

# Rancho Adobe Fire Protection District

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**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
NOVEMBER 15, 2023 — 7:00 P.M.  
COTATI FIRE STATION - #1 EAST COTATI AVE.  
COTATI, CALIFORNIA**

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

President Brian Proteau, called the Regular Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The agenda for this meeting was posted on November 10, 2023.

Directors Present: Mark Hemmendinger, Bob Moretti, Sage Howell, Ray Peterson, Bret Herman, Brian Proteau, Michael Gadoua

Minutes Conducted by: Jennifer Bechtold

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

**II. 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

A letter from SDRMA was included in Board packets congratulating the District on no 'paid' property/liability claims in fiscal year 2022-2023. There was also a letter from Bill Morton from Municipal Finance Corporation addressing his position on the change to the lease-lease back documents.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Regular Meeting of October 18, 2023

Motion moved by Mr. Moretti to approve the minutes of October 18, 2023, and seconded by Mr. Hemmendinger.

Motion Carried: Aye   6   No   0   Abstain   1   (Mr. Gadoua)    Absent   0  

**IV. CONSENT CALENDAR**

A. Ratification of Checks Issued

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

Motion Carried: Aye   7   No   0   Abstain   0   Absent   0

## V. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

### A. Firefighter's Union Report

Engineer Daniel Ikalani mentioned that Local 1401 has been working hard on Measure G, including fundraising efforts of \$310K of a \$485K goal. The next fundraiser will be held in January at Sally Tomatoes. Endorsements of the tax measure are coming in. The Union is looking forward to the strategic planning meeting in January.

### B. Firefighters' Association Report

Engineer Ikalani noted the annual toy drive will be starting soon. The holiday party will be held December 15 at the Penngrove Social Fireman's Hall. The Association is also planning the annual crab feed for February 3.

### C. Chief's Report

Chief Veliquette reported on the following items:

- 1.) Mike Porter has been promoted to Fire Captain, effective December 1. There are two candidates who will be interviewed tomorrow to backfill his engineer position.
- 2.) The Promotional and Badge Pinning Ceremony was held two weeks ago with 15 employees who received badges. Great turnout and event.
- 3.) Halloween festivities were supported in Cotati and Rohnert Park.
- 4.) Auto extrication training with new firefighters.
- 5.) Multiple structure fire calls with the two largest on Jewett and in Rohnert Park.
- 6.) Administrative audit fieldwork completed.
- 7.) Chief Schach gave the tax measure presentation to Cotati City Council last night. Next meet and greet is January 21<sup>st</sup> at Sally Tomatoes.
- 8.) Upcoming events – Strategic planning session tentative dates are January 12 or 19 from 8-5. The Christmas party is December 15, Penngrove Light Parade is December 17 and the crab feed is February 3.
- 9.) October Calls for Service: 119 good intent, 98 rescue/medical, 14 service, 13 false alarm, 10 hazmat and 4 fire. There were 42 fire alarm calls to SSU.

The Board discussed the tax measure presentation at the City Council meeting and overall, Chief Veliquette felt the response was mostly neutral from the community and council. Mr. Herman also asked when we last spoke to SSU regarding payment to the District for services. Chief Veliquette has been meeting with SSU leaders and feels they are unwilling to pay any funds to the District because they have no funding and do not want to set precedence for other CSUs. Mr. Hemmendinger noted that the issue of setting a precedence falls on deaf ears, as the other two fire districts receiving money from CSUs has certainly not set a precedence. Chief Veliquette feels both the issues really fall on deaf ears. Mr. Peterson feels we need to engage our legislators, so they recognize there is a problem. They are the ones who control the budgets for the university, so we need them at the table with SSU.

### D. Director Reports

No Director reports.

### E. Committee Reports

#### a. Finance/Budget

Mr. Hemmendinger noted a Finance meeting held to review the Board policies and a brief presentation was given by SCI Consulting Group regarding the impact fee study. The committee also had a brief discussion on the year-to-date budget. We will take a close look at this in time for our strategic planning meeting. We will have our first tax revenue deposits by then and we'll see if we

are ahead of budgeted revenues.

b. Long Range Planning

No report filed.

**VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

A. Discussion on Proposed Sales Tax

Chief Veliquette reported that informational presentations have been made in Petaluma, Rohnert Park and Cotati. On December 11, we will receive our ballot letter designator. This past Monday was the kickoff for fundraising campaigns. The Union has raised about \$310K of \$480K goal. Chief Veliquette will be reaching out to Cotati Councilmembers for any questions they may have about the tax measure. The Union can also advocate for and answer questions anyone may have. Additionally, Our Board can legally, through a Resolution, support the measure.

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Resolution R-5: Resolution Acknowledging a Report Made by the Fire Chief Regarding Required Annual Inspections of Certain Occupancies

Chief Veliquette commented the statutes within this resolution date back to 2018, following the Ghost Ship Warehouse fires. Legislation was passed in September 2018 stating that all fire districts and departments must inspect certain types of residential and educational occupancies. The District has 14 public and private schools, of which 13 have been inspected so far this year. The last school should be completed by year-end. As far as residential occupancies, residential care facilities, apartments, hotels, etc., Rancho Adobe has 61 and 14 have been inspected to date. This report clearly shows we have missed the mark on the mandated inspections, because we do not have the staffing to get all of these completed. The District needs a fire inspector and BC Taylor has a couple options to help us meet this mandate next year. One option is to hire a paid fire inspector intern through SRJC's fire program. However, the District really needs a full-time fire inspector, and we will move forward with hiring someone if we pass the sales tax measure.

Motion moved by Mr. Gadoua to adopt Resolution R-5, Acknowledging Required Annual Inspection Report, and seconded by Mr. Hemmendinger.

Motion Carried: Aye   7   No   0   Abstain   0   Absent   0  

Roll Call:

Mr. Proteau – aye

Mr. Howell – aye

Mr. Peterson – aye

Mr. Gadoua – aye

Mr. Moretti – aye

Mr. Hemmendinger – aye

Mr. Herman – aye

B. Discussion on Fire Impact Fee Study

Chief Veliquette is recommending the Board enter into an agreement with SCI Consulting to perform a nexus study for impact fees on new development. Once the study is completed, it can be broken into about four different areas, such as a fee per square foot on residential and commercial development. Many different fire districts, including Sonoma Valley Fire District and Sonoma County Fire District, have completed the study and created a fire impact fee program. The program gives us an opportunity to recoup money affecting the District through growth and funds

*New Business Continued:*

may be used for facilities and apparatus, but not on personnel. We would also ask the City of Cotati and Board of Supervisors to adopt the program on our behalf since they are Land Use Authorities and the District is not.

Motion moved by Mr. Gadoua to approve the Fire Impact Fee Study and seconded by Mr. Howell.

Motion Carried: Aye   7   No   0   Abstain   0   Absent   0  

C. Approval of Kaiser Health Benefits for 2024

Chief Veliquette commented that our Kaiser health plan had a minimal increase of 5.4% which is significantly lower than almost every other Kaiser plan for the year. This results in a \$17K increase to the budget which has already been accounted for.

Motion moved by Mr. Howell to approve the Kaiser Health Benefits for 2024 and seconded by Mr. Peterson.

Motion Carried: Aye   7   No   0   Abstain   0   Absent   0  

D. Discussion and Approval of Proposed Changes to Board Policy #7010, Financial Policy and #7050, Reserve Management Policy

Chief Veliquette noted the Board policies were reviewed by the budget committee and only two were identified as needing adjustments. Those suggested amendments are outlined in packets along with the completed policies. The Board suggested adding page numbers as well as updating the footer with the date of amendments. Mr. Hemmendinger commented Policy 7010 was updated to show our required debt service ratio is 110% not 125% as previously thought.

Motion moved by Mr. Hemmendinger to approve the proposed changes to Board Policies 7010 and 7050 and seconded by Mr. Gadoua.

Motion Carried: Aye   7   No   0   Abstain   0   Absent   0  

**Closed Session was Opened at 8:16 p.m.**

**VIII. CLOSED SESSION**

A. Pursuant to Government Code §54957, the Board will hold a closed session for the following reason: PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION.

Title: Fire Chief

Action Taken: The Board approved a 5% pay increase for the Fire Chief. The new contract will be placed under New Business at the December Board meeting.

**Closed Session was Adjourned at 8:57 p.m.**

**IX. DIRECTION ON FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- **Consideration of a Resolution for Endorsing Tax Measure**
- **Legal Work from Weist Law on Bank Loan**
- **Board Reorganization**

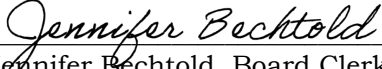
**X. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, the Regular Board meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

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

Motion Carried: Aye   7   No   0   Abstain   0   Absent   0

Respectfully submitted,

  
Jennifer Bechtold, Board Clerk

Date Approved by Board: December 13, 2023