



**SONOMA COUNTY FIRE CHIEFS  
ASSOCIATION MEETING  
ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES  
July 21 at 8:30 AM  
Rohnert Park Public Safety**

ATTENDANCE

Daren Bellach	Kenwood	Matt Epstein	DCRFD
Mark Heine	Sonoma County Fire	Mark Courson	OES
Bill Bullard	Graton	Ron Lunardi	Occidental
Brian Henricksen	AMR	KT McNulty	REDCOM
Devon Gambonini	Santa Rosa	Ben Nicholls	CALFIRE
Sean Lacy	Sonoma Valley Fire	Steve Mosiurchak	County of Sonoma
Bill Braga	Sebastopol	Sean Lacy	Sonoma Valley Fire
James Salvante	Coastal Valley EMS	Marshal Tuberville	Geyserville
Doug Williams	SMART	Jason Boaz	Healdsburg
Tim Mattos	RPPS	Jeff Schach	Petaluma
Mike Mickelson	North Bay Fire/VFC		

**Call to Order:** Chief Heine began the meeting at 0835 and led the pledge.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Chief Heine

**Host Chief Introduction:** Chief Mattos welcomed everyone

**Presidents Report:** Chief Heine reported we are deeply engaged at the FSWG level. There has been two primary issues the group has been working on. The most recent being the funding allocations approved by the BOS meeting. Looking at all the funding needs and issues. The second, being engaged in preparing for a sales tax measure in June 2022.

**Changes to the Agenda:** Mark Brown is unable to be here today. He will present at our next meeting. Brian Henricksen will be presenting today on Hospital wall times and some issues.

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion: Mattos, 2<sup>nd</sup>: Epstein, All AYE.

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

Chief's General Fund	\$3,428.12
Survivor's Fund	\$103,396.31
Receivable from Fire Agencies	(\$850.00)
Training Officer's Fund	\$2219.92
Training Officer's – Command Grant	(\$223.90)
FPO General Fund	\$4,102.59
FPO Fire Safety Trailer Fund	\$11,956.00
FPO Career Succession Fund	\$818.71
FPO Fire Investigation Fund	\$1,951.26

Youth Fire Setter Program	\$1,041.53
Safety Pals General Fund	\$24,165.62
<u>Safety Pals Trailer Fund</u>	<u>\$2,500.00</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	\$152,507.06

**Correspondence:** None

**Presentation:** Brian Henricksen spoke about some challenges in the EMS system. Hospital wall times have been long. With COVID restrictions starting to loosen up in February, the wall times have gotten very long. This means less available resources for 911. 1 to 2 hour wall times are the average. What is the solution? Up staffing additional paramedics is difficult do to the shortage of paramedics. Co responding a BLS rig with an ALS rig. If the call does not require ALS care, then the BLS care can transport the PT. This concept is being looked at to help mitigate the problem. There needs to be more of a coordinated effort with the large shareholders to help make a difference. Long term we need to look at maybe 25%-30% of the Pt's that were transporting to the hospital really don't need to be going there and are EMT level care. We need to change our response system and utilize BLS as a primary responder on some of these calls.

James Salvante stated that the policy that comes up with the conditions of transfer of care from an ALS unit to a BLS unit has been sitting there not really being used until Petaluma came forward with these issues. The problem is state wide and the hospitals are run at the State level. When we engage with the hospitals were hearing it's not only psych Pt's but they are also having trouble getting beds in their facility and having trouble finding places to transfer Pt's out of the hospital because of staffing issues at other hospitals. We have had a long standing practice in dealing with wall times. We need to keep an awareness with our public safety partners and leverage our strong political pole if it's needed, to get to our partners and let them know the entire system has a real problem. They met with hospitals late last week to tell them this is a significant problem. If we can't get the hospitals to move up Pt's when we get to a certain level of congestion, we will have to go to a total bypass situation. They are calling it a "closure" rather than a divert. This is because we don't want the closure of an ED to be used as a labor saver. Notice of any closure would be put out as, this is a public safety closure due to public safety conditions. It's not safe for Pt's on the gurney and not safe for Pt's in the field that cannot get an ambulance. Hospital CEO's and executives care a great deal about what the community hears. The messaging will continue to be, this is the problem and the hospital did not meet that need. In-PT receiving facilities for behavioral health will not take Pt's unless they have COVID clearance. A process has been started with AMR to have a BLS unit available to do this and keep the drawdown from happening on the 911 system. We have been checking in with behavioral health to see what they can do. (COVID testing in house) AMR will be adding additional resources, we will see if this helps.

Chief Schach spoke in regards to the wall times and how frustrated he was with public health and it needs to come from the County level to find a solution. The BLS program in Petaluma has been very successful. They were relying heavily on auto/mutual aid into Petaluma. They were having a hard time staffing a third ambulance because of cost. They are staffed 7 days a week from 8 to 6. If the call is an immediate type call, the Medic on the Engine can ride with the BLS unit.

Chief Epstein stated that there needs to be a more defined plan and recognition that this is a serious issue. We need to figure out a different solution, have talks and figure out an action plan.

Chief Heine added, this is a complex topic at the local and State level. Cal Chiefs has been engaged on this issue that was born out of contact from L.A. City. Their wall time has gotten to the point where they have 4-5 ALS rigs in one ER stacked up to sit with Pt's to free up the ambulances. We need to get the stakeholders to the table and discuss this issue. This is a system wide problem that needs to be addressed by a system wide response.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** None

**Standing Committee Reports:**

**Fire Service Working Group:** Chief Heine reported that there are 4 entities that are all seeking immediate funding from the County Fire Service Project Fund. Roughly there is \$8.5mil in the fund. There is the proposed consolidation of the Bodega Bay Fire District with Sonoma County Fire, North County proposed annexation of Sotoyme and Fitch Mountain, immediate sustainability of Kenwood Fire District and consolidation of the CSA40 agencies with Gold Ridge. The total needed funding exceeds what is available from the County. The County BOS decided they would try to allocate those funds as they see fit. They came to the FSWG and pitched their proposal. FSWG made some suggested edits. It was asked if the group could get a day to meet with the Fire Ad Hoc to help solve this. Instead they chose to meet one on one with each entity. This was fought hard behind the scenes through the SCFCA due to this causing a splinter effect of all agencies involved. With regards to Sonoma County Fire District's annexation of Bodega Bay, the County realizes they are in a critical financial stress. The County will put a million dollars a year for 2 years into your organization pending a successful passing of the sales tax. If the Sonoma County Fire District gets into the LAFCO process to annex. Upon completion of that process, the County will fund the complete consolidation which is \$3mil a year. The problem is that \$3mil comes out of that pot of \$8.5mil which does not leave enough funds for the CSA40 agencies. So now that leaves agencies upset on how much funding other agencies will receive. Yesterday at the County BOS meeting the Ad Hoc members presented their funding plan and each of the 4 term sheets to the full Board. They asked for an action item to direct the County Administrator to meet again with each of those 4 entities and negotiate the term sheet into an actual contractual agreement. The Board allowed a long public comment period and Bodega Bay had a lot of community speakers lined up. Now unfortunately the work that we had as these 4 agencies to do, has less to do with what the needs are and more about not letting our relationships fracture. This is a problem.

Chief Mickelson added there has been a number of us that have been in the group for years. When they all walk into that room, they make sure they are looking out for the entire County and that's what is frustrating and not able to do that. Rancho Adobe put in to annex 3 of the South County VSC's but at a higher request for funds. Marshal Tuberville put in for \$1.5mil and the County offered them \$1.2mil. FSWG has offered a couple of other ways to come up with some more funding. The group suggested that the new sales tax would pay for all of REDCOM which helped free up some funding for the agencies.

The FSWG is also working on the sales tax measure and the distribution plan. The measure is anticipated to generate \$51mil the first year. Each agency Chief will be coming into the FSWG group to update their current needs and vision.

**SMART:** Doug Williams reported the week day schedule continues to have five AM round trips and eight PM round trips. The Saturday schedule is six trains that run from 7:30AM until 9:00PM. Holidays will be using the Saturday schedule. Recruitment for the general manager position has been postponed until December. The Board is continuing to meet twice a month and talking about how they will be restructuring the service. Pathway extensions are still a big topic. As of July 11<sup>th</sup>, SMART assumed control of freight service. Have been working with Marin Co. trying to get AVL access into the dispatch system. Doug wanted to thank REDCOM for helping bridge this gap.

Grant money has been received on getting the Healdsburg Bridge replaced as well as trying to resume the Windsor extension.

**PG & E:** None

**Sonoma County Emergency Management:** None

### **Regional Zone Reports:**

**CALFIRE:** Chief Nicholls reported that we have started fire season off with a higher ignition rate, but a lower acreage. The last several weeks that has not been the case. The State is at approx. 2000 fires greater than the average for the year at over 200,000 acres over. The Beckworth fire is coming to a close. The Dixie fire is anticipated to grow. Predicted Services has put out a fuel advisory that will be pushed out to the Chiefs group. Locally we have been fortunate that the fire activity has not been the normal activity we have seen. We have had a lot of IA success. We have been short on crews this season and as of today have only 1 crew available. Crews will be more of a surprise on fires than a constant presence. Since bulldozers are being used as a stop gap for the crews, Dozers are also going to be thin. There will be fires this summer where we mop it up and do not get line around these fires. IC's should be aware of not committing more resources than needed to incidents to mitigate the fire. AB38, the requirement for real estate sales for inspections. If your agencies get hit for these types of inspections, refer these to the defensible space page: [fire.ca.gov/dspace/](http://fire.ca.gov/dspace/) this will put them into the queue for these inspections. Chief Parks sent out info on a new Intel tool similar to the Orange County aircraft. 17 Victor is under an exclusive use with Cal Fire for intelligence gathering on fires.

**Zone 3:** Chief Bellach reported that Kenwood had their public hearing for an Assessment Measure for November with a \$.12 per Sq. Ft for Residential and Commercial and a \$16.00 per acre for Agricultural. Polling came back at roughly 93% of the voters in favor.

**Zone 4:** No report

**Zone 5:** No report

**Zone 6:** No report

**Zone 7:** Chief Heine reported his agency will be putting out an EMS Division Chief position flyer. Forestville came on board as station 7 as of July 1<sup>st</sup>. Station 7 and the Larkfield station are now ALS. Still in the consolidation efforts with Bodega Bay. Robert Johnson was promoted from BC to Deputy Chief of Support Services. Yesterday Ryan Estes was promoted to Shift BC for A shift. Hoping to take a contract for the REACH Public Safety Helicopter Program to the Board in August. A new Type 6 Engine is scheduled for delivery in about 2 weeks. This will be assigned to the Mountain station 6. The Mountain station overhaul work is almost complete. Plans to occupy this station will be August 1<sup>st</sup>. It will have 3 dorm rooms and the ability to house 6 firefighters during peak staffing levels.

**Zone 8:** Chief Braga reported they had a vegetation fire off of Llano Rd. This is the third fire there. Yesterday was 3.5 acres. Dozer 1443 came in and did some work. The call ended up being in the City of SR limits.

**Zone 9:** Chief Schach reported Rancho Adobe has three FF Medics in backgrounds. Petaluma has a crisis prevention program. A mobile crisis intervention mobile unit. The primary role is crisis intervention for the homeless.

**OES:** No report

**Training OP's:** No report

**FPO's:** Devon Gambonini reported their next meeting will be this afternoon at 1:00pm in person and Zoom in Sebastopol. The last meeting in June was a joint with zoning officials from Petaluma. Had close to 70 people that attended. Hot topic were energy storage systems and code changes in effect for July 1<sup>st</sup>. The most recent topic of conversation is mowing. We have had several fires that have been caused by mowing throughout the County. Working with Cal Fire and County to start a campaign in regards to being safe. There will be a Youth Fire Setter Academy in September. We have around 8 that will be attending. As a reminder, if you are having incidents involving youths, please reach out to find who your local area coordinator is to schedule a screening.

Chief Heine added that they have had about 9 fires in 8 days related to mowing. This is an issue across the County. He appreciates the collaborate effort and that everyone needs to be on the same page.

Chief Epstein stated he would like to see a County wide list of incidents based on warming fires. It's becoming a bigger issue. In Image Trend there is not call type to log those types of calls. If we could get these numbers, there is funding for these issues and people experiencing homeless issues.

**Fire Districts:** No report

**Volunteer Fire Companies:** Chief Mickelson reported next month they will take delivery of 2 new Type 3 Engines. One will go into Lakeville and one at Two Rock. Have been engaged with Gold Ridge and talks regarding funding needs. Signed the agreements with the County for two more years for funding.

**Vegetation Management:** Steve Mosiurchak reported that James Williams left in April to go to the City of San Jose Fire as the Asst. Chief. Since then Steve has been filling in as the interim Fire Marshal. As of a couple weeks ago, Steve was appointed as the full time Fire Marshal. Steve is now the point of contact for any County related Fire Marshal questions. The Chipper Program has been running all year around for the last two years. The applications are now fully automated online for anyone to apply throughout the County. Have currently received over 290 applications and have processed over 200 of them. Payments for the DSI program have been processed and should be going out soon. VMI are now in the second phase, have had some issues with the Collector App and Survey 123. Have been working on these issues and the process in November that will allow Districts to pick their own areas to focus on. On the Collector App parcels that are due for 2<sup>nd</sup> inspection are currently and will be turning blue. The Districts are putting a lot of time in this program. There will be a mechanism for cost recovery through the abatement. The Brick Grant \$37Mil was received by the County. This is a matching grant. A match of \$15Mil would need to come from the County. Some of that matching funding will come from the PGE settlement. The program will focus on defensible space, structural hardening and community buffers. Larkfield/Wickiup, Mark West corridor, Guerneville/Rio Nido and Penngrove/Sonoma Mountain are areas that have been identified as risk areas. Once the grant is awarded, there will be an 18 month planning phase. The project will eventually benefit the entire County.

**Coastal Valley EMS:** James Salvante reported they have been having good discussions in regards to hospital wall times. EMSA gave notification that they are pulling back on their EMT Skills verification for renewals. Starting September 30<sup>th</sup> you will need to have the skills completed for EMT renewals. Looking at re-starting the ALS updates sometime in October/November. There are still ipads left for agencies using Image Trend for PCR's.

**Ad-Hoc Committee Reports:** None

**Fire/EMS:** Chief Schach reported they have been working on the Rancho Adobe First Responder ALS program and have draft MOU's and a policy draft from Coastal Valley EMS. They have a meeting today at 1:00PM. The current OSHA mandated masking rule states in the work place employees need to be masked unless the agency has a program where the employee confirms with the agency that they are vaccinated. What the work place means? Fire stations and engines are still questionable. The rules may require fire stations and engines to wear masks. Chief Epstein stated they have the ability to test or screen for COVID and have the results with-in 2 hours. If anyone needs a rapid test/screening, please contact Chief Epstein.

**County Alerting System:** None

**Sonoma OP Area Up-Staffing Plan:** Chief Heine reported we have been very busy. Currently we have 19 Engines and one water tender out of the operational area. All 4 of the Counties OES Type 1 Engines and a Rainbow ST with a Type 1 Engine from Marin Co. have been assigned to the Dixie Fire. 2 Type 3 ST's are out. 1 at the Tamarack and 1 at the Dixie. We have a TF of 4 Type 6 and 1 Type 3 at the Dixie. OES WT 21 has been reassigned to the Dixie. 4-5 overhead out and assigned to the Dixie. At the Region level, the reputation for this Op area is that we are quick and efficient in processing orders. We are currently at max drawdown and have notified Region 2.

**REDCOM:** KT McNulty reported they are noticing a higher call volume than usual. Continuing to beta test the camera IA technology.

**Closed Session:** None

**Good of the Order:** Chief Nicholls stated Copter 104 is engaged at this point. When the copter drops water it is approx. 8,300 lbs. We need to make sure that all personnel are out of the way when dropping. Ground resources must be monitoring air/ground and when you get direction to clear the line. CLEAR THE LINE! The copter wants 50 ft. of room minimum between the crews and their drop zone. The camera IA is still not at its peak. Still working on it. Also having the camera be able to plot on a map.

KT added that in August night time fire detection should be available.

Chief Heine added that dynamic control of the cameras is also being worked on to eliminate the delays.

Brian Henricksen stated there was an AMR incident where a shooter shot at a medic unit in Tucson. The responders were staging for another different incident, a shooter that was related to a fire incident call came up flagging down the AMR crew and shot the EMT in the head and the other in the chest. Both are still in critical condition. They have been reinforcing the ballistic vest program. This is just a reminder. The crew was not responding to a dangerous event. We need to be aware and this has been happening in Contra Costa and L.A. as well.

Chief Mickelson reported that Wilmar has a Chicken BBQ on Sunday.

**Adjournment:** 10:35 @ hrs.

**Next Meeting:** August 11<sup>th</sup> Coast Guard Two Rock.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Daren Bellach  
SCFCA Secretary