



**SONOMA COUNTY FIRE CHIEFS  
ASSOCIATION MEETING  
ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES  
January 25th, 2023 at 9:30 AM  
Petaluma Community Center**

**ATTENDANCE**

Daren Bellach	Kenwood Fire	Scott Westrope	Santa Rosa Fire
Mark Heine	Sonoma County Fire	Evonne Stevens	REDCOM
Steve Akre	Sonoma Valley Fire	Chad Costa	Petaluma Fire
Jason Boaz	Healdsburg Fire	Lance Macdonald	Healdsburg Fire
Robert Johnson	Sonoma County Fire	Jack Piccinini	Sebastopol Fire
Jeff Veliquette	Rancho Adobe Fire	Doug Williams	SMART
Ben Nicholls	CALFIRE	Brenda Bacigalupi	REDCOM
Aaron Johnson	RPPS	Herb Wandel	Rancho Adobe Fire
Ray Mulas	Schell Vista Fire	Shepley Schroth-Cary	North Bay 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 Costa welcomed everyone.

**Presidents Report:** Chief Akre thanked everyone for their trust and confidence in giving him the opportunity to serve as president for the next years. He will do his best to bring us together and be more united.

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

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

Chief’s General Fund	\$3,778.17
Survivor’s Fund	\$96,396.31
Training Officer’s Fund	\$2,050.44
Training Officer’s – Command Tablets	(\$259.56)
FPO General Fund	\$3,397.53
FPO Fire Safety Trailer Fund	\$13,306.90
FPO Career Succession Fund	\$388.71
FPO Fire Investigation Fund	\$2,176.36
Youth Fire Setter Program	\$1,041.53
Safety Pals general Fund	\$24,890.62
Safety Pals Trailer Fund	\$2,500.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$149,666.91</b>

**Correspondence:** None

**Presentation:** None

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** Request to all SCFDA member agencies to contribute an initial funding amount towards the new sales tax initiative process – Chief Heine – FSWG is looking to get some seed money to move forward in putting together a new sales tax measure program. The original Measure G numbers were to bring in around \$50.1 Million a year at a half cent sales tax. Based on current revenues a half cent sales tax in 2023 would bring in around \$62 million a year. They would be proposing a citizen-based ballot measure. This means gathering signatures to get it to qualify getting on the ballot. This would only need 50.1% to pass. There is a measure being proposed and it has qualified to be on the November 2023 ballot that would change this law and go retroactively for 2 years. By needing only the 50.1% to pass, this would eliminate the County out of it. The next steps would be to engage Props and Measures, they are the company that support ballot measures throughout the state. They would need to start conducting a basic pole to see if the community would even tolerate a measure like this. Next we need to start getting signatures up until the actual campaign starts. Local 1401 is taking a huge stance on this and they will be the ones to help us. They would like to look towards member agencies to help get funding through the Sonoma County Fire Chiefs Association so that the SCFCA can hire Props and Measures. We have Bill Adams working on the legal aspects of this. 501c3's can hire entities like this as consultants. Agencies that have a better capacity to do this, we are looking at \$5,000.00 to \$10,000.00 donations, but what ever you can do is going to be critical seed money. The County is being fully informed on what we are doing and the process. When its time all agencies would be brought back to the table to discuss needs to start to determine the amounts to be distributed. The polling cost is \$25,000.00 and to get the signatures its about \$350,000.00. Chief Piccinini asked what if we raised the SCFCA dues to something significant, this then can be a budget item vs going to City Councils and asking for the funding. Chief Akre stated that this would be an easier approach and agreed to that possibility. FSWG will work out a structure for this and bring it back to the group.

**Standing Committee Reports:**

**Fire Service Working Group:** See New Business

**SMART:** Doug Williams reported that the ridership has decreased some due to the rainy weather and they hope it will increase once the rain is over. The issue with the weather had created some flooding, the tracks were under water in the Novato area. The freight trains were not able to run due to the flooding in Schell Vista. The extensions to Windsor and to Healdsburg have some new rumors that there may be some money coming available that would finish the Windsor project and possibly deal with the bridge in Healdsburg. Hopefully sometime next year Windsor will be open. The pathways are still under construction. If you want to use the pathways for fire department access you need to get to them early. They have been working on automatic notifications to SMART when there is a fire in the vicinity of the right of way. This would send an e-mail or a text to the proper SMART officials. This could help them get people to the area early to coordinate at the command post. The railway museum which is housed in the Schellville area is looking at the idea of moving some of the equipment up to Cloverdale and possibly operating an excursion between Cloverdale and the Geyserville area. This is not an official word from

SMART. They are looking at bringing back the SMART tax again to renew it which expires in 2029. They are looking at 2024 as their target. Doug has been working with SMART to update the first responder handbook.

**PG & E:** No report

### **Regional Zone Reports:**

**CALFIRE:** Chief Nicholls reported the new Fire Hazard Severity Zones have been updated and released. The public comment period has been extended until April. Fire Hazard Severity Zones are not identifying risks, they identify hazards. CalFire had the online applications for dooryard burning last year. That has now been expanded for everything. They are trying to get this sorted out through Sacramento to make sure people are getting the correct burn permits when burning. The Cal Fire Prevention Grants are open until March 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Zone 3:** Chief Bellach reported they're happy with the agreement for staffing with Sonoma Valley Fire and how it is going. Boards are talking, consolidation ad hoc committees are talking. Looking into the future and how we can continue our relationship. Chief Mulas reported they are trying up some of their Measure X parcels that fell through the cracks and have not been paying.

Chief Akre reported they are in the process of doing Engineers and Captains promotional testing. He wanted to thank any department that has or will be helping with the assessment centers.

**Zone 4:** No report

**Zone 5:** No report

**Zone 6:** Chief Boaz reported last Monday night the City Council formally adopted the city of Healdsburg wildfire protection plan. They brought on five new reserve firefighters and are getting them trained. Chief Boaz really appreciated the way these storms were treated from the OPS area and the communication that we received, as well as the great job from REDCOM.

**Zone 7:** Chief Westrope reported the cost for the new station 5 is not \$24 million it is \$17 million as was reported in The Press Democrat. They hope to break ground in the spring. Looking at station 8 they are still trying to figure out the final funding pieces. Hopefully they will break ground later in the fall or next year. They have a tenth fire engine on order, and they had three new firefighters start the academy yesterday.

Chief Heine reported Medic 570 and 571 are continuing to work really well. The helicopter was very useful during the storms. There was a lot of talk with OES and the governor's office during that time, it was the first time they prepositioned a local government helicopter for anything other than a wildfire. The helicopter was up staffed for 93 hours and flew 14 hours of airtime. Occidentals loader was a valuable resource there was some issues at the Op Area Coordinator level coordinating this equipment.

**Zone 8:** Chief Piccinini reported Graton and Sebastopol came together on getting a grant for new SCBA's, this was almost a quarter of \$1,000,000 worth of equipment. Sebastopol is still a predominantly Volunteer Fire Department and they did some aggressive recruitment volunteers and are bringing on 7 volunteers. They are currently at the

crossroads as far as what Sebastopol Fire is going to do. Is the city going to continue to remain an independent fire department, are they going to consolidate with Gold Ridge or do a JPA like Sonoma and Valley of the Moon Fire District did.

**Zone 9:** Chief Johnson reported they have 5 in the academy now. They are very close to the City Council adding another Battalion Chief and they hope to do a traditional battalion response. Aaron Hall has been promoted to an acting fire prevention officer. Rohnert Park has a wellness team that can respond if needed. Please feel free to use them if your agency needs this support.

Chief Veliquette reported they are down a few positions and are starting a revamping of their retention and recruitment process. Their main focus is their ALS program and getting that first responder ALS Engine program up and running. They have started a rebranding and are looking at their uniforms, patches and logos to bring it all back together as one. They have a station renovation project starting for the Penngrove station. This will be about a \$1,000,000 interior only renovation. A goal is to bring Rancho Adobe back into the Sonoma County Fire Chiefs Association and support other agencies. This Saturday a new engine will go into service at the Liberty station and will be having an in-service ceremony from 11am-1pm.

Chief Costa reported they are continuing to work with their partners to increase the EMS and operational services in Petaluma.

**OES:** No report

**Training OP's:** No report

**FPO's:** No report

**Fire Districts:** Chief Akre reported the January in person meeting will be tomorrow night hosted by Northern Sonoma County Fire in Geyserville. Business meeting starts at 5pm. Dinner to follow and the program is the Kincadee Fire movie. They will seat new officers tomorrow night as well.

President Comisky from the FDAC spoke regarding their annual conference on March 14-17 in Napa. They are looking forward to getting more people to attend this year. He also spoke about how Districts have been taking hit for many years with Prop 14, ERAF and Prop 172. Prop 172 money has been going to local law enforcement via the BOS. We must find sustainable funds. We must tap into new funding to sustain the districts. FDAC is working on multiple ways to do this.

**Volunteer Fire Companies:** Chief Schroth-Cary reported they are still perusing consolidation.

**Vegetation Management:** No report

**Coastal Valley EMS:** No report

**CAL Chiefs Report:** Chief Heine reported he serves as President elect for Cal Chiefs, Chief Akre serves as Northern California Director and Chief Weststrobe serves as Area Director. Last week President Tubbs and Heine met with Tribal Fire Chiefs. There are 74 Tribal Fire Departments in the State. The goal was to meet with them to bring the Tribal Chiefs Association into Cal Chiefs. Yesterday they were notified that they would be moving in that direction. May 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> is the CFED Conference in Palms Springs.

This traditionally was an EMS based conference and now has changed to more of a first responder conference. Cal Chiefs will be hosting these two days. Please look into attending this conference. Day 1 will be all the hottest topics in EMS, day 2 will be high level strategic wildland fire focus planning. Cal Chiefs is doing a Podcast every 2 weeks. Please look at this media. President Tubbs is putting out a monthly Eblast. Please let Chief Heine know if you are not getting those. They now meet quarterly, on Friday Nor-Cal FPO's have their annual meeting in Sacramento. Chief Akre and Heine will be there representing the Executive Board. 2023 is reimagining Cal Chiefs and restructuring. They felt its time to do some thing differently. They will be overhauling how they are structured, be more efficient and improve communications. They are working closely with the Wildfire Alert Camera system and Cal Fire leadership. They continue to work closely with the insurance industry, Wildfire and WUI insurance rates and the ability for people to access insurance. This year's Cal Chiefs conference will be in Ontario, in October.

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

**Fire/EMS:** Chief Akre reported the EMS Sub-Committee continues to meet weekly. They had their EMCC meeting this week. A lot of thing still happening, gearing up for the RFP. There were only 2 entities that came to the mandatory pre bidders conference. (Sonoma County Fire District and AMR) For the EMCC they have preposed bylaw changes that have been approved by the EMCC board and will now go to the BOS for their approval. They had a good discussion about tiered response and how it would be implemented. As this is a valuable tool to have, there are some very serious concerns on the process. Please pay attention on some policy changes that have been released by CVEMS for public comment and review. One was for medics and what the requirements were to be a preceptor.

**DEM:** No report

**Sonoma OP Area Up-Staffing Plan:** Chief Heine reported we were super busy during the storms. The repositioning paperwork was a tremendous amount of work and thank you to Chief Westrope for all his hard work.

**REDCOM:** Evonne reported the REDCOM 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary party will be Friday the 27<sup>th</sup> at the Sheriff's station in the training room starting at 4:30pm. The expansion plan for REDCOM that was started in 2019 was put on the back burner. At the last meeting there were able to approve \$100,000.00 to move forward with this project. We were in close contact with Region 2 and the other Op Area Coordinators around us.

**Closed Session:** None

**Good of the Order:**

**Adjournment:** @ 11:00am

**Next Meeting:** February 25<sup>th</sup> location Sonoma County Fire, Forestville Station

Respectfully Submitted,

Daren Bellach  
SCFCA Secretary