



VISTA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Regular Board of Directors Meeting
Minutes – November 13, 2024

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.

REGULAR AGENDA

President Elliott called to order the regular meeting of the Vista Fire Protection District Board of Directors at 1:00 PM at the “Smart Space” conference room located at 450 South Melrose Drive, Vista CA.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

President Elliott led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll

Directors Present: Elliott, Fougner, Gomez (arrived at 1:02 pm), Miller, Ploetz

Directors Absent: None

Staff Present: Karlena Rannals, Administrative Manager; Gerard Washington, Fire Chief; Bret Davidson, Deputy Chief; and Chris Cardinale, Legal Counsel

3. Oral Communication (Public Comment)

No one requested to speak to the Board.

4. Consent Calendar

MOTION BY DIRECTOR FOUIGNER, SECOND BY DIRECTOR MILLER, CARRIED 5 AYES; 0 NOES; 0 ABSENT; 0 ABSTAIN to approve the consent calendar with the removal of 5.c.i (1) Fire Chief report: as submitted:

a. Board of Directors Meeting

i. Minutes (Regular Meeting) October 9, 2024

b. *Payroll Register*

- Payroll paid on November 7, 2024 \$5,000.00
- Payroll taxes paid on November 7, 2024 \$ 382.50

Total \$5,382.50

b. *Accounts Payable*

- Accounts Payable Check 4244 thru 4254 to paid November 13, 2024 \$87,289.46
- Auto withdrawal(s) paid on October 10 – November 9, 2024 \$ 997.32

Total \$88,266.78

c. *Receive and File*

i) Monthly Reports

(2) *Fire Marshal*

(3) *District Inspector*

(4) *Effective Response Force Report – September*

ii) Southern Operations Seasonal Weather Outlook – November – January 2025

iii) Administrative Manager’s Report

iv) AB1234 Travel Report – Rannals (CSDA Board Clerk Conference)

v) Correspondence

(1) None

Director Miller had the following questions for the Chief:

Q: With the relocation of temporary station 3, are there any significant changes in the responses to the District and City? He reported that station 3 is getting pulled to City calls more often, but it is too soon to tell the impact of response times since a monthly report has yet to be generated.

Q: Update on the Shake Roofs? He reports that there is nothing to regulate unless a roof is replaced. The fire department cannot mandate a replacement. Director Miller requested this item be placed on a future agenda.

Q: Seeking recommendations on the use of the Fire Inspector's time until the end of the contract. He responded that until the weed abatement process is completed, currently there is not capacity to add any projects to the inspector's duties.

MOTION BY DIRECTOR MILLER, SECOND BY DIRECTOR GOMEZ, CARRIED 5 AYES; 0 NOES; 0 ABSENT; 0 ABSTAIN to RECEIVE AND FILE item 5.c.i (1) Fire Chief report of the consent calendar.

5. New Business

a. *Independent Auditor's Report FY 2023/2024 (Time Certain: 1:15 pm)*

Jonathan Abadesco, CJ Brown & Company CPAs participated via Zoom. Mr. Abadesco delivered a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the financial statements of the District noting that the District has received a "clean opinion" for the FY24 audit. He also reported that the auditors had no disputes or concern with management or the internal controls in place. He responded to questions from the Board.

MOTION BY DIRECTOR PLOETZ, SECOND BY DIRECTOR MILLER, and CARRIED 5 AYES; 0 NOES; 0 ABSENT; 0 ABSTAIN to accept the FY 2023-24 independent audit and management report as presented.

b. *Contract Renewal – Landscaping Contract*

Ms. Rannals summarized the staff report provided. She reminded the Board that they approved Policy No. 4020 – Purchasing and Contracting in November 2023. Staff contacted Aztec Landscaping regarding their upcoming renewal. Aztec Landscaping has requested a 7.3% contract increase (from \$26,250 → \$28,176). Staff countered their request, asking if there was an interest in an additional 12-month period, offering a 5% increase (from \$28,176 → \$29,585) The increase remains under the new \$30,000 threshold and currently does not require that the contract be rebid. Staff recommended the 24-month extension. She responded to questions from the Board.

MOTION BY DIRECTOR PLOETZ, SECOND BY DIRECTOR FOUIGNER, and CARRIED 5 AYES; 0 NOES; 0 ABSENT; 0 ABSTAIN to authorize a 24-month contract with Aztec Landscaping, Inc. for Emergency Access Road Maintenance, Weed Abatement, and As Needed Services to the Vista Fire Protection District. The contract will be effective from December 1, 2024, to December 1, 2026, with an annual rate of \$28,176 for the first year and \$29,580 for the second year. In addition, the Administrative Manager was authorized to execute the contract.

c. *Board of Directors Meeting Calendar*

Ms. Rannals reviewed the meeting schedule for the calendar year 2025. At this time, no adjustments were made to the schedule, therefore, no action was taken by the Board.

d. *Special Presentation – “Navigating the Fire Insurance Maze”*

Deputy Chief Davidson delivered a PowerPoint presentation reviewing the complexity of the heavily regulated insurance industry and how the industry sets their rates. Many insurance agencies in California have paused or suspended writing policies for new properties, with property owners being forced into the FAIR plan. He reviewed a new program Safer from Wildfires program, which is intended to help homeowners take mitigation steps to lower their risk. The more actions that a homeowner takes under Safe from Wildfires, such as neighborhoods forming a Firewise USA community will qualify you for an insurance discount. He also discussed how artificial intelligence is being used by the insurance industry. He summarized activities that fire departments can do to lower insurance rates, such as the following under the current Safe from Wildfires initiative:

- 1) Assist neighborhoods to become Firewise communities; and
- 2) Be recognized as a Fire Risk Reduction Community by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection

In addition, as a Fire District, should have a robust weed abatement ordinance and have an initiative-taking defensible space program. Chief Davidson and Chief Washington responded to questions from the Board. Chief Davidson was thanked for the information and his preparation of the presentation.

10-minute recess

Director Fougner departed at 2:25 pm.

6. Continuing Business

a. *Buena Creek Fuels Management (Time Certain – 2pm)*

Ms. Caitlin Kreutz, Environmental Consultant discussed her report submitted to the board for review. She stated that until Necessity of Right of Entry (ROE) Permits are obtained, she is unable to provide a detailed analysis of what grants may be available. However, she discussed options currently available such as a CalFire Wildfire Prevention Grants Program; California Fire Safe Council Grants Clearinghouse; and Federal Emergency Management Agency Hazard Mitigation Grant program to name a few. She discussed the next steps, which included a recommendation that the District retain the services of an environmental consulting firm, and that she can serve as the project manager and environmental specialist.

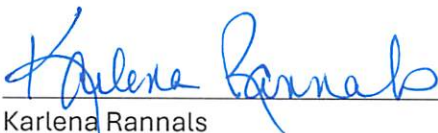
Mr. Cardinale suggested that the Board authorize him the time to assist them in looking for a path forward. He noted that hiring an environmental consultant will require the development and distribution of a Request for Proposal (RFP). Is the board seeking a compulsory vs. voluntary path for compliance? He offered to prepare a proposal for their review as what needs to be done...what is the roadmap to accomplish the cleanup of the properties. The Board by consensus agreed to direct staff to prepare a plan of options and provide an update at the December board meeting.

7. Oral Report(s)

- 1) *Fire Chief* – in addition to his report submitted, Chief Washington distributed the 2023 Annual Fire Department report for information. He also reported that the Fire Department has a new logo, flag, and patch.
- 2) *Deputy Chief – Administration* – he reported that there are currently nine (9) forced abatements between the City and the District.
- 3) *Administrative Manager*: In addition to her report submitted, Ms. Rannals reported the following:
 - She reminded the board of the Ethics training is scheduled for December 11, 2024 from 10am – 12pm. This is in advance of the regularly scheduled meeting.
 - November 6, 2024 Election Results: she reported that all incumbents were elected to their new divisions.
 - Onboarding Board Members: she informed the board that she has been developing the materials to properly onboard a newly elected official.
- 4) *Legal – Cardinale*
 - He reported that he is working with the Policy & Procedure ad hoc committee and has a meeting scheduled with Director Fougner on December 9. In addition, he will be discussing at the same meeting prepared bullet points to discuss with the City for a possible contract amendment.
- 5) *Board of Directors*
 - Ploetz –reported that he attended the Badge Pinning Ceremony on November 9. He was pleased that the District was recognized. Also, he went on the emergency access road inspections with Inspector Kozakiewicz and observed Aztec working on the sandbag project.
 - Gomez – the FireSafe Council is moving formed. They are working to implement a Home Assessment Program. He requested authorization for funding and the use of the District logo. He was informed that it was not on the agenda; therefore, the board could not act. The use of the logo will be added to the December agenda.
 - Elliott – presented Director Gomez with a plaque in recognition of his term as a Director for the Vista Fire Protection District.

8. Adjournment

President Elliott adjourned the meeting at 4:10 pm.



Karlena Rannals
Board Clerk



James F. Elliott
President