obligations for FY 24/25. Mr. Proteau asked what happens if the funding is identified after March 1st and Chief Veliquette commented that this will affect the July 2025 consolidation date.

B. Approval of Update to Chart A in Purchasing and Procurement Policy 218

Chief Veliquette noted there was a line missing on the chart shared last month, and this has not been updated in the policy.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion and Approval of Quotations for Electrical Work for LED Sign Installation

Chief Veliquette suggested the District enter into an agreement with Reyff Electric to complete the electrical work for our new LED signs. The biggest cost is at Liberty because we are running almost 300 feet of electrical lines. This is not a budgeted expense, so Chief Veliquette recommends pulling this from our facility reserve account.

New Business Continued:

Motion moved by Mr. Gadoua to approve the quote for electrical work from Reyff Electric and seconded by Mr. Herman.

Motion Carried: Aye 5 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 2

B. Discussion and Possible Approval to Purchase Type 3 Fire Engine

Chief Veliquette commented that 9160 is now 25 years old and due for replacement. He suggested we enter into contract for the purchase of a new Type 3 for an amount not to exceed \$700,000.

Motion moved by Mr. Herman to approve the purchase of a Type 3 not to exceed \$700,000 and seconded by Mr. Gadoua.

Motion Carried: Aye 5 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 2

VIII. DIRECTION ON FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Discussion on interest in serving as Vice-President for SCFDA
- Discussion on providing emergency preparedness, CERT Program and First Aid training in the community
- Discussion on setting up new bank accounts for Measure H and fire impact fees
- Discussion on update to Summit State Bank signers

IX. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the Regular Board meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

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

Motion Carried: Aye 5 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 2

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Bechtold, Board Clerk

Date Approved by Board: February 19, 2025