

Rancho Adobe Fire Protection District

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**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING
MAY 18, 2022 — 7:00 P.M.
COTATI FIRE STATION - #1 EAST COTATI AVE.
COTATI, CALIFORNIA**

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

President, Michael Gadoua, called the Regular Board Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The agenda for this meeting was posted on May 13, 2022.

Directors Present: Mark Hemmendinger, Michael Gadoua, Bret Herman, Brian Proteau, Ray Peterson

Directors Absent: Carla Grube, Leslie Cozad

Minutes Conducted by: Jennifer Bechtold

The Board of Directors voted to add an item to the agenda: Item F, Discussion and Action on Continuing Consolidation Efforts with SCFD

II. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

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

There was no comment.

B. Correspondence and/or Presentations

There were no presentations.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting of April 20, 2022

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

Motion Carried: Aye 5 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 2

IV. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Ratification of Checks Issued

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

Motion Carried: Aye 5 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 2

V. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Chief's Report

Chief Gossner reported on the following items:

- 1.) Monthly meetings continue with the Rohnert Park City Manager and Chief Mattos. These have been great collaborative meetings.
- 2.) Hiring of two medics – one took a job with another entity and the second medic failed background. We are still down to just one medic.
- 3.) On May 3, a meeting was held with Chief Heine, Mr. Hemmendinger, Mr. Gadoua and SCFD Directors Click and Tognozzi. Chief Gossner also met with David Rabbitt, who now has the financial analysis. The county will see how they can help close the financial gap.
- 4.) Both staff and Board members now have the financial analysis, which shows a gap of \$2 million. All the numbers look good from our perspective.
- 5.) Last night, Chief Gossner along with Mr. Gadoua, Mr. Hemmendinger, Captain Gromala and Engineer Henry attended the SCFD Board meeting. We had a request to add two board members if consolidation was realized. By a vote of 6-1, the SCFD Board did not want to change their policy of adding more members.
- 6.) We are running a dual process for consolidation and hiring a full-time Chief. We have three candidates so far; one is local.
- 7.) Lexipol renewal cost is not being covered by County so Chief Akre is looking at running these costs through Sonoma Valley. Rancho Adobe is paying far more than other departments for this program, so Chief is trying to understand this. He does feel Lexipol is a very good program and we need to continue using it.
- 8.) Rohnert Park is having an amnesty fireworks day for people to turn in old fireworks and they have asked us to help.
- 9.) AMR – tiered response. Committee met today for the first time – next meeting is Monday. The fire service is active in these meetings along with the other stakeholders.
- 10.) Our type 1 is due to be completed in July. Type 6 is on track but will not be here for summer. We have moved to single station tone outs.
- 11.) Chief will be away from the office through next Thursday.

B. Director Reports

Mr. Peterson commented he is out of the country May 29 to June 26.

C. Committee Reports

a. Finance/Budget

Mr. Hemmendinger commented the year-to-date budget is on track with overall expenditures. There are a few categories we are a bit heavy in such as FLSA, though we will have left over cash from a number of categories. Supplies and services and capital improvements are fairly under budget. Strike team monies have mostly been received with \$67K outstanding. Revenues should be fairly on target and may see \$1.3 - \$1.5 million in carry over funds.

Chief Gossner asked about turn back funds. Mr. Hemmendinger commented that some of these funds were rolled from last fiscal year into capital improvements, which most of these projects have not been addressed to date. \$500K is about a year old. The rest of the funds are unbudgeted strike team money.

Mr. Hemmendinger also noted we made \$1200 on the 90-day CD we invested \$2 million into. After looking forward at our cash needs, we have put the \$2 million back into another 90-day CD, which has a slightly higher interest rate.

b. Negotiations

No report filed.

c. Equipment

BC Wandel said mid-point and final inspections on the new Type 1 would happen in July. The Type 6 chassis is ordered and we are looking at this going into service during the 4th quarter. BC Wandel also noted we have had some costly repairs to apparatus recently.

d. Legislative

No report filed.

e. Chief's Evaluation

No report filed.

f. Long Range Planning

Mr. Hemmendinger said the LRPC meeting was postponed because there was not much new information to speak about.

g. Capital Improvements

Mr. Proteau said they met with Strata to go over the bidding process for the HVAC at stations 1 and 3. Questions were answered and he gave an update on the remodel at station 2. Building plans should be returned to us for review in late June or early July.

h. Ad-Hoc Fire Chief Selection

Mr. Gadoua mentioned the submission process remains open through July 1 and we will look at resumes then.

D. Firefighters' Association Report

Captain DeJong said the Association would cover the bar at the awards dinner on May 27. They are still considering whether to hold the pancake breakfast on July 2. Additionally, the new executive committee has been elected and they will take office next month.

E. Firefighter's Union Report

Captain Gromala said the financial analysis has been reviewed by the Union and noted the ALS program is on stand-by. He would like to thank Chief Gossner for approving the single station tone outs.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Resolution R-9: Reducing Board from Seven Members to Five Members

Motion moved by Mr. Proteau and seconded by Mr. Peterson.
Motion Carried: Aye 5 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 2

Roll Call:

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

Public Hearing was opened at 7:31 p.m.

VII. PUBLIC HEARING

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

Mr. Hemmendinger commented the budget was compiled with assistance from staff and Board members, and then reviewed by himself, Mr. Peterson, Chief Gossner and Mrs. Bechtold. In this budget, we looked at a three-year average to reduce some of the expenses requested. Permanent positions include pay increases for in place from the second part of contracts and our PERS retirement shows a decrease of \$500K. Of this amount, almost \$400K has been shifted to long-term debt for the pension obligation bonds. Next year we have accrued PERS liability of \$64K. Workers compensation costs have gone down. Mr. Hemmendinger noted that he and Mrs. Bechtold have reviewed other health plans due to the cost of the health savings plan over the years. We found that even with the \$200K paid out for the HSAs, our Kaiser plan is still less costly than adding a new plan and costs the employees virtually nothing each year. Due to a proposed jump in staffing next fiscal year, our healthcare costs will increase to \$614K. Total salary and benefits went down \$200K and that is a reflection of PERS shifting to long-term debt.

Under supplies and services, our liability insurance has gone up around \$4K, which is a small increase. We also went out to bid on insurance and SDRMA is still lower than other special districts are paying with their pooled insurance. We do have a \$25K deductible and hope this will renew at the end next fiscal year.

In other expenses, the long-term loan on 9182 matures in 2027 and we have added the pension obligation bond payments. We have budgeted fixed assets at \$2.1 million for new equipment and remodeling at station 2. Mr. Hemmendinger and Mrs. Bechtold have been speaking with a financial consultant to better represent capital improvements and apparatus replacement. We may move to a capital improvements budget, which would drop those totals off and shift to a new schedule. We feel this will be a better way to represent our budget.

Revenues are budgeted on a 3.5% increase in property taxes and a 3% increase on the parcel tax. Strike teams are projected at \$300K because we do not like to project high. The casino contract for next year has dropped to \$180K and overall we project \$7.4 million in revenues. If we remove capital expenditures out of this budget, we will be left with \$420K next fiscal year. This should leave us with a good debt service ratio.

Public Hearing was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution R-10: Ordering an Election be Held and Requesting the Consolidation with the November 8, 2022 General District Election

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

New Business Continued:

Motion Carried: Aye 5 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 2

Roll Call:

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

B. Discussion on Capital Upgrades to Fire Stations

Mr. Hemmendinger asked what the likelihood is that we will proceed with the projected \$1 million station 2 improvements and Mr. Proteau replied we are already moving forward with the plans. In June or July, once the final plans are brought forward, the Board will have a chance to vote on spending those funds.

C. Discussion on Sonoma State University Funding

Mr. Hemmendinger is feeling frustrated with the slow state of this issue. He and Mr. Peterson are searching for written records that would require us to provide service to SSU. So far, no records seem to exist and LAFCO is searching through their documentation. We need to come up with a plan of action if we find records as to how this is in our sphere of influence.

Mr. Peterson said the state legislature created Rohnert Park and SSU with a donation of land from the Rohnert Family. Mr. Hemmendinger would like to see if LAFCO could find any documentation on how SSU came to be part of our fire district. Once we know more, we can begin to ask for payment for services or to annex them out of our sphere of influence. This has become a bigger issue now that we are paying Redcom fees for all of these calls. Mr. Hemmendinger does not think it is right our residents are paying for a university through taxes and then we are paying again for the service being provided to the university.

D. Resolution R-11: Authorizing Application For Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP) Program in Accordance With the USFS

Item has been tabled until June.

E. Discussion on Purchase of Fuel Storage Tank (Staff Report from BC Wandel)

BC Wandel reviewed his staff report with the Board and reiterated the importance of considering the purchase of a fueling storage tank. The tank would be kept at station 2 and it would be positioned with fencing to keep the area safe. Mr. Peterson asked what additional security we would have around this area and BC Wandel said the trailer itself would be locked up and stored close to the station. Mr. Peterson also asked what would happen if the tank has a crack down the road. BC Wandel replied the tanks are double plated and compartmentalized and we would put down a tarp that would contain a spill from going into the creek.

Motion moved by Mr. Peterson to purchase a fueling trailer and seconded by Mr. Hemmendinger

Motion Carried: Aye 5 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 2

F. Discussion and Action on Continuing Consolidation Efforts with SCFD

Mr. Hemmendinger said it makes a lot of sense if we were to consolidate, for the sake

of continuity and operations, to expand the SCFD Board to nine members for a short period. The SCFD Board made a policy some time ago to not allow this to happen and voted not to change this policy at their meeting last night. Mr. Herman asked when the close of the consolidation would happen and Mr. Hemmendinger replied no earlier than July 1, 2023, but could be July 2024. Mr. Herman commented three SCFD Board members are up for election in 2022 and four members are up for election in 2024. Mr. Hemmendinger said anyone can run for those positions in the newly formed district, but incumbents may have more of an edge than someone new may have. Mr. Peterson asked if there was discussion on how their Board would become familiar with RAFD and Mr. Hemmendinger noted SCFD usually picks two Board members who also works with staff and the Chief to become familiar with the area. Our Board does not feel this was sufficient. Mr. Hemmendinger commented said we are bringing a solid district into this consolidation, not a failing one. There is also a significant resource in battalion chiefs, which is a huge positive to SCFD as well. Mr. Peterson asked about the current size of SCFD, to which Chief Heine replied it is 250 square miles serving 93,000 citizens and employing 138 staff including volunteers.

Mr. Peterson said the financial analysis was pretty explicit with the word annexation throughout the document, but consolidation is what we have discussed since the beginning. Mr. Hemmendinger commented when we began this it was as a partnership with other entities and with a partnership, you see equal representation. Mr. Gadoua said comparing us to other districts SCFD has consolidated with, we are a stronger entity. He said there was no neutrality in their decision and commented that it is frustrating there was no appreciation from where we are coming from and what we have to offer.

Mr. Proteau said he does not think this item should have been added to the agenda. This is not an emergency. He said we went into this process with an open mind and wanted to see what was good for our district. If you are not a board member, you can certainly attend every board meeting and speak up. Mr. Proteau also wants to see the pros and cons for the district at some point and he wants to see, in writing, how this annexation helps our district.

Chief Heine said the term annexation elicits a negative impression and the term is important. From his perspective, there is a sense of urgency to vote tonight and normally the Board decides on a cautious approach to move forward. This approach is done through an incident action plan where everything is sectioned out. Both Boards would later be asked to pass a resolution that accepts the terms of the consolidation prior to going to LAFCO, generally in October. By December, an application to reorganize and dissolve RAFD into SCFD is submitted to LAFCO. They must sit on this application for 30 days and then, in January, LAFCO will vote on the entire application. If accepted, a future date is set for a hearing, which occurs for a minimum of 30 days and a max of 60 days. This is the protest period for registered voters or landowners. If 25% of protests are received by one group or the other, a consolidation cannot occur. If 50% of either of these groups submits a protest, then annexation can never go forward. By the end of April or May, we are done with process and the go live date is July 1. Chief Heine feels there is a captive audience with supervisor elections upcoming. He has already met with Supervisors Gore and Rabbitt and they are entertaining earmarks in the County budget for funding.

Captain Gromala spoke and encouraged the Board to move forward with consolidation. Mike Stornetta, VP of 1401, spoke to the Board about the benefits of consolidation to our district.

Motion moved by Mr. Herman to continue with investigation and annexation and seconded by Mr. Proteau.

Motion Carried: Aye 5 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 2

X. DIRECTION ON FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- **HVAC proposals for bids for station 1 and 3**
- **2nd reading of FY 22/23 preliminary budget**
- **Discussion on how to purchase new Type 1**

XI. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the Regular Board meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Motion moved by Mr. Hemmendinger and seconded by Mr. Herman .
Motion Carried: Aye 5 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent 2

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Bechtold, Board Clerk

Date Approved by Board:

June 15, 2022
