

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

