

Sonoma County Fire Districts' Association

MEETING MINUTES

Virtual meeting on April 22, 2021 at 1900 hours

1. Call to Order

President Akre called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.

The following members were in attendance.

Name	District		Name	District
Steve Akre	Sonoma Valley		Mark Heine	SCFD
Fred Peterson	Northern Sonoma County		Ernie Lovelace	Schell Vista
Sean Grinnell	Bodega Bay		Chris Tachouet	Gold Ridge
Gary So	SCFD		Doug Williams	SMART
Marshall Turbeville	Northern Sonoma County		Mark Hemmendinger	Rancho Adobe
Marti Cambell	North Sonoma Coast		Jackie Gardener	North Sonoma Coast
Charlie Lachman	Gold Ridge		Bob Taylor	Cloverdale
Bill Adams	Johnston Thomas		Frank Treanor	SCFD
Bonnie Plakos	North Sonoma Coast		Mark Bramfitt	LAFCO
Bob Gloeckner	Gold Ridge		Paul Barry	Cazadero
Daymon Doss	Kenwood		Mike Nichols	Cazadero
Mike Gadoua	Rancho Adobe			

2. Approve/Amend the Agenda

Director Lachman moved to approve the agenda, 2nd by Director Doss, approved by all, none opposed.

3. Treasurer Report

Sec/Tres Grinnell reported a balance of \$6,625.59 for the end of May. Grinnell then asked the group if they could remember the timing for annual dues, Fiscal year, or calendar year? Director Treanor said the dues are calendar year based and due January 1st. Grinnell said he would send the notice out before the next meeting. President Akre said he would like the add dues to a future agenda. Future political action might warrant future discussion as money is needed. Director Lachman suggested collecting pledges from members in attendance.

4. Committee Reports (As appropriate)

a. FDAC / FDAC EBA / FAIRA / FASIS

President Akre reported the FDAC-EBA meeting, rates appear to be holding steady for next calendar year-look to July or August for the rates.

b. LAFCO

Mark Bramfitt reported the commission is meeting the week after next on Wednesday. Of importance to this group is the completion of the protest period for the annexation of the Forestville Fire Dist. to SCFD. The number of protests will not raise to the level needed to change the outcome. There is an election for special district member (class 1). Mark Hemmendinger and Bill Norton are running. We will then open the election for the alternate member. The Commission adopted the annual budget, with a very small increase of 3%. Director Lachman asked about the timing of the next "in person" meeting? Bramfitt said he is following the County lead as they provide the venue.

c. Political Action

President Akre asked again for volunteers for this position and said Director Treanor did such a good job we need someone to fill his shoes. In the meantime, President Akre will provide updates as they become available. Director Hemmendinger mentioned Cal OSHA's revised PPE requirements, he will let us know when the rule changes. Director Lachman offered that he might be interested if Director Treanor could tell him about the time needed for the position. Director Treanor offered that all person needs to do is look at what Cal Chiefs provides as well as the leg reports and then reading through volumes of information for those items that are important to us.

d. FSWG

Director Taylor reported they met today, we have no clear direction from the County, but we may have new info as Chief Heine is meeting with County reps today. We are developing an IAP and assigning responsibilities. I did receive a draft copy of the IAP but have not had a chance to review it yet. Labor is meeting with the various union reps to see where they come into this. We meet every Thursday from 9 to noon. We might have an opportunity to amend the ordinance. We talked about the Ad Hoc request, but I will report on that later. Chief Heine added that he spoke the CAO and asked what their expectation for their slice of the sales tax measure and we need an experienced campaign manager or firm to take the lead on this. From the County-they are looking for funding to complete the outstanding consolidation efforts in North County, CSA 40 and Bodega Bay and whatever else happens in South County. They do understand the need for campaign management and have some funds to get that started.

e. Measure G 2.0 Ad Hoc

Director Taylor reported they had a very informative meeting the other night. The Id'd 6 items. The first is the reference to LAFCO. We felt that LAFCO had no place in the allocation. Remove the consolidation requirements. We felt the expenditure plans should sunset and be redone every five years. The current monies provided by the county should be maintained (prop 172 etc.). We also talked about SCFDA having a representative or two to the advisory body made up of civilians. A concern was not to have a district director or chief as they would be voting on expenditures which creates a possible conflict. Chief Plakos added the expenditure plan needs to be flexible and continually adapted as conditions change. Director Hemmendinger added we left open the timing of the spending plan but also added the idea of an emergency fund for needs that might pop up. We also felt the need for a separate governing body and not leave it in the hand of the supervisors. Director Lachman also voice his support of the separate governing body. Chief Akre said his understanding is the ability to spend is with the Board of Supervisor. Chief Heine added the governing board needs to be the Board of Supervisors, it would be a County tax and therefor County money. Furthermore, when we first met with Muelrath for G1, the community focus group needed two things: No funding going back to the County of Sonoma and a citizen oversight committee to provide input to the Board of Supervisors. Director Lachman suggested we seek our own legal opinion. Many more ideas were shared about the loss of control with it being a county tax. We will be heard and the idea of separate

counsel opinion will be sought. Director Lachman asked Mark Bramfitt's opinion. Measure G 1.0 were surprised to be included in the measure. The intent might have been to assist with regionalization. Our SOI's and MSR's are part of the public record. The Commission will simply report what is within its purview.

5. Program (none)

6. Old Business

a. Approve Past Minutes March

Sec/Tres Grinnell asked to table this item as he did not send the minutes to the whole group nor post to the webpage, just the e-Board received them.

b. EMS EOA RFP Update – Chief Heine

Chief Heine said the Board of Supervisors crafted a draft EOA RFP. It was reviewed at a public BoS hearing where they received a fair amount of public comment back. They went back to the drawing board and made some edits to that document and it came back before the BoS last week and the vote was to adopt it as a draft to send it to the state, which is requirement of the code. All eyes are on the state now. Through ongoing legal challenges, many of the policies and regulations State EMSA uses have been suspended by the courts. We do not know what that means. There is no mandatory time to respond, but 30-60 days is normal. The timeline of the county has bid opening by the end of May. Agencies must submit letters of intent to bid by the end of May, and the Bid package is due by August and formal presentation must be made in September to an outside review panel who will then make formal recommendations to the Supervisors, for an award of bid in October for a July 1, 2022, start date. From the Fire Service perspective, we got a few desired edits but not the ones I thought were to most important. Couple of important things they did was extract the Bell's ambulance piece and directed staff to negotiate a direct contract with them for their own EOA area. That is exceptionally problematic from a legal standpoint. They also agreed to an AMR Union leadership that they pay existing wages/benefits regardless of who is awarded the contract. This is problematic for two reasons. Not sure it is legal for the County to dictate what is part of a meet and confer agreement. The second issue is the cost of the employee contract. President Akre thanked Chief Heine for his report and for his efforts to try to get the service to a public provider and asked what support is needed from the SCFDA. Chief Heine thanked President Akre and explained he experience with other RFP processes in the state. We are looking at a ten-year agreement worth over 100 million dollars. In the county RFP and in our own, we give first right of refusal of the incumbent workforce. This is not about my agency battling AMR, its about the system. I do not think the system, the way it is set up today, is not providing the high service that it could and for many reasons, but the obvious one is the current model favors profits over the deployment of resources. This is done by putting the fewest number of ambulances needed to cover the area. Please keep in mind, the workforce are some of the most dedicated EMT's and Paramedics around. As a fire district we cannot make a profit, nor can we under charge for our services-by law. Any profit gets put back into the deployment of apparatus and personnel. In San Diego, AMR and Falck. As bidders we are required to have letters of support. So, back to the question, I ask for your consideration of a letter of recommendation from SCFDA for the RFP process. President Akre offered his thoughts and support of Chief Heine and asked for other comments. Chief Grinnell moved to approve a letter of support for SCFD and the RFP process, 2nd by Chief Plakos. President Akre asked if there was any further discussion. Director Doss asked if Chief Heine asked if he had any idea of any profit in Sonoma County. Chief Heine said his team believes they are taking out 4-6 million in profits each year. Chief Plakos said she fully supports trying to move ambulances into the public sector. Chief Heine also asked that if anyone has questions or hears something good or bad to please reach out to him. President Akre added his appreciation for Chief Heine's openness and availability to the group. Chief Heine also let everyone know that he has reached out to every stakeholder imaginable to make sure his RFP is as inclusive as it can be. Director Lachman added his agency's contract with AMR to stage an ambulance at his station 2.

c. Sonoma County Vegetation Management/PG&E Settlement Funds

President Akre said he had a great conversation with Chief Tuberville today and they have a plan to reach out to Ag and Open space. We need to be involved with them and the decisions being made as the work will be in our Districts. Chief Tuberville added vegetation management means different things to different people. It can be actual work of fuel breaks down the Counties free chipper service to Chapter 13a enforcement and abatement and is the fire service willing to do the hands work. Ag and Open Space, is Caryl Hart there for the short or long term, will she be doing the work or will she be the administrator. Simply a lot of unknowns right now. Chief Tuberville will keep us updated. The item will be a standing item on the agenda per President Akre. Director Lachman mentioned our county is an oddity as it is part of two separate air control districts, and if Chief Tuberville had an opinion. Chief Tuberville added the idea of creating one air control district. I think what will happen is the state air resources board might take jurisdiction over the local air board, in terms of prescribed burns. VP Peterson said they are looking for a person to head up this program. Is there anything that will happen until that person is appointed? Chief Tuberville said Ag and Open Space will open their application process, but behind the scenes have been contacting government entities to get your projects ready. Supervisors said we want this before 2022, but CEQA will take much longer. No flow path the apply or for funding at the moment.

d. Northern Sonoma County Fire District Update – VP Peterson

VP Peterson reported that his agency was getting ready to submit our reorganization plan budget for the areas to be annexed to the CAO and the Board of Supervisors. We are keeping our fingers crossed that the county is willing to make this happen and not drag their feet on this. To Mark's point we need to get community support on this to leverage the tax exchange, but we are moving forward on this. President Akre offered the support of SCFDA if needed or desired.

e. Consider letter of support for SCFD for the EOA RFP Bid – Chief Heine

President Akre said we covered this in Item 6b and moved on to the next item.

f. Discussion and direction on future meeting schedule and consider the possibility of in-person meetings with or without dinner and their location (hosts). – VP Peterson

VP Peterson asked the group to discuss and to consider an "in person" meeting and therefore offered to the group a meeting in Northern Sonoma County in July and to screen the Kincade Fire Documentary if the membership thought it was appropriate. The final decision does not have to be until June, assuming the State holds true to a June opening of the state. President Akre supports the concept but suggested that we just need to make sure what the state and CDC guidelines are and revisit over the next two months for compliance aspects. All agreed. Chief Plakos suggested that we still attempt to provide the online meeting aspect for those that cannot travel as needed for the meetings. We will work on this for the July meeting.

7. New Business

a. Consider a letter supporting the extension of the current County essential services funding for the agencies that currently receive it. – Chief Heine

President Akre reported there are several districts receiving essential funding: Bodega Bay, Cloverdale, Northern Sonoma County, North Bay Fire and Gold Ridge. Director Hemmendinger asked if this also includes the REDCOM fees? President Akre said no, that is separate. Director Gloeckner moved to send a letter of support for the funding. Second by Director Lachman. Sec/Tres Grinnell reminded the group that each District has only one vote. Second by VP Peterson, all were in favor, none were opposed. President Akre said he would get a letter out very quickly.

8. Good of the Order

Chief Grinnell said thank you to everyone for their support.

9. Next Meeting May 27, 2021

President Akre reminded everyone that our next meeting will be on May 27, 2021.

10. Close

President Akre adjourned the meeting at 9:00pm.

Minutes provided by Secretary/Treasurer Sean Grinnell.

Minutes Approved on _____

Steve Akre, President SCFDA