

Sonoma County Fire Districts' Association

MEETING MINUTES

Virtual meeting on January 27, 2022, at 1900 hours

1. Call to Order:

President Akre called the meeting to order at 7:03

The following members were present:

Name	District	Name	District
Steve Akre	Sonoma Valley	Sean Grinnell	Bodega Bay
Charles Lachman	Gold Ridge	Bonnie Plakos	North Sonoma Coast
Tony Gossner	Rancho Adobe	Marti Campbell	North Sonoma Coast
Bill Adams	Counsel	Charley Lachman	Gold Ridge
Sheply Schroth-Cary	Gold Ridge	Michael Gadoua	Rancho Adobe
Mark Bramfitt	LAFCO	Daymon Doss	Kenwood
Mark Hemmendinger	Rancho Adobe	Matt Atkinson	Sonoma Valley
Bill Norton	Sonoma Valley	Doug Williams	SMART
Paul Bernier	Northern Sonoma County	Bob Uboldi	Kenwood
Jackie Gardener	North Sonoma Coast	Paul Barry	Cazadero
Nicole Richardson	?		

2. Approve/Amend the Agenda

Director Gardener moved to approve the agenda as posted, 2nd by Director Hemmindinger, approved by all, no one was opposed.

3. Treasurer Report

Sec/Tres Grinnell reported a balance of \$7,209.15 in the account and no correspondence received.

4. Committee Reports (As appropriate)

a. FDAC / FDAC EBA / FAIRA / FASIS

President Akre reminded everyone the annual FDAC Conference is in April (5th – 8th) at the Napa Marriot, it's a great conference with lots to learn, its close and it's great for networking.

President Akre informed those in attendance that both the FDAC EBA and FASIS Boards voted to move forward with the consolidation efforts. We hope that FAIRA might one day join us as well. Chief Schroth-Cary asked if we could speak to FAIRA's survey regarding fuel treatment. President Akre said he had just a very basic working knowledge of it but not much more. Bill Adams added that FAIRA sent out a letter about employment counsel. FAIRA passed a policy that if you have an employment related claim, they

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must be consulted if you do not you will be liable for a \$25,000.00 deductible payment. A copy of the FAIRA letter will be sent to SCFDA members.

b. LAFCO

Executive Officer Mark Bramfitt reported that LAFCO is meeting next week. The agenda will include a review of our work plan for the calendar year. The workplan will include 4 or 5 expected fire service initiatives. The first is the Sonoma County/Bodega Bay reorganization, we will work it quickly as both parties are interested in completion before mid-year. We expect an application from North County, who will be taking some IRP territories. In addition, there will be another one with Sonoma County taking some IRP area in the river. We also expect to do some work in the south county. Lastly, but maybe the least likely is some desire to take action on IRP 71, the 45 islands inside the City of Santa Rosa. The County desires to assign those areas to a district. And finally, I will be sending out a call for nominations soon for our “public” member and “public” member alternate positions as their terms are going to expire in May. The Commission determines who will be the public member and alternate will be, both seated members will seek reelection.

c. Political Action

President Akre made another plea for any member that might be interested in taking former President Treanor’s vacant seat on this committee.

d. FSWG

President Akre reported that FSWG continues to meet. Per Chief Heine, the next meeting will be attended by Terri Wright from the County to continue working on the tax measure and the more pressing issue of how to pay for REDCOM Fees, the upstaffing fund and Lexipol. We are also supporting the Gold Ridge effort of taking on the VFC’s. Through President Akre, Chief Heine also mentioned a future North Sonoma Coast funding project. Chief Plakos was not familiar with a project per se, but she did have an idea to support increased staffing along the North Coast using proceeds of the sales tax measure, as well as support for County funding for an increased presence of Cal Fire between Sea Ranch and Bodega Bay. Chief Schroth-Cary added FSWG is in support of various activities both past and present. Tuesday was a significant day for many of us but we have a lot of work to do. The sales tax measure is still a priority to FSWG. We still want to hear the needs of other agencies. Chief Plakos asked if we have lost support for REDCOM, Lexipol and upstaffing? A) President Akre - “as of right now-yes”. Hopefully, Terri will ID the buckets left open to us, if any? The county made a three-year commitment to the REDCOM Fees, and this is the last year of that. Their decision to support the consolidation, sustainability funding, CSA 40 funding: CSA 40 was there only area of responsibility. Our meeting next is about how can we get that funding back. Chief Schroth-Cary added that current funding is contingent upon the timing of annexations. The longer it takes for annexations, the longer the money might be available. Chief Plakos asked if notification will occur with enough time for budgeting processes that are about to begin. **Yes**, was the answer from President Akre, but we should plan to pay for the fees going forward, for now. Director Hemmendinger said we are coming back to the issue that we once spoke of during an FSWG meeting I attended. We are spending county money on agencies that have done a poor job managing their funding. It feels as if those of us who have managed their funding are being penalized by spreading the funds around the way they are. It seems to be the age-old problem, the failure to bring the fire services together in this county. Chief Akre said his hat is off to the four agencies, as the county tried to divide and conquer but the four main agencies and ancillary agencies held it together to the end. Director Bernier added that he was happy with the Tuesday meeting as well as to echo those feelings of sticking together. As for today, I think we need some more accountability and visibility. We should be able to track the money, where it came from and where it is going, it does not have to be as hard as it is.

e. Measure G 2.0

President Akre provided a little more background as to why the county is not pursuing a sales tax measure

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In 2022. Polling was not outstanding; EMC research came out at a little below the 65%. A hard spot to start from. The other consultant recommended that polling is not favorable either. Past results for Measure G, the number of undecided voters was dramatically less than in the past. Only 1 – 2 percent were undecided this time. There was also a lot of local opposition from the vegetation management folks. We will continue to work towards bringing a tax measure to get us the funding we need. Director Campbell said one thing that struck her was that the survey showed that 80% of people are happy with the service level they have. As a rural resident I have no doubt that those in the cities are happy with their service level, but out here, we are having a difficult time. The discussion needs to be about how to build support in the voter base to support a fire tax. I would hate to wait until 2024 until we try again. President Akre added that we are sometimes our worst enemy. We do not tell people that we barely had enough firefighters on scene, or not enough funds to pay for x or y. We need to make a better effort to educate our communities on what our needs are. President Akre also said that Chief Tuberville is working on a position paper for what vegetation management should look like for the fire service in Sonoma County.

5. Program: **None**

6. Old Business

a. Approve Past Minutes - October 28, 2021

Director Gadoua moved to approve the minutes of October 28, 2nd by Director Bernier, approved by all, none were opposed.

b. EMS EOA RFP Update – Chief Heine

President Akre reported the Bids are due on March 1st. A lot of process issues from all bidders. Awards are due in mid-April with services to begin July 1. At the pre-bidders conference there were 8 bidders.

President Akre asked for direction from the members. Chief Heine seeks our endorsement of the public/private partnership model. Chief Grinnell moved to approve a letter of support from SCFDA, 2nd by President Akre, approved by all, none were opposed. President Akre to work with Chief Heine on the wording. Chief Plakos also expressed support of the public model over for-profit models. A model template will be available for those agencies that want to support Sonoma County FD.

c. Sonoma County Vegetation Management/PG&E Settlement Funds update – VP Peterson/Chief Tuberville

Director Bernier said his agency continues to manage vegetation. We not only have a crew at the station, but we also have a crew from another organization (name unk) to get training in veg management; With hopes of getting training to become a typed crew. We are going to be busy. President Akre added that he was aware of another county sponsored veg management grant that closed last week. There is a CalFire grant program that closes the 2nd week of Feb...More coming, keep your eyes open and let us know so we can send the info out to all of you.

7. New Business

a. Funding Needs for 2022 and Beyond (Dues/Assessments/Bank Changes)

Sec/Tres Grinnell reminded the group the Chief Williams told us that dues are to be discussed during the December meeting for the upcoming year, it's that time. There is no reason right now to change the dues structure, we do not have any reoccurring bills no public meetings, and our dinners were usually break even events so not effect on our bank balances. Going forward, there is a need for our own Zoom account and cloud storage. I think that a \$50 per year annual due is appropriate. Assessments were another topic of discussion, but right now we do not appear to have the need, but it is easy to pick that back up as needed. The biggest issue right now are the bank fees being charged-\$2 per month. We can change that with by using a separate account type with a minimum balance.

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President Akre agreed that we do not have a need for an assessment but that might change very soon as we have the ability to be politically active. I think we need to put in some more work on this. We should come back in a month or two to revisit or perhaps a sub committee or ad hoc to look at the future financial needs of the association. Director Hemmendinger suggested that we make the change to the bank account as soon as we can and said he did not know if a vote was needed but he would support the change. Director Lachman asked with the recent Board action, the number of dues paying members will go down, at least a little bit. **A) yes** it will but not by much. The short term we are good. Director Gadoua asked if it was worthy to put together an ad hoc to look at this and the related aspects? **A) Yes.** Agendize the item for our next meeting.

b. Attendance at Meetings (VP Peterson)

VP Peterson asked that we plant the seed since he could not be at the meeting. He would like to see more participation in our meetings from the membership. President Akre said he appreciates those who attend on a regular basis, but those attending only represent a small portion of our membership. Director Hemmendinger suggested that we send out a mailer or survey monkey to see why our attendance is so low and get to the why. Let's make sure we are not Zoom weary. Director Lachman offered reports should be kept short and perhaps a dues discount for attending a zoom meeting. Director Doss confirmed (or not) if Sec/Tres Grinnell has the current information? **A) Yes** but its only as good as the updates come through each agency (I will ask the for this during our next emailout).

8. Good of the Order

Chief Gossner introduced himself as the Interim Chief at Rancho Adobe. Great discussions and thank you for the opportunity and nice to see everyone again.

Chief Williams said the discussion tonight about how to get more members to attend has happened many times before. Today's environment seems to have so many more moving parts than we had 20 years ago. I do encourage that the Fire Districts Association be the unified voice.

Chief Grinnell told the group that Tuesday was a very big day for Bodega Bay, after his own 31 years in Bodega Bay, it looks like the financial struggles are finally over. Thank you to Chief Heine and the whole Sonoma County Fire District and people here tonight who helped make this all possible.

9. Next Meeting February 24, 2022, via Zoom

10. Close

Director Hemmendinger moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:24pm, 2nd by Director Gardener, approved by all, none were opposed.

Minutes approved on _____

By _____

