

**CITY OF SAN RAFAEL
FIRE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING**

September 8, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.

Meeting Via Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by Chair Mizroch.

Present: Chair Stephen Mizroch, Vice Chair Larry Luckham, Commissioner Nadine Hade, Commissioner Ken Johnson, Commissioner David Fonkalsrud
Staff: Battalion Chief Matt Windrem

Open Time for Public Expression

No public comments

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Luckham moved to adopt the minutes of the July Fire Commission meeting with Commissioner Fonkalsrud seconding the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Fire Foundation Update

Chairman Mizroch reported that the Fire Foundation currently has a balance of \$64,317. He also reported that due to COVID uncertainties, the annual crab feed event has been cancelled for 2021.

Chairman Mizroch discussed the event for new recruits at station 52 and suggested the Fire Commission fund the purchase of a portable sound amplification system that could be used for future events at all stations.

Historic Subcommittee Update

No updates

Commissioners' Reports

Commissioner Luckham noted the fire dangers of wood frame structures under construction and a recent incident where a homeless individual ignited a fire that spread to a wood frame structure under construction.

Commissioner Hade noted the benefits of the increased activity by SRFD in residential fire prevention and vegetation mitigation.

Commissioner Johnson shared learnings from the insurance industry about cancer detection and prevention for firefighters, including products such as "Responder Wipes." BC Windrem informed that SRFD currently uses wipes and soaps that decontaminate heavy metals and other carcinogens. Commissioner Johnson also mentioned that the moratorium for homeowners insurance expires shortly, with an anticipated reduction in insurers offering coverage in the area. Commissioner Johnson is working with Chief White in building a playbook for how SRFD can help residents regarding insurance needs. Commissioner Luckham noted that he has seen fewer options for insurance for property managers. It was noted that California FAIR is the insurer of last resort, but offers "bare minimum" policies and that residents could be faced with three times previous costs for less coverage. Commissioner Johnson indicated that a \$1,000 policy could increase to \$6,000 - \$7,000, and this issue is now global with re-insurers suffering from losses in places such as Greece and Turkey.

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Commissioner Fonkalsrud offered assistance to Quinn Gardner and team in social media fire prevention efforts as we enter peak fire season. He also asked if there is anything the Fire Commission can do to help SRFD, especially as our teams get called up for strike force duty and managing through ongoing COVID challenges. BC Windrem suggested small, but meaningful actions, such as delivering coffee and donuts to local station staff. Commissioner Hade asked about mental health assistance for firefighters and BC Windrem discussed the employee assistance program, and that San Rafael Police and Fire are working together on a contract with a firm that specializes in these services for first responders. Chair Mizroch suggested inviting Jordan Sachs (EMS medical director) to a future Fire Commission meeting.

Fire Chief's Report

BC Windrem updated on the following activity/incidents:

MWPA: CEQA clearance is underway for vegetation projects with more than 9,000 inspections. BC Windrem noted the importance of vegetation management in light of the recent fires on San Rafael Hill and Lucas Valley.

COVID: The pandemic is trending in the right direction locally. SRFD is in the final stages of the County health order that requires proof of vaccination for public employees (or routine testing of those not vaccinated), bringing us in line with the state mandates.

Retirement Breakfast for Captain Andy Rogerson: Well attended event for the 25 year veteran.

8/16 San Rafael Hill Fire: Occurred on the side facing the freeway (eastern side) and was contained quickly, although some confusion regarding evacuations. Lessons learned on alerting (police and fire) and partnership between the departments to train to the same standards.

Lucas Valley Fire (Lassen): Some evacuations out of an abundance of caution. Unified command with Marin Co. Fire since the fire spanned jurisdictions and Cal Fire provided air support. Lessons learned: lack of inmate hand crews (normally 200 available / this year 50) has impacts. This incident was provided a civilian crew from Willits as other crews were assigned to other fires in the state.

Caldor (El Dorado): SRFD has an engine assigned and the crew was rotated last week. The current crew has been out a week and are expected to serve an additional week. BC Windrem noted that SRFD will be reimbursed for crew time and that 70% of support for large fires is through the mutual aid program.

Lightning: Is forecast for this week.

Fire Season: For the last four out of five years, we have experienced unprecedented fire activity with most fire departments do not have additional staff. Fire season now extending to four to six months in duration.