

Minutes from the May 24th, 2023, Bolinas Fire Protection District Board Meeting at the Bolinas Fire Station.

Pres. Molesworth called the meeting of the Bolinas Fire Protection District to order at 7:00 P.M. Pres. Molesworth, Dir. Pierce, and Dir. Dunne were present. Vice Pres. Torrey and Dir. Martinelli were absent. Also present: Chief Krakauer and Administrative Manager Isaac Taylor.

Pres. Molesworth asked for unanimous consent to approve the Agenda, with the amendment to change item 5a from an action item to a discussion item. Seeing no objections, the Agenda is approved as amended.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

None.

CHIEF'S REPORT

MERA

Chief Krakauer attended the MERA meeting, which is now in-person, on Wednesday, May 10th. Items discussed included the draft budget, as well as projected increases to member agency contributions to establish a maintenance reserve fund for existing equipment. The District's contribution is expected to be around \$5,000. The group also reviewed construction progress at the radio sites. Chief Krakauer reported meeting several new agency representatives.

Chiefs

Chief Krakauer attended the Chiefs meeting on Thursday, May 18th. The fire agency chiefs discussed the transition of Marin County Office of Emergency Services, formerly part of Marin County Sheriff's Office, which is now the Marin County Office of Emergency Management under the direction of Marin County Fire Department. George noted that OEM offices will be in the same location in Los Gatos, and that Chiefs are optimistic about the reorganization. Chief Krakauer advised that the District is likely to have new expenses for fire dispatch services, but that these expenses are expected to have a small impact on our operating budget. Pres. Molesworth confirmed with Chief Krakauer that these new expenses are not anticipated until FY24-25.

MWPA

Chief Krakauer discussed the MWPA meeting in item 5c.

Prevention

Chief Krakauer discussed District wildfire preparedness and response in item 5c.

Roads

Chief Krakauer reported that the District will be working once again with Don Murch to mow some of the unincorporated roads on the Big Mesa that are designated as essential ingress & egress routes.

Inspections

Chief Krakauer conducted fire safety inspections this week of the Bolinas Library and Bolinas Rod and Boat Club. The District is updating its annual business inspection program after a delay due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus of this program are public areas of Bolinas businesses, with attention to life safety and removing fire hazards. These inspections also familiarize staff with locations where fire personnel may respond

in the case of a nighttime emergency. Inspections include identification of electrical hazards, extinguisher checks, smoke alarm checks, Knox box checks, and checking for clear and illuminated exits. Pres. Molesworth asked if the inspections are informational, or if the District takes enforcement actions. Chief Krakauer responded that the District attempts to make inspections educational, and generally provides businesses 30 to 60 days to correct any identified hazards.

Planning

No update.

Grants

The District expects to receive new SCBAs in August from the successful FEMA Assistance to Firefighters joint grant proposal between Bolinas, Stinson Beach, Muir Beach, Nicasio and Inverness fire districts.

Training

Training has been focused on EMT skills and wildland firefighting.

The District is planning an Emergency Medical Responder (“EMR”) class this Fall in Bolinas. Asst. Chief Marcotte is collaborating with Marin County Fire EMS coordinator Jen Glazier and College of Marin to put on the class.

EMR is a prerequisite for EMT certification. Several years ago, Stinson Beach Fire Protection District hosted an EMT class in Stinson, and Bolinas volunteers were able to attend. The District hopes to host another EMT class in the future, as it is increasingly difficult to get volunteers certified as EMTs. Typically, this certification requires a semester-long class that includes hospital and ambulance hours.

Marin County Fire has graciously offered to put on volunteer agency wildland training in July. MCF holds their seasonal wildland academy every year in June. It is typically about a week long, and incorporates live fire training and numerous skills stations. Bolinas typically joins this training, but this year MCF offered to make a separate training in West Marin tailored to volunteer firefighters. This is an incredible training opportunity and we are very appreciative of MCF for their offer. Steve is coordinating with other West Marin fire agencies to determine the best dates.

Volunteers

The annual Mother’s Day Pancake Breakfast returned on May 14th. The volunteers set a new department record, with over 300 breakfasts served. Volunteers also sold lots of apparel. Proceeds from this event are split between the Bolinas Volunteer Firefighters Association and the Bolinas Disaster Council.

The volunteers also voted to purchase eight additional CPR mannequins. Asst. Chief Marcotte and firefighter Emily Easom, both certified CPR instructors, can now accommodate class sizes of up to fourteen.

Next week, the association will be discussing fundraising goals and a new investment policy.

Apparatus

Engine 265 received its annual service, and no major issues were found.

Asst. Chief Marcotte delivered the new UTV, U241, to the dealer for its first scheduled service. Some additional lighting was added, and Marcotte also built a custom patient platform for the UTV. Pres. Molesworth asked if the UTV's water tank would in place through fire season, and Chief Krakauer clarified that the tank and patient platform could be switched out quickly as needed.

Disaster Council

Chief Krakauer and Asst. Chief Marcotte hosted an annual meeting of the Bolinas Disaster Council, which was attended by eight area coordinators. Two of the fourteen area coordinator positions remain unfilled. Topics discussed included the move of the emergency radio repeater from Commonweal to the MERA site for better coverage, planning area coordinator trainings, recruiting new members, and public education.

Resource Recovery

The District ordered four new tires for the John Deere 524k loader, which will be installed in Bolinas next week. Pres. Molesworth asked whether the MWPA grant for the Resource Recovery loader included funds for service and maintenance, and Chief Krakauer affirmed that it did.

Chips from this week's MWPA Chipper Day were also deposited at the Resource Recovery site, providing some important revenue for the site and keeping green waste local. The District's chips from our June 9th Chipper Day will also be deposited at the site.

Buildings and Grounds

The District continues to await receipt and installation of a new lift station septic pump from City Sewer Pumping in Point Reyes.

The Bolinas Clinic will be doing needed painting on their building in the early part of next fiscal year. Pres. Molesworth asked if building maintenance is the responsibility of the clinic operator, and Chief Krakauer confirmed that it is.

General Operations/Administration

Calls remain above average for the year, but have slowed somewhat in the last two weeks.

Isaac Taylor reported on a phone call between Chief Krakauer, himself, and a representative from the California Asset Management Pool (CAMP), a Joint Powers Authority public agency investment pool. Isaac reported an informative conversation, with information on how special districts can diversify investments between investment pools, to realize higher earnings while maintaining security and liquidity of investments. Isaac and Chief Krakauer will be attending an Investment Policy 101 webinar tomorrow, and hope to present a draft Investment Policy to the board early next fiscal year.

Chief Krakauer reported increased use of the fire station community meeting room by local agencies and nonprofits.

Personnel

Chief Krakauer noted that Asst. Chief Marcotte would be away on vacation for a few days.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Discussion Item #1 – First Reading of Draft Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Isaac Taylor explained budgeted increases in income from property tax, rental income, county interest, and Measure W Transient Occupancy Tax.

Isaac explained that the increase in budgeted expenses is primarily due to an increase in personnel expenses. Budgeted personnel expenses include salary and wage adjustments, taxes and benefits, as well as six months of a new full-time firefighter position. As a percentage of total operating budget, personnel expenses are going up from 63.7% to 65.8% in FY23-24. Other categories with smaller increases include administrative expenses, communications, prevention, and safety equipment. Total budgeted expenses are up 13.8%.

Pres. Molesworth asked if rental income contract durations were considered in relation to increased expenditures for personnel, since rental income could decline at the end of contracts. Isaac Taylor responded that personnel expenses have been designed to correspond to tax revenue only.

The budget for non-operating capital expenditures is approximately \$78,000 for planned acquisitions of a Long-Range Acoustic Device for emergency notifications, a second replacement lift station pump, an air compressor to service the District's new SCBAs, and the District's cost-share obligation for the new SCBAs.

Isaac also reported that, due to higher than expected tax revenue and lower than expected expenses, he is projecting a net income at the end of FY22-23. Dir. Dunne asked if there was a mechanism by which the District could expend extra funds at the end of a fiscal year for special projects or priorities. Isaac Taylor responded that this could be possible with strategic planning. Pres. Molesworth added that the goal should be for the District to fully expend its revenue strategically. Chief Krakauer added that late expenses for firefighter wildland equipment may reduce some of this operating margin.

Pres. Molesworth asked if the operating profit would be added to the District's reserves at the conclusion of the fiscal year, and Isaac Taylor responded that it would. Pres. Molesworth suggested exploring adding this to a potential investment policy. Isaac Taylor noted that the District's reserves are already in the Marin County Investment Pool, but that he would explore integrating this in the District's investment policy.

With regard to personnel increases, Isaac Taylor shared that the Finance Advisory Committee had discussed catching up with peer agency salary standards, and also keeping up with inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Dir. Pierce shared that the Human Resources Advisory Committee recommended the increased hourly adjustment after reviewing an initial recommendation they felt was too conservative. He noted that staff are highly valued, had recently received good reviews, and stressed the importance of retaining quality employees and striving to align with industry standards, in spite of being a small community. Dir. Dunne asked where the adjustments would put District staff relative to other agencies. Chief Krakauer responded that staff would still be compensated at a level slightly lower than our closest peer agencies, but that the recommendation goes a long way toward achieving parity. Pres. Molesworth and Dir. Pierce agreed that the time was right to take a larger step toward making salaries on par with the rest of the county.

Discussion Item #2 – District Wildfire Preparedness and Response

Chief Krakauer shared that a 2023 fire season postcard has gone out to all Bolinas residents, and thanked Isaac for putting the card together. This year's postcard includes

information on Chipper Days, emergency notification systems, defensible space evaluations, residential grants, Resource Recovery, and fire safety and planning.

Chief Krakauer reported that the District is undertaking prevention measures ahead of wildfire by planning mowing of ingress and egress roads, hydrants, and purchasing new wildland firefighting gear. Between the District and the MWPA, there will be a Chipper Day event every two weeks between now and October. MWPA also has a new large pile program, for residents with extra large chipping piles. Registration is online.

Isaac Taylor attended Ember Stomp, the County's wildfire prevention festival, last Saturday at Marin County Fairgrounds. He reported a good event with many educational opportunities.

Chief Krakauer attended the MWPA Operations Committee meeting on Wednesday, May 3rd. The board approved the 2023-2024 Work Plan and budget, and approved recruitment for two new vegetation management specialists. In addition, \$200,000 in discretionary core funds will go toward environmental compliance and permitting in the West Marin zone.

Chief Krakauer also attended a PG&E wildfire safety webinar on Thursday, May 18th. Representatives went over their Community Wildfire Safety Program objectives and enhanced safety settings to prevent wildfires. These include enhancements to fire cameras and new technology in high fire hazard areas that will deenergize lines instantly when certain problems are detected, in order to prevent accidental ignitions. They also discussed their process of weather forecasting and Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS).

CONSENT CALENDAR

MSC Dunne/Pierce (unan.) to approve the Consent Calendar.

BOARD MEMBER REPORT

No update.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Human Resources Advisory Committee – Dir. Pierce discussed the meeting in item 5a, which included wage and salary proposal review and employee evaluations.

Finance Advisory Committee – No update.

Operations Working Group – No update.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Pres. Molesworth asked for unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting. Seeing no objections, the meeting adjourned at 8:19 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Isaac Taylor
Administrative Manager

Note: Minutes of all Board meetings are available for review on the District's website.