

AGENDA
SAN RAFAEL FIRE COMMISSION
VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

Wednesday, January 11, 2023 @ 4:00 P.M.

Watch on Zoom: <https://cityofsanrafael-org.zoom.us/j/83441506482>

Webinar ID: 834 4150 6482

Listen by phone: +1 669 900 9128

Link to follow via Zoom email for Fire Commissioners only

Members of the Public May Speak on Agenda Items

1. Open Time for Public Expression

The public is welcome to address the Fire Commission at this time on matters not on the agenda that are within its jurisdiction. Please be advised that pursuant to Government Code Section 54954.2, the Fire Commission is not permitted to discuss or take action on any matter not on the agenda unless it determines that an emergency exists, or that there is a need to take immediate action which arose following posting of the agenda. Comments may be no longer than two minutes and should be respectful to the community.







2. Approval of Minutes – December 14, 2022

Recommended Action: Amend and or approve as submitted.

3. Fire Foundation – Verbal Update from Appropriate Commissioner(s)

Recommended Action: Accept Verbal Report and take appropriate action.

4. Chair and Commission Member Reports:

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

Informational only. No action to be taken on these items.

5. 2023 Meeting Note Taker Assignments

Recommended Action: Review, amend, and/or approve assignments.

6. Fire Chief Report

Informational only. No action to be taken.

Any records relating to an agenda item, received by a majority or more of the board or commission less than 72 hours before the meeting, shall be available for inspection at San Rafael Fire Department's Administrative Office, 1375 Fifth Avenue, San Rafael, CA. Sign Language interpreters and assistive listening devices may be requested by calling (415) 485-3066 (voice), emailing Lindsay.lara@cityofsanrafael.org or using the California Telecommunications Relay Service by dialing "711", at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. Copies of documents are available in accessible formats upon request. Public transportation is available through Golden Gate Transit, Line 22 or 23. Paratransit is available by calling Whistlestop. Wheels at (415) 454-0964. To allow individuals with environmental illness or multiple chemical sensitivity to attend the meeting/hearing, individuals are requested to refrain from wearing scented products.

City of San Rafael Fire Department

Fire Commission Meeting

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

December 14, 2022

Via ZOOM

Present:

Chair Larry Luckham
Vice Chair Nadine Atieh Hade
Stan Burford
Ken Johnson
David Fonkalsrud – Alternate
Donna McCusker – Alternate
Chief Darin White

Absent:

Thomas Weathers

Chair Luckham called the meeting to order at 4:04

1. Open time for Public Expression

There were no members of the public in attendance.

2. Approval of the Minutes – November 9, 2022

Commissioner Burford moved to approve; Commissioner Johnson seconded. The minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

Discussions were had about whether or not alternates can vote and it was determined yes, in cases where a quorum is needed.

3. Fire Foundation (FF) Report – Commissioner McCusker

The FF didn't have a formal meeting this month but instead hosted a lunch at La Toscano to thank Jack Devlin for all his years of service.

Chair Luckham thanked Jack and wife Kathy for being foundational leaders in San Rafael for decades.

4. Commission Member Reports

- a. Vice Chair Atieh Hade had no comments other than looking forward to seeing those who attend the Boards and Commissions event.

- b. Commissioner Johnson shared it was more of the same in insurance industry for fire – property market continues to get worse for January 1st renewals.
- c. Commissioner Fonkalsrud commented on the progress of 55 and that it was exciting to see the numbers go up. Also shared he had a call last week with Fire Staff about the Community Awareness Program he has been working on to use some of the social media channels to promote awareness about fire safety to the community. Spent approximately an hour discussing this and suggested finding Spanish content as well. Will meet again in January. Happy to have had that meeting and will hopefully reenergize this program.
- d. Commissioner Burford shared he is continuing to work with the Homeowners' Association in his neighborhood relating to the "no parking" rules that are in place. They are going to provide suggestions to the City about signs themselves as they should be more clear. He gave a shoutout to MWPA or Caltrans (whomever is doing the work) for removing hillside of trees and other areas over Mill Valley.
- e. Commissioner McCusker had nothing to report.
- f. Chair Luckham shared he had sent a video clip of a Christmas tree fire from a few years ago to the Chief. The fire occurred January 2nd of that year so not long after Christmas. The video showed that from the moment of ignition to full engulfment, it took 5 seconds. Christmas tree fires are really dangerous and very serious and for anyone who doubts it, there are test fires that agencies have conducted to show this. The other point Chair Luckham brought up was a blurb in the Marin IJ about the County acquiring an option on the old golf course as the idea behind that was part of the property would become Marin County Fire. This would become a fire dispatch center for fire and emergency medical services and seemed like positive news.

5. Fire Chief's Report

Chief White started out by saying this was news to him and he didn't realize they were going to place fire dispatch as this was never something that had come up in prior conversations.

He thanked Commissioner Fonkalsrud for being patient with City staff as he has been trying to implement the Community Awareness Program. Also thanked Commissioner Burford for aiding in gathering neighborhood comments about the work being done with parking and signage.

Chief White shared with the team that effective March, meetings will be in person as the Governor has not extended the Emergency Declaration. He doesn't expect this to change unless there is a steady rise in infections and hospitalizations or a new variant but will monitor the State order.

He reminded everyone about the Boards and Commissions event happening today at Falkirk which is hosted by the City of San Rafael to celebrate its volunteers.

The MWPA advisory operations committee meeting took place and he had to leave early but he shared the workplan is underway for FY23/24. More streamlining is taking place as there is more robust staff working for MWPA. More than half a million dollars in grant funding has been provided to community grant projects (Resident Grant Programs). This program is something they are finding helpful especially for those in the community who are frustrated at the cost of the work they need to do on their property to fall in line with requirements.

Chief White talked about the Marin County Fire Dispatch activity that is taking place to obtain services as the Sheriff's office gave notice they will no longer be doing it. He mentioned the Sheriff's office was likely favorable in pricing as they were not including all the overhead but the timing of the notice provided was insufficient. There has been a great deal of analysis done and there are many needs. These needs will provide additional opportunities but also increased cost. It is likely there will be a parallel dispatch center in the Sheriff's office but the deadline may be pushed out at least until March 2024 so something can be developed that is seamless.

Lastly, an update was given on Stations 54 and 55. They are moving along quite nicely and close to completion. They will not be done by the end of the year but they are on track. Accolades were given to all those who were involved in making these renovations happen.

Chair Luckham called for any additional comments. Hearing none, he closed the meeting at 4:48 pm.

Prepared by: Vice Chair Atieh Hade

DRAFT



To: San Rafael Fire Commission

From Darin White, Fire Chief

Date: January 11, 2023

Re: Monthly Report

Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority-Vegetation Management

The Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority's 2021-2022 Annual Report was recently released, and it reveals that substantial amount of work that was done in Marin County. For additional information please refer to www.Marinwildfire.org.

Guidelines/COVID-19:

The winter of 2021 surge in COVID-19 cases involved a new, fast-spreading virus variant, known as Omicron. According to scientists, the COVID viruses that we are encountering now are in the Omicron family but are not nearly the same impactful viruses. It is believed that last winter's wave of persons infected with Omicron still have a measure of protection despite the protection fading over time.

While the Omicron virus subvariants have spread more easily than earlier variants, they have generally caused less severe illness and death. This may be assisted in part by the introduction of medications such as Paxlovid, which has been shown to reduce the severity of symptoms and the number of hospitalizations and deaths.

The new COVID-19 vaccine booster released in the fall of 2022, which just 14% of the U.S. population and 17% in California have received, is tailored to provide added protection against Omicron variants. Researchers believe that the early data has shown that the updated COVID-19 vaccine may reduce risk of severe COVID-19 cases that could lead to hospitalizations or death by 50% or more.

As more people opt to use rapid at-home antigen tests to confirm COVID-19 infections these days and not reporting the results, the reported cases has fallen. As an example, fewer than 2.5 million weekly molecular COVID tests were done as of Dec. 14, 2022 compared with more than 11 million weekly tests in the same week in December of 2021. Numbers of at-home tests being performed now have not been determined.

Caution is still needed as indicated by other signs that the virus remains quite active. Transmission levels remain high across the Bay Area and the community risk level, which measures the impact on local health systems throughout the Bay Area, is still elevated. Los Angeles saw its level drop from high to medium, but several Central Valley counties hit the high mark. Wastewater monitoring continues to show high virus levels in the South Bay, for example.

The risk remains a concern for older people and those with weakened immunity, prompting a protest last month in Oakland over lifting mask requirements in libraries. Adults ages 65 years and older have accounted for half of all COVID-19-associated hospitalizations since April and 60% since early October,

2022. However, there is a new variant that is capturing the attention of those here at home, it is known as XBB.1.5

China (Politics or hype?)

Experts are also keeping an eye on what is taking place in China due to the sharp rise in cases after the government recently began lifting lockdowns and allowing unrestricted travel into and out of the country. Rapid transmission in high population environments can produce new variants that may prove more immune-evasive and dangerous, they said. Reportedly, hospitalizations and deaths are again overwhelming Chinese hospitals and the lack of transparent and verifiable information coming from the Chinese government has caused many countries to require COVID testing of passengers originating from China. This has been done as a precautionary measure as there are potentially new deadly variants that might be spread without some form of testing and quarantine.

XBB.1.5 is the product of recombination: Two descendants of BA.2, the subvariant that drove a modest wave of cases in the US in April, swapped pieces of their genetic code, resulting in 14 new mutations to the virus' spike proteins compared with BA.2, and a new sublineage, XBB.

After testing numerous variants one well renown scientist, Dr. David Ho, found that XBB.1 was the most evasive of them all. It was 63 times less likely to be neutralized by antibodies in the blood of infected and vaccinated people than BA.2 and 49 times less likely to be neutralized compared with BA.4 and BA.5.

In addition to being highly immune evasive, XBB.1.5 is able to gain access into our cells far easier than other variants.

Marin County Fire Dispatch Update

City Manager Jim Schutz, Chief White, Nadine Atieh Hade (Human Resource and Finance Director) Thomas Wong (SRFD Senior Management Analyst) and Marin County Fire Chief Jason Weber and Charlotte Jourdain (representative working on behalf of Marin County Fire Department and indirectly on behalf of the county fire agencies) met on December 19, 2022, to discuss the proposed Marin County Fire Department contract for fire and EMS disptach services. More data has been sought before the City and SRFD can make a final commitment to join. Data includes population and call volume numbers. The person generating the data was out of the country through the holiday break so we anticipate receiving some information in the near future.

Station 54 and Station 55 Renovations





While Station 55 appears ready to house apparatus, there are a few items that still require completion. The notification system and phones are inoperable but the facility is on the verge of opening! Interior photos of the kitchen, main hallway and view of the bay/San Rafael bridge are below and on the next page.





Fire Incident

On Monday December 19, 2022, at approximately 2:36 pm the San Rafael Fire Department was dispatched to a structure fire in the rear units of a 99-unit four story apartment complex in the Canal district. Firefighters located a fire in the wall between two apartment units that quickly extended to upper floors and outward laterally into void spaces. A second and then 3rd alarm was struck as firefighters continued to open walls & ceilings to stop the spread of the fire. Eventually, the truck crew successfully performed a trench cut (this cut is designed to stop firespread in roof/attic spaces).

The fire was declared contained and under control at 3:40 p.m. In all, 6 units were affected including the vacant unit that was undergoing remodeling. 2 units on the first floor, 2 on each of the second and third floors. 9 families were displaced totaling approximately 26 persons and several of those were minors. American Red Cross arrived on scene and immediately began to provide services including blankets, meals, and temporary hotel accommodations. SRFD members provided SAVE Cards to the families who were displaced.

The cause and origin of the fire was investigated by the Marin County Fire Investigation Team (MCFIT) members and was determined to be an accidental fire, likely started by an employee who went out to move his car. Upon his return about 15 minutes later he encountered heavy smoke in the upper walls of the bathroom he was soldering some piping in.

Multiple personnel from throughout the county responded to the incident and/or provided coverage in the stations and agencies which fought this fire.

There were no injuries and property loss estimates are unknown currently. Much of the damage that occurred is attributed to water and smoke. Residents of the adjacent units have their power restored and Deputy Fire Marshal Robert Sinnott has outlined multiple items to get the fire and life safety protection and notification systems restored. Security services were summoned to prevent unauthorized persons from accessing the units.



(Photographs above and below courtesy of DC Robert Sinnott, 12-19-22)



A Look Back in Time (Volunteers and 2 Chiefs?)

The San Rafael Fire Department began as a Volunteer Fire Department and remained so until the first paid member, Fire Chief Fred Shuer, in 1945. The Public Safety Center is becoming the repository for any photographs, memorabilia, and other historical items that can be securely stored and displayed there. In the photographs below, I have been able to piece together an approximate timeline for the photos below but more research is needed to confirm my guesses and amateur sleuth work.

Volunteer Fire Chiefs Circa (1950-59?)



Walter Castro, Sr.

Clarence Johansen



San Rafael Fire Commission
2023 Meeting Note Taker Assignments

January:	Donna
February:	Dave
March:	Ken
April:	Stan
May:	Tom
June:	TBD
July:	Nadine
August:	Donna
September:	Dave
October:	Ken
November:	Stan
December:	Tom

Note: This is a proposed schedule for 2023. Approval should be a matter of business for the January, 2023 meeting. Also note that a new Chair will need to be nominated and approved by vote at the March, 2023 meeting as Larry will be termed out of a seat on the Fire Commission at the end of March.