



City of San Rafael Fire Department Fire Commission

Larry Luckham – Chair
Nadine Hade – Vice Chair
Thomas Weathers - Commissioner
Ken Johnson - Commissioner
Stan Burford - Commissioner
David Fonkalsrud – Alternate
Donna McCusker - Alternate

FIRE COMMISSION MEETING

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

August 10, 2022

VIA ZOOM

Present:

Chair Larry Luckham
Deputy Chief of Operations Abraham Roman
Vice Chair Nadine Atieh
Ken Johnson
Stan Burford
Donna McCusker (Alternate)
David Fonkalsrud, Alternate

Absent:

Fire Chief Darin White
Thomas Weathers

Chair Luckham called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. with a contingent note regarding a technical glitch for Commission Access to the Zoom call. The calendar links do not work for panelist, these will be fixed.

1. OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Attending as a guest was Thomas Wong Senior Management Analyst San Rafael Fire Staff

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 10, 2022

First order of business – approval of the minutes from the 8/10/2022 Commission meeting.

Two changes to the Minutes were brought forth by Chairperson Luckham:

- 1.) Item 5.3 states “Fighting fire w mixture of soda water. When sprayed on fire soda **removes** CO₂, extinguishes fire faster.” This is not correct, soda releases carbon dioxide thus smothering flames.
- 2.) Fire Hydrants: Marin County fire departments owns the fire hydrants. This is not correct the Fire Hydrants are owned by the individual fire departments

Moved to accept by FC Johnson seconded by Nadine Atieh – vote, unanimously



1375 Fifth Avenue, San Rafael, CA 94901

3. FIRE FOUNDATION

Chair Luckham as FC McCusker for an update and she reported the fire Foundation would donate \$15,000 to provide OSHA Compliant Protective Footwear Boots to the Fire Fighters. **An additional \$15,000 would be donated to this effort by Fire Commissioner McCusker.**

Chairperson Luckham thanked Commission McCusker for this generous donation. He gave a bit of background starting with the founding of the San Rafael Fire Department in 1874 as an all-volunteer department. In 2014-2015 the Fire Commission acted on a proposal by Commissioner Leonard Thompson to create a San Rafael Fire Foundation, a 501(c)3. The goal of this entity is to plan activities and raise funds in support of the Fire Department which is exactly what this donation is doing.

4. HISTORIC SUBCOMMITTEE

Chair Luckham had nothing to report.

5. CHAIR AND COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS

Vice Chair Atieh - Reviewed the usefulness for the free PulsePoint app now available in Marin County designed to provide the public with real-time fire agency incident information and to locate CPR-trained people near someone in cardiac arrest. Marin residents will have access to real-time fire incident information, and local bystanders in Marin can be alerted to administer cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) if needed. When pre-selected, alerts are sent to participating residents only when an emergency occurs in a public place.

PulsePoint users can preselect which types of incidents to follow or know instantly what is going on when fire engine or ambulance sirens are sounding in San Rafael

Vice Chair Atieh – Commended Commissioner Fonkalsrud for championing an article in the Marin Independent Journal written by Colleen Bidwell about Dr. Steve Mizroch. The article highlights Dr. Mizroch’s the recent retirement from the San Rafael Fire Commission after serving for more than three decades, the last 11 of which as chairman. The article was published on August 13th, 2022.

Commissioner Fonkalsrud – Followed with details about the article stating it would be a Question and Answer piece with Dr. Mizroch. He pointed out that even after retiring from the Commission Dr. Mizroch continues to bring great publicity, promotion and awareness for the Fire Commission and the San Rafael Fire Department.

Commissioner Buford – Consistent with the technical glitches pointed out earlier in the minutes Commissioner Buford had no audio feed and could not contribute to the meeting.

Commissioner McCusker – Covered the topic of San Rafael not allowing any Bamboo or Juniper within 15 feet of the homes and the required removal. This is due to the fact that they are highly pyrophytic and ignite easily. She commented one neighbor removes the vegetation and another does not, what steps are being taken in these cases? Commissioner Luckham suggested she could identify herself as a Fire Commissioner and bring up the requirement. Commissioner McCusker believed that communication is best delivered by the SR Fire Department.



In support of the conversation Chair Luckham commented that vegetation management has both Advisory and Required rules to follow. He then reminded the Commissioners of Measure C having passed in March of 2020 creating the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority. This is a Joint Powers Agreement among 17 member agencies covering most of Marin County to coordinate fire prevention activities using Measure C funds. Funds will be used for fire protection and prevention services, including but not limited to:

- Vegetation management (Fuels reduction)
- Wildfire detection
- Evacuation plans and alerts
- Grants
- Public education
- Defensible space and fire-resistant structure evaluations
- Local and specific wildfire prevention efforts

As far as Bamboo and other highly flammable vegetation Chair Luckham suggested referring to:

<https://www.marinwildfire.org/>

<https://firesafemarin.org/>

Chairperson Luckham will be creating a group of website links to share with the Fire Commissioners.

Commissioner Johnson – Shared the following link: <https://global.lockton.com/gb/en/news-insights/retrocession-rates-reflect-nat-cat-pressure-in-insurance-sector>

To keep the Commissioners aware of the financial impact on the citizens of San Rafael due to lack of homeowner's insurance availability, this article is helpful. Basically, what it states is investment market funds are not being made available to the Reinsurance industry due to loss experience and investor fatigue. Insurance carriers are having a tough time buying insurance on their risk portfolio – known as Reinsurance. Lack of reinsurance translates to lack of availability which drives up homeowner insurance costs.

Deputy Chief Roman – Stood in for Chief White as he was on vacation. Deputy Chief Roman came to San Rafael Fire after a long career with Berkeley Fire Department where he was a Battalion Chief for 24 years.

On July 20th a man was killed in an e-bicycle accident at China Camp State Park in San Rafael. While this was a tragic event Deputy Chief Roman got to witness many different facets of the SR Fire Department responded to a rescue and then unfortunately a recovery. The skills of the department were outstanding and the interaction with the CHP Helicopter was strong.

That same day Deputy Chief Roman was on site for the Pickleweed Park Fire in the Canal neighborhood. The fire department responded to the first fire at approximately 5:10 p.m. Wednesday and the second at 7:30 p.m. The first fire, near a marshy area next to the park and alongside the Bay Trail, burned approximately 2,500 square feet. The fire was mostly out by the time firefighters arrived, because of the fast thinking and hard work of local young men. These young men's efforts were super impressive to



the Deputy Chief. Because they were Hispanic the Deputy Chief was reminded of his time at the Long Beach Fire Department.

In Long Beach the Deputy Chief was engaged in a comprehensive community engagement process, providing both CPR and Narcan Training in Spanish. The Deputy Chief looks forward to continuing this work at the San Rafael Fire Department. Other initiatives include:

- Utilizing 3 Buildings for Firefighter training on the 500 block of 4th Street.
- Recruiting new candidates for the Fire Department
- Creating a group to build “What is Our Culture” at San Rafael Fire Dept.
- National Night Out - Soccer balls with SRFD logo for the Canal District soccer fields
- “Ride Alongs” for you men and women age 14 to 18
- Introduction of Fire Explorers - helps young adults prepare for a career in the fire service with classroom training and hands-on lessons on the ground. Explorers will work with the San Rafael Fire Department to learn both firefighting techniques and leadership skills, and earn community service hours.
- Ignite Boot Camp aims to inspire women to become firefighters
- He will work with Novato Fire on a collaborative community project which provides “at risk” children between the ages of 10 years and 14 years an opportunity to spend one week with local firefighters.

<https://www.novatofire.org/about-us/novato-fire-foundation/fire-squirts>

Deputy Chief Roman looks forward to working with the San Rafael Fire Foundation to support these efforts.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Luckham asked if there was anything further from anyone, and there being nothing further, adjourned the meeting at 5:12 p.m.



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