

City of San Rafael Fire Department Fire Commission Meeting

Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Jan 11, 2023
Via ZOOM

Present:

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

Absent:

Thomas Weathers
David Fonkalsrud

Chair Luckham called the meeting to order at 4:01

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.

3. Fire Foundation (FF) Report – Commissioner McCusker

The FF has not had a formal meeting yet this month.

4. Commission Member Reports

- a. Vice Chair Atieh Hade had no comments other than pleased to see the rain!
- b. Commissioner Johnson shared it was more of the same in insurance industry for CA only now we have earthquakes, mudslides, trees down, flooding AND fires!
- c. Commissioner Burford explored notion of adding smaller vehicles to the fleet vs current Type 6. Would there be any benefit to run smaller trucks on smaller calls? Chief White responded in depth & said the challenge is who to assign it to & under what circumstances/what incident? Does see utility of that concept in off road/wild land areas.
- d. Commissioner McCusker nothing to report.
- e. Chair Luckham shared photos of the Czech Fire Department circa 1960 & experience he had with family members while visiting.
San Rafael Canal area feels at distinct risk of flooding. Between the tide/storms/winds combined create this risk. If all 3 are in play w an eastern wind heightens the risk.

1987-88 area flooded out to E Francisco Blvd & there was 6" of water on the old Ford Dealership floor.

5. Fire Chief's Report

MWPA Annual Report available on marinwildfire.org website. Great deal of work accomplished this past year, more to be continued. Chief White will no longer effective today be the Ops Chair for MWPA, it will now be Jesse Perry/Stinson Beach Fire. Chief White is now responsible for the next 2 years as President of the Marin County Fire Chief Association.

Chief White himself was ill w Covid in November. He has had 2 further episodes of fever/cough due to lowered immunity from covid infection. He was treated w azithromycin (antibiotic) & was pleasantly surprised at its' efficacy against a viral related initial infection.

XBB1.5 is a covid sub variant originating on the east coast. It is extremely infectious. Caution is still needed as indicated by other signs that the virus remains active. Consider social distancing & masks to continue to protect yourself. New boosters should be given consideration.

China is experiencing hospitalization rates approaching what they had 3 years ago. This is concern in other countries. This does not bode well for us & may indicate covid will be with us for some time to come. Current government orders here are for us to come out of emergency orders at the end of February & resume in person meetings. This may be revisited if conditions deteriorate.

Marin County Fire Dispatch Update: Proposed Marin County Fire Dept contract for fire & EMS dispatch services is still under review. More data has been sought before the city & SRFD can make a final commitment to join.

Stations 54/55 Chief White hopes to have members back in respective stations by our next Commission meeting in February.

Fire Incident 12/19/2022 at 99-unit 4 story apt bldg in the Canal District. It became a 3-alarm fire as firefighters opened walls/ceilings to stop the spread of the fire. Crew successfully performed a trench cut (designed to stop fire spread in roof/attic spaces). No injuries. Substantial loss. Much of the damage was due to water/smoke. 26 residents have been displaced & are being provided for by the Red Cross & the owner of the building. Fire could have been much more severe. Crews did an excellent job in their work in stopping the fire. It was accidental & occurred while there was construction/soldering occurring on the premises. SRFD was assisted by multiple agencies in the county including Novato Fire & Kentfield Fire along w San Rafael PD.

Look Back in Time/Rebuilding History of the SRFD

Chief White is working to reconstruct the history of the department in anticipation of the 150th anniversary of SRFD. Tracking original fire chiefs, volunteers, and looking to create a timeline on the chain of command of the department over the past 150 years.

Suggestion made to connect w Captain Steve Davis who served a good portion of his career at Station 52 where a photo was on display prior to the demolition. He might be able to advise further on the photos Chief White has presently.

6. 2023 Meeting Note Taker Assignments

Proposal to accept made by Commissioner Burford.
Recommendation to accept made by Vice Chair Nadine Atieh Hade
Assignments approved by vote.

Commissioner Luckham reminded Commission members he is termed out as a member of the Fire Commission & Chair after the March 2023 meeting. Members need to be considering whom they wish to nominate as Chair upon his term ending.

Chair Luckham called for any additional comments. Hearing none, he closed the meeting at 4:37 pm.

Prepared by: Donna McCusker Commission Alternate

