



**VISTA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**  
**Rescheduled Regular Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Minutes – January 15, 2025**

*These minutes reflect the order in which items appeared on the meeting agenda and do not necessarily reflect the order in which items were considered.*

**BUSINESS SESSION – REGULAR AGENDA**

**FLAG SALUTE**

President Ploetz led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Ploetz called to order the regular meeting of the Vista Fire Protection District Board of Directors at 1:05 PM at the “Smart Space” conference room located at 450 South Melrose Drive, Vista CA.

a. Roll Call

Directors Present: Elliott, Fougner, Hill, Miller, Ploetz

Directors Absent: None

Staff Present: Karlena Rannals, Administrative Manager; Gerard Washington, Fire Chief (*arrived at 1:52 pm*); Bret Davidson, Deputy Chief; and Chris Cardinale, Legal Counsel

**ORAL COMMUNICATION (PUBLIC COMMENT)**

*Jolee White, Skyline Drive, Vista:* spoke to the board members that senior citizens are on a low budget, and they cannot afford to clean their property. She proposed that when firefighters are not putting out fires, they can use their ariel bucket and trip the palm fronds off of the large or tall trees.

*Curt Thiele, Skyline Drive, Vista:* spoke to the board members about a pamphlet that was distributed, he received letters from the Fire Marshal that was threatening, and he did spend money to clean the property. He believes that this program (weed abatement) is not being managed properly and is a bit of an overreach.

**MOTION WAIVING READING IN FULL OF ALL RESOLUTIONS/ORDINANCES**

MOTION BY DIRECTOR ELLIOTT, SECOND BY DIRECTOR HILL, and CARRIED 5 AYES; 0 NOES; 0 ABSENT; 0 ABSTAIN to waive reading in full of all resolutions and/or ordinances.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

MOTION BY DIRECTOR ELLIOTT, SECOND BY DIRECTOR HILL, CARRIED 5 AYES; 0 NOES; 0 ABSENT; 0 ABSTAIN to approve the consent calendar, calendar with the removal of 4.a.ii Fire Marshal and 4.a.iii District Inspector report:

1. Board of Directors Meeting (Approve)

a. Minutes (Regular Meeting) December 11, 2024

b. Minutes (Special Meeting) January 8, 2025

2. Payroll Register (Approve)

a. Payroll paid on January 7, 2025

\$6,100.00

b. Payroll taxes paid on January 7, 2005

466.65

\$6,566.65

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| 3. Accounts Payable (Approve)  |                       |
| a. Accounts Payable Check 4262 thru 4268 to be paid January 15, 2025 | \$1,243,041.14        |
| b. Auto withdrawals(s) paid December 10, 2024 – January 9, 2025      | \$978.99              |
|  | Total                 |
|  | <u>\$1,244,020.13</u> |
4. Receive and File (Information)
- a. Monthly Reports
    - i. *Fire Chief*
    - ii. *Fire Marshal*
    - iii. *District Inspector*
    - iv. *Effective Response Force Report – October 24*
    - v. *Southern Operations Seasonal Weather Outlook – December 2024 – March 2025*
    - vi. *Administrative Manager’s Report*
    - vii. *Correspondence*
      - 1. None

Director Miller inquired about the 37 multifamily condominiums on Hannalei Drive and does this addition have an impact on response times? Chief Washington reported that there are no concerns on the response times.

Director Miller inquired about the Defensible Space Assistance Program (DSAP) due to a funding cut? Chief Davidson responded that this was the program funded through the San Diego County Fire Safe Council, and they ran out of money. This has nothing to do with the defensible space inspections that are performed by Fire Prevention personnel.

MOTION BY DIRECTOR MILLER, SECOND BY DIRECTOR ELLIOTT, CARRIED 5 AYES; 0 NOES; 0 ABSENT; 0 ABSTAIN to approve the balance of the consent calendar.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

a. *Ordinance No. 2025-01* entitled an Ordinance of the Board of Directors of the Vista Fire Protection District Establishing a Schedule of Fees for Emergency Medical Services.

President Ploetz open and closed the public hearing. The Board Clerk reported that no written correspondence was received.

**DISTRICT BUSINESS**

a. *Ordinance No. 2025-01* entitled an Ordinance of the Board of Directors of the Vista Fire Protection District Establishing a Schedule of Fees for Emergency Medical Services.  
Staff reported that this is the required second reading of the Ordinance. There were no changes to report made to the document from the first reading. This ordinance is in alliance with the City of Vista ambulance fee schedule.

MOTION BY DIRECTOR ELLIOTT, SECONDED BY DIRECTOR PLOETZ and CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY ON THE FOLLOWING ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Elliott, Fougner, Hill, Miller, Ploetz  
NOES: None  
ABSENT: None  
ABSTAIN: None

President Ploetz requested the board clerk publish all required notices as required by law.

b. Buena Creek Fuels Management

Mr. Cardinale summarized his staff report provided in the meeting material. He noted that he believes that the desired project in the Buena Creek area would qualify for the grant. He included in his summary the grant requirements for the Community Wildfire Defense Grant offered by the USDA Forest Service. He also recommended that the board consider the terms and conditions of the grant requirements, (that include identifying a lead agency, cost overages, and labor standards to name a few) which may impact how the project is implemented.

Ms. Caitlin Kreutz, consultant, summarized her proposal to assist the District with the grant application to enhance wildfire prevention and mitigation efforts. She provided three options for consideration: 1) engage an independent contractor; 2) contract through an environmental consultant; and 3) take no action. She recommended that the District consider partnering with SWCA environmental consultants, which has extensive resources. She distributed a schedule of fees of the various costs associated with retaining specialized services.

During the board discussion regarding the grant application, Chief Washington agreed to serve as the lead agency for the purpose of the grant. He did request the assistance of a consultant due to the timing that the grant application must be submitted no later than February 28, 2025.

MOTION BY DIRECTOR ELLIOTT, SECOND BY DIRECTOR MILLER, CARRIED 5 AYES; 0 NOES; 0 ABSENT; 0 ABSTAIN the following board actions:

1. Authorize and direct the Fire Chief to apply for the Community Wildfire Defense Grant: USDA Forest Service by February 28, 2025; and
2. Authorize the Administrative Manager to contract with SWCA Environmental Consulting, with Caitlin Kreutz as the point of contact for technical grant services, for a cost not to exceed \$28,000; and
3. Authorize the Administrative Manager to execute such contract.

c. Vista Fire Protection District - Policies

The ad hoc committee (Fougner, Miller) reported that they have been collaborating with legal counsel on a document to present to the Board for review and approval. They anticipate placing this item on the February agenda.

d. Board Workshop(s)

- a. Ms. Rannals reminded the board of the workshop scheduled for February 25, 2025, starting at 1pm. The board members requested to get the work product well in advance of the workshop so that they can be better prepared. President Ploetz agreed to pass the request along to the staff. Director Miller once again proposed a subcommittee; however, no action was taken.

- b. Ms. Rannals requested that the board members consider establishing meeting dates (quarterly) for future workshops. The goal was to block the dates; however, if they were not needed, they would be cancelled. They board by consensus agreed to schedule as needed.

*10-minute recess*

## **PRESENTATION**

Director Elliott delivered a PowerPoint to discuss and review a governance model for organizational effectiveness. He reviewed the role of the board and the role of staff and how the two work together or overlap. He emphasized the importance of clear direction to staff, letting them do the work, and report back to the board for information or action. The presentation was for informational purposes.

## **ORAL REPORT(S)**

a. *Fire Chief:* Chief Washington acknowledged his delay in President Ploetz's request for an extension for feedback to him regarding the 2024 weed abatement program. He agreed to extend the date by one week, January 22, 2025. Please deliver your reports to Ms. Rannals and she will forward them to him.

b. *Deputy Chief – Administration:*

1. They are anticipating that the City Attorney will ask for 30 Administrative Warrants to allow the weed abatement contractor to clean the property. This will not occur until mid-February.
2. Because of the fire in the Los Angeles area, they are receiving numerous complaints of properties that have not been cleared, including receiving complaints through the County Board of Supervisors 5<sup>th</sup> District.
3. Resources deployed to the fires in Los Angeles County: i.) seven Vista personnel deployed on the OES engine and overhead assignments; ii.) USAR Task Force 8 (San Diego) has been activated for search and recovery; iii.) task force sitting in San Marcos on standby for San Diego County.

c. *Administrative Manager:*

1. A reminder that the required Harassment training is scheduled in advance of the February 12, 2025 Board of Directors meeting. Lunch will be provided.
2. Purchased and delivered with the assistance of Deputy Chief Ford and Battalion Chief Downing a holiday meal and card on December 24<sup>th</sup>.

d. *Legal Counsel:* no report

e. *Board of Directors:*

*Ploetz:* reported that neighbors in his community are seeking a community meeting for wildfire preparedness. Chief Washington encouraged all board members that requests such as this should be communicated through the Administrative Manager.

## **FUTURE AGENDA ITEM(s)**

Director Miller requested consideration of understanding the performance metrics that are provided monthly as the *Effective Response Force* report. He is looking to understand the data provided and is there a different way to present the information. The board clerk will add it to the February agenda.

**ADJOURNMENT**

President Ploetz adjourned the meeting at 3:55 pm.



Karlana Rannals  
Board Clerk



John Ploetz  
President