



# Bolinas Fire Protection District

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May 23, 2005

The regular meeting of the Bolinas Fire Protection District was called to order at 7:30 PM by Pres. Sands. Vice Pres. Binley, Dir. Currey, Dir. Aitken, Dir. Phillips, Chief Tyrrell-Brown, Kim Bender and at least thirty community members were present.

## **PUBLIC EXPRESSION**

None.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Building and Grounds Report**

At this point in the meeting, Action Item #1 – Adopt plan to relocate Communications Tower for Construction of new Firehouse and Clinic- was moved up in the agenda to accommodate the community members present. Pres. Sands began the discussion by giving a brief history of the present tower configurations and describing the new configuration proposal. She outlined the Board's intention to serve the community and hear all questions and issues. She outlined the new plan highlighting three aspects; the RFs emitted by the new single tower would be lower than what is presently emitted, the cell sites on the tower generate income for the District at approximately one quarter of the District's budget, and the demand for cell sites is based on the use and popularity of cell phones in Bolinas and outside communities.

Pres. Sands stated that if in the future there is sufficient reason, the District can cancel leases with cell companies at a cost to tax payers in the community.

Sandra Della Valle expressed her concern that the new single tower with MERA and five cell sites is too close to the children's playground and the Medical Clinic.

Pres. Sands reiterated that the amount of RFs would be lower from the new single tower than what is presently emitted.

FF Pete Smith explained that the increased height of the proposed tower significantly lowers the amount of radiation that hits the ground as the RFs exponentially decrease with each additional foot of height.

Jim Heddle reported that U.S. standards for measuring harmful effects of RF waves on humans are based on thermal effects. There are non-thermal bio-effects to humans that have been measured at very low frequencies of RFs. According to some studies, electromagnetic waves could affect biological organisms' cellular electromagnetic structure.

(The health hazards of RFs are in dispute internationally as the proof is not substantial yet.)

Mary Beth Brangan described her role as a fund raiser for the Capital Campaign and clarified past recommendations she made for consultants regarding electromagnetic safety issues. She said that she recommended Cindy Sage as a consultant to complete a third party RF emission study of the new tower configuration and not Hatfield and Dawson.

Kim Bender clarified that she did not hire Cindy Sage as she is not an engineer.

Mary Beth Brangan answered that indeed she works closely with qualified engineers.

Kim reiterated that she was seeking an unbiased third party engineer to complete an independent study of the new configuration.

Several community members expressed their concern about growing electro-magnetic sensitivity in the United States and potential human cellular damage from exposure.

Dale Johnson expressed her concern about electro-magnetic damage to humans and inquired about the possibilities of developing the Martinelli site instead of placing the tower at the Firehouse and Clinic site.

Pres. Sands stated that we are the last piece of the MERA system in the County of Marin yet to be developed. The MERA tower in Bolinas would serve all of West Marin, not just Bolinas and has adequate reception for radio communication to serve these purposes.

Peter Martinelli reported that his family would still consider signing a lease with MERA for a site on his property. His family had been negotiating with MERA for a tower on their land for several years and was ready to sign a lease in 2004. MERA representatives, however, stopped communicating and began negotiating with the Bolinas Fire District instead for a site at the new Firehouse. Peter reported that MERA had determined his site as excellent as it has clear reception from both Pt. Bonita and the Inverness Ridge. He stated that he and his family are still interested in a lease with MERA plus hosting two additional cell sites and a free one for KWMR. He suggested that the family might be able to offer the District a percentage of proceeds made from renting his site to augment costs of moving the MERA system to the Martinelli property. [NOTE: Subsequently, the Martinelli family decided they do not want commercial carriers on their property, but will continue discussions with MERA.]

Kim Bender gave a brief history of negotiations with MERA and Crown Castle in 2004. She stated that the new Firehouse plans necessitated the move of the existing Crown Castle tower or a break in the Crown Castle contract which would both be costly as the existing lease does not expire for five years. Crown Castle offered instead to build a new tower and pay for a significant portion of the costs of tower construction if they could add two new sites on the new tower. When MERA heard of the negotiations with Crown Castle, they asked the District to reconsider having MERA at the station. The site at the Firehouse would be much less costly for MERA to develop. Since the District is part of and needs the MERA system, and the Fire District site means MERA becoming fully operational potentially two years sooner, the District re-entered negotiations with MERA for a spot at on a 100 foot tower on District property.

Vice Pres. Binley stated that since we would be part of the MERA system, the District would have to absorb the costs of moving MERA to the Martinelli site which could be as high as \$200,000. He

stated that Sup. Steve Kinsey offered that the County would share the burden with the District and pay for approximately two thirds of the cost, leaving \$60,000 for the District to pay.

Chief Brown stated that in fact the Department is already part of MERA. She stated that the MERA system is superior to the current system and that the sooner we complete the system, the safer all West Marin Fire Fighters will be.

Zoë Gardiner asked what exactly the current dangers to Volunteers are.

Peter Martinelli stated that the survey work for the Martinelli site has already been completed.

Jenny Pfeiffer said that since we have to move the tower any way, why not move it to the Martinelli site.

Vice. Pres. Binley said that moving the tower to the Martinelli site would be hugely expensive.

Pres. Sands reiterated that the District is part of the MERA system and that the sooner we complete the system the better.

A Doctor (name unknown) reported that he has observed more and more patients with electro-magnetic sensitivities and damage in his private practice. He quoted a Swedish study that concluded that low level radiation in rural settings is riskier to human health as the electro-magnetic pulse emitted is greater.

Sandra Della Valle reported that the International Fire Fighters Assoc. in August of 2004 declared that they are waiting for further research to be completed regarding the effect of electro-magnetic waves on human cells before they will accept any more cell towers to be built at fire stations.

Discussion ensued regarding the possible long term health risks of exposure to RFs vs. the costs to the District and the Community to move the MERA portion of the tower and/or the cell sites to the Martinelli site. Various kinds of funding were discussed including raising public taxes, writing grants, and a regular donation from profits made by the Martinellis from their proposed site and paid to the District to help augment costs. Also discussed, was the issue of delaying the completion of the MERA system in regards to Fire Fighter safety. It is a big problem as they currently have to carry two radios, which is not safe.

Vice Pres. Binley suggested that those opposed to the proposal come up with a different proposal that incorporates and addresses all the issues at hand including financial feasibility, health risks and quality emergency communication.

Several community members including Peter Martinelli, Jim Heddle, Mary Beth Brangan, Vivienne Roe, Zoë Gardiner and Rachel Gertrude formed a Citizen's Committee at the meeting and asked for the Board's endorsement for communication with MERA and Crown Castle. The Board supported their action. The Committee plans to make a progress report at the June Board Meeting, and a formal alternate proposal at the July Board Meeting.

Mary Beth Brangan thanked the Board for all their hard work on the tower issue and recognized all of the long hours members of the Board have been spent in meetings.

At this point there was a break in the meeting and many of the community members present departed.

MSC, Currey/Phillips (unan) to approve application and submission of Crown Castle plan to the Marin County Development Agency for a 100 foot tower with notification of the formation of a Citizen Committee to explore alternative proposals.

The Board decided to move ahead with this action as it did not include signing a lease with Crown Castle.

Pres. Sands noted that the proposal may be refused by the County as an Environmental Impact Report may be required.

### **Capital Campaign Update**

Kim Bender gave the Capital Campaign report. She reported that \$120,000 has been raised in the past four weeks.

She reported that final draft of the lease with the CHA has been finalized by herself, David Burnett, John Severson and Larry Baskin. She asked the Board to review it and put it on the June agenda for approval.

Kim asked the Building and Grounds Committee to determine a budget amount for realistic repair and maintenance of the new building.

David Burnett declared that the CHA will cover all costs associated with their own building construction and maintenance.

Kim thanked David for all his hard work and assistance with the formation of the CHA lease agreement.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

MSC, Phillips/Currey (unan) to approve of the Consent Calendar including the Warrant List, the Financial Report, the Minutes from April 25, 2005, the transfer of \$100,000 from Operating to Investment Accounts and Correspondence.

### **CHIEF'S REPORT**

#### **NERA**

Update earlier in the meeting.

#### **Cell Sites**

The Crown Castle lease was returned to CC. The last issue to discuss is the annual increase of cost. A final lease should be ready for the June Board meeting.

#### **Training**

Captain Tom Nunes with Marin County Fire Department trained personnel from Stinson and Bolinas on the new NERA portables. The new system will be superior to the existing low band system as communication with more agencies will be possible.

A public CPR class will be held on the evening of June 25<sup>th</sup>. Asst. Chief Marcotte, FF Donohue and FF Smith successfully completed the CPR Instructor class which was held in Petaluma. Chief Brown was one of the instructors.

#### **Volunteers**

Buck Meyer, Cameron Brown and Chris Moon are three new potential volunteers.

## **Apparatus**

JW Mobile performed an annual service on all three engines. E283 had a problem with its cooling system and a leak in the rear right wheel assembly. Chief Brown and Dir. Aitken fixed the cooling system by replacing hoses and thermostats. The leak cost \$2,000 to have repaired. Overall, JW Mobile has been cost effective and convenient as they come to the station to service the engines. Chief Brown thanked Dir. Aitken for his time and help with E283.

## **Disaster Council**

David and Bobbi Kimball are on vacation until June 10<sup>th</sup>.

## **General Operations**

Planning for July 4<sup>th</sup> has begun. Chief Brown has met with representatives from the Community Center, the CHP, the Sheriff's Office, the Lyon's Club, and the Disaster Council to discuss plans. Law enforcement of regulations regarding fireworks will be stricter this year. Parking and Traffic preparation will be the same as last year. Public information regarding the event will be posted again this year.

## **Parking and Traffic**

Parking issues are rising along with the warmer weather. Chief Brown met with Lt. Anderson of the Sheriff's Office and with the summer Parking and Traffic Officer who will begin working on Memorial Day and continue through the summer.

## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

**Action Item #2:** Approve lease with Crown Castle and **Action Item #3:** Accept preliminary Budget FY2005-2006 were tabled until the June Board Meeting.

MSC, Currey/Phillips (unan) to approve FDAC-FASIS amendment to Joint Powers of Agreement and Bylaws.

MSC, Phillips/Binley (unan) to Adopt Resolution #136 – Resolution Determining the 2005-2006 Appropriation Limitations of Tax Proceeds (\$498,222).

## **BOARD MEMBER REPORT**

None.

## **PERSONNEL MATTERS**

None.

## **PUBLIC EXPRESSION**

Asst. Chief Marcotte expressed that he was proud of the BFD Volunteers. He said that the medical care that they provided on the last two medical calls was fantastic. FF Tony Tkac risked his own life in rescuing the victims of the recent ship wreck. Without his presence, strength and perseverance, the people on the ship may not have survived. He also commended FF Gordon White for his commitment to developing the data base. He has successfully reorganized the whole system and developed a new internal structure.

Asst. Chief Marcotte thanked all of the Volunteers and declared that the Bolinas Community is well protected. The Board requested that Chief Brown send letters of commendation to the Fire Fighters mentioned above.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Pres. Sands thanked the Board members and everyone involved with the new station for all their hard work.

**ADJOURNMENT**

MSC, Aitken/Currey (unan) to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Molly Brown

District Secretary

NOTE: All minutes to all Board meetings are available for review at the Bolinas Library.