



**SONOMA COUNTY FIRE CHIEFS  
ASSOCIATION MEETING  
ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES  
April 12th, 2023 at 8:30 AM  
Kenwood Fire Station**

**ATTENDANCE**

Daren Bellach	Kenwood Fire	Mark Heine	Sonoma County Fire
Evonne Stevens	REDCOM	Brian Diemer	PGE
Steve Akre	Sonoma Valley Fire	Jack Thomas	Santa Rosa Fire
Sean Lacy	Sonoma Valley Fire	Ray Mulas	Schell Vista Fire
Doug Williams	SMART	Jeff Schach	Petaluma Fire
Ben Nicholls	CALFIRE	Jason Boaz	Healdsburg Fire
Kelly Bradley	North Bay Fire	Jeff Duvall	DEM
Marshall Tuberville	NSCF	Bill Bullard	Graton Fire
Chris Godley	Sonoma County DEM	Charles Funkhouser	Coast Guard
Devon Gambonini	Santa Rosa Fire	James Salvante	Coastal Valley EMS
Brenda Bacigalupi	REDCOM	Shepley Schroth-Cary	North Bay Fire
Jeff Veliquette	Rancho Adobe Fire	Ron Busch	Sonoma County Fire
Mark Courson	OES	Mike McCallum	Santa Rosa Fire
Trevor Collins	Santa Rosa Fire	Matt Windrum	Sonoma County Fire
Bonnie Plakos	North Sonoma Coast Fire	Jack Piccinini	Sebastopol Fire

**Call to Order:** Chief Akre began the meeting at 8:30am and led the pledge.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Chief Akre

**Host Chief Introduction:** Chief Bellach welcomed everyone.

**Presidents Report:** Chief Akre reported the FSWG has been pleased with the level of participation and engagement from each of the departments within the Zones in talks about wants and needs for the new tax measure. Tomorrow, they meet with Zone 3 and Zone 7. The asks for the revenue are already higher than the revenue anticipated that we will be receiving. He shared some concerns he had with the group, when we take a formal position on something and one of our chiefs goes outside of that and goes contrary to that position without having a conversation with us, that is troubling. It takes away a lot of energy and efforts that we take as a group to move our service forward. As a group, we should discuss differences and opinions together. Please use this forum to share differences of opinion and concerns so that we can maintain a united position. This issue is related to LAFCO and a certain organization that drew up a letter not supporting consolidation.

Chief Bullard asked for a change to the agenda to add the topic of county wide recruiting of volunteers. This will be added under new business.

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion: Chief Lacy, 2<sup>nd</sup>: Chief Schach, All AYE

**Treasurer's Report:** Chief Bellach reported:

Chief's General Fund	\$4,477.80
Survivor's Fund	\$96,396.31
Special Assessment Fund	\$96,396.31
Training Officer's Fund	\$2,650.44
Training Officer's – Command Tablets	(\$259.56)
FPO General Fund	\$3,967.00
FPO Fire Safety Trailer Fund	\$14,131.90
FPO Career Succession Fund	\$388.71
FPO Fire Investigation Fund	\$3,321.26
Youth Fire Setter Program	\$1,041.53
Safety Pals General Fund	\$25,355.77
Safety Pals Trailer Fund	\$2,500.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$196,542.59</b>

**Correspondence:** None

**Presentation:** None

**Old Business:** Update on the sales tax initiative – Chief Heine: There has been conducted some very preliminary polling to test the waters for a March ballot. 400 people were interviewed, there is about a five-point margin of error either way. About half were happy with the overall direction of the county as a whole. Homelessness and Fire Protection were the top concerns, but only when asked to rate those topics. Voters said that all of emergency services are doing a fantastic job. The proposed ballot measure was read to the voters, the measure was polled at about 64.8%. We have until June 1st to get everything submitted to the elections office to meet the March window. The presentation will be sent out to the group to view the full details of the polling. Chief Veliquette made a motion to move forward with the County Tax Measure. 2<sup>nd</sup>: Chief Mulas, All AYE. Chief Akre will reach out to those agencies not represented in the meeting or online.

**New Business:** County wide Volunteer recruitment – Chief Bullard: Chief Bullard spoke about a flyer put out by the National Volunteer Fire Council that some of us may have seen. A video documentary called Odd Hours No Pay and Cool Hat about being a volunteer. One of Graton's firefighters was selected, she was someone who lost her house in the Tubbs Fire and wanted to get into the fire service. She has also become a seasonal firefighter with Cal Fire as well. Graton Fire will be having an in-house screening on Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup> to see if this is something they want to promote. They would like to promote this regionally. The video would be available for screening opportunities to promote. Chief Bullard asked the group if there were any other people interested in working with him and to see if we can make this happen within Sonoma County. Chief Akre stated this is a great opportunity for us to build our volunteer ranks. If our sales measure passes, we will be looking to hire 150 to 200 career firefighters. If we have this program established as a recruitment and retention tool, this would be a great way for us to transition to volunteers and career staff. Chief Piccinini stated he would be interested in supporting and helping with this. Chief Bradley expressed the same interest as well. Chief Busch stated that Chief Grinnell would also help with this project.

Chief Bullard stated that we could get independent theaters to screen for free throughout the county. The Volunteer Fire Foundation has also shown interest in this as well and we may be able to find some funding from them.

### **Standing Committee Reports:**

**Fire Service Working Group:** Chief Heine reported most of their time has been spent on the sales tax measure. Been working with Gold Ridge Fire and LAFCO in the application period and picking up the other CSA 40 Agencies. They are continuing to support Kenwood and Sonoma Valley on their consolidation efforts.

Chief Akre added they have extended their meeting times to three hours every Thursday morning. They will be having all-day workshops here soon to work through all the asks and the distribution plan.

**SMART:** Doug Williams reported the Windsor funding has been approved and the Healdsburg funding is still pending. Still working on the pathway extensions. The freight system is back up and running. They will be having extra trains running to the Giants games. They have been working on the notification process with REDCOM and look forward to getting that on board. If there is anything that any agency wants to do related to training, the sooner you can get it to Doug the better. The Golden Gate Railroad Museum is looking at taking some of the equipment that is stored in Shell Vista and moving it up to Cloverdale and then running excursion trains between Cloverdale and Asti.

**PG & E:** No report

### **Regional Zone Reports:**

**CALFIRE:** Chief Nicholls reported we are coming into fire season looking really good. We may not be back up to Level 3 staffing until June 5th. Level 2, one engine per battalion should be online by the 24th. Hood Mountain firefighters get hired back the same time, they do have some firefighters that need to get through some additional training and that would bring them back online by May 1<sup>st</sup>. By June 5th every station should be covered with one engine plus Sonoma Air Attack Base and possibly Boggs Mountain. They are pushing forward for the second half of the fleet with the AVL application. Crews have been busy in Annadel, this week they went up to Saddle Mountain to help with the project. They will be prepping for a 70 acre burn later this year off Bennett Ridge at the edge of the subdivision to help create a buffer. Cal Fire can now help and assist with any burns as in the past they were unable to assist. Chief Nicholls will be attending a AOP meeting with Mendocino National Forest next week to talk about the annual plan between the forest and the surrounding units some of the discussion will be on the forest service typing teams to now just complex incident management teams. They will also be talking about structure defense versus structure protection. Right now the Forest Service has structure defense as the priorities trying to keep the fire out of a community, once the fire gets into that community it becomes structure protection.

**Zone 3:** Chief Mulas reported they have been very fortunate with grants, they received Plymo vent systems and mobile radios.

Chief Bellach reported they opened an application period for captains and engineer's positions that opened on March 30<sup>th</sup> and closes on April 30<sup>th</sup>. We are about halfway through the period and only have one application so far. We are still in active talks with Sonoma Valley Fire in continuing that ALS contract for services.

Chief Akre reported they are currently working with Kenwood as the temporary contract is up July 1<sup>st</sup>. They're also working on what could happen next with SDC. The state announced that they are willing to turn the property over to developers and start developing the Carneros Resort. They did provisional appointments to three captains and five engineer's to allow some stability to their open spots they have right now. They are currently doing their annual physicals this week. We now have a first responder therapy dog. Fire Marshall Trevor Smith initiated the process and now has a 17-month-old golden retriever named Coda.

**Zone 4:** No report

**Zone 5:** No report

**Zone 6:** No report

**Zone 7:** Chief Westrope reported station 5 have its groundbreaking day in May. The construction on station 8 is moving along. Last Thursday they had a badge pinning for 92 personnel. They're expecting to have a academy of six in June.

Chief Heine reported they are working on internal strategic planning right now. They just purchased Healdsburg's previous ladder truck. Going into next week they will be focused on the RFP project.

Chief Busch thanked everyone for helping with their promotional process. They are currently specking a new boat for Bodega Bay.

**Zone 8:** Chief Piccinini reported they picked up 8 new volunteers that are within the city. They have been able to expedite their training and we're also able to put them through the CSFA burn trailer. They put on a 20-hour academy. Graton hosted a nice safety fair and did a great job, they had approx.150 people attend. They received an SCBA grant and have put the new SCBA's in service as well as some extrication equipment.

**Zone 9:** Chief Veliquette reported they are still working on the first responder ALS program for the engine companies. They are moving forward with the draw EPI program. They are currently in hiring mode for full time FF Paramedic, FF EMT, and PT FF. They started a station remodel on the interior of the Penngrove station.

**OES:** Chief Courson reported last week they held their mutual aid summit and Firescope meeting in Ventura. Check out the Firescope page for new updates and quarterly briefings. Look for a e-mail coming out regarding recent activities and maritime responses. This will be a survey trying to establish assets throughout the state and find any gaps to better serve the mutual aid system.

**Training OP's:** No report

**FPO's:** Devon reported the FPO's met on March 15th at Rancho Adobe. They had a presentation from the American Red Cross and talked about services that are available from requests from first responders. We also had a presentation from Linda Collister and the Santa Rosa JC pilot program, the fire prevention internship program. This may prove to be a valuable resource for departments to bring on an intern for fire prevention and training to obtain a good candidate for hiring. There is a fire investigation class series starting in Petaluma in July. The next meeting will be April 19th at Sebastopol Fire.

**Fire Districts:** Chief Akre reported they are still looking for an agency to host this month's meeting on the 27th.

**Volunteer Fire Companies:** Chief Bradley reported they were successful in getting the approval from LAFCO for consolidation with Gold Ridge Fire and the CSA 40 agencies are moving in that direction. They are currently open to new volunteers and have 12 applications pending.

**Vegetation Management:** No report

**Coastal Valley EMS:** James Salvante reported they have Gabriel Kaplan back in action and are extending his hours, he is reengaging in the tiered response. REDCOM has been a big help in getting the data needed for the Epi support from DHS. They have posted the leave behind Narcan policy that allows EMS responders to institute a leave behind Narcan program in your community. People are having problems getting albuterol, the EMS director has authorized the use of an alternative medication as well being able to use the expired albuterol up to a certain date, also being able to use the Atrovent. Our sister division within public health, the public health preparedness section has successfully run an RFP and is in the evaluation phase to contract. This will help with the increase and capability of providers that are not engaged in doing EMS services to staff our shelters during large incidents.

**CAL Chiefs Report:** Chief Heine reported Bill AB 1168 is a bill out of the city of Oxnard. The first community hearing was in Sacramento yesterday. This is the infamous Oxnard 201, it was intended to ensure if you are a fire department, ALS provider and has 201 rights you can enter JPA's and in no way waves 201 rights. AB 40 is the ambulance offload delay issue. We are seeing some impacts in Sonoma County but by no means on the level that Southern California and seeing. LA County Fire LA city fire is seeing up to four-to-eight-hour wall times. This bill starts to address these issues. They have been meeting regularly with EMSAC and EMDAC and trying to improve relationships with both of those agencies. Cal Chiefs are doing a lot of Podcasts from Firescope to legislative information, please check it out if you're interested. Last week in Sacramento they started setting up the legislation agenda going forward.

**Ad-Hoc Committee Reports:** No report

**Fire/EMS:** Chief Schach reported how BLS units were getting dispatched in REDCOM went to the DOAG presented by Coastal Valleys. The next steps are REDCOM will be working with DOAG to show what is currently happening and then evaluate if there are any tweaks needed. If anybody has input the DOAG is your reach out point. Now that tiered response has been happening for about the last 4 months, there is data being

gathered and we hope to have tiered response task force meeting with county health soon.

Chief Heine reported on the ambulance RFP process, next Thursday Sonoma County fire and AMR will have a two-hour window to present their bid packages to the counties outside scoring panel. On March 8th the county served a material breach of contract letter to AMR that dictated a 30 day plan that AMR was to come up with. On April 7th they sent out another letter stating that AMR continued to be in breach of contract. For member agencies that are served in EOA1 this is important information. Chief Heine will push out information as needed.

**DEM:** Jeff Duvall reported with Chris's departure he is the interim director. Sam Wallace is the interim deputy director. They're in the process of hiring two deputy emergency service coordinators this week and they should be on board by June. They have all the annual EOC training for the county going on right now. They are currently reviewing all the after-action reports from the winter storms. They are starting to gear up for the seasonal prep work for PSPS, red flags, wildfires, and shelter/evacuations with multiple organizations. They are working on a day in May to bring before the board a proclamation to terminate the local emergency for COVID. In June they have the extreme temperature annex that will go before the BOS. On Thursday May 18th will be the golden eagle exercise. They will activate the EOC for a wildfire scenario and pandemic, this is a Bay Area regional exercise.

**Sonoma OP Area Up-Staffing Plan:** Chief Heine reported we are phasing out the rain season and starting to get into the wildland season, please remember to use active status for equipment. If anyone needs help accessing the active status system, please feel free to reach out to Chief Heine or Chief Andreas for support. It is very important for us to have this live active picture every day for the region to see available resources if needed for immediate dispatches. The annual overhead refresher will be on May 16th. If you have any specialty resources that you want to make available to the Op area, please get this information to Chief Heine so he can create a pathway to get these resources used if needed.

**REDCOM:** Evonne reported she wanted to thank everybody that came by REDCOM during dispatcher appreciation week. They promoted Jennifer Mitchell to operations manager. They have been working with DEM to work out a messaging short term operations for a major event like an earthquake. The Sheriff's Department is updating their radio system. REDCOM is at the end of life with their current system. They will be going to a ZTRON system.

**Closed Session:** None

**Good of the Order:**

**Adjournment:** @ 10:32

**Next Meeting:** May 10<sup>h</sup> location Sonoma County Fire – Forestville Station

Respectfully Submitted,

Daren Bellach  
SCFCA Secretary