

# Sonoma County Fire Districts' Association

## MEETING MINUTES

Virtual meeting on June 24, 2021, at 1900 hours

### Zoom Meeting Info:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82716168964?pwd=Y1VMS2ViR3doMmhmdGd0WCtuVGNFUT09>

Meeting ID: 827 1616 8964

Passcode: 773040

### 1. Call to Order

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

The following members were in attendance.

Name	District		Name	District
Steve Akre	Sonoma Valley		Paul Barry	Cazadero
Fred Peterson	Northern Sonoma County		Bonnie Plakos	North Sonoma Coast
Sean Grinnell	Bodega Bay		Marti Campbell	North Sonoma Coast
Chales Lachman	Gold Ridge		Erich Lynn	Timber Cove
Sheply Schroth-Cary	Gold Ridge		Bob Taylor	Cloverdale
Bill Norton	SVFRA		Doug Williams	At Large
Chris Tachouet	Gold Ridge		Marshall Tuberville	Northern Sonoma County
Mark Hemmindinger	Rancho Adobe			
Mark Bramfitt	LAFCO			
Jackie Gardener	North Sonoma Coast			
Gary So	Sonoma County Fire			

### 2. Approve/Amend the Agenda

Director Hemmindinger moved to approve the agenda, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Director Gardener, All voted in favor, none opposed

### 3. Treasurer Report

Sec/Tres Grinnell reported the account balance at \$6,821.90 with dues paid by four members.

4. Committee Reports (As appropriate)

a. FDAC / FDAC EBA / FAIRA / FASIS

FDAC-EBA and FASIS did meet today said Sec/Tres Grinnell.

b. LAFCO

Executive Officer Mark Bramfitt reported there still two vacancies on the commission. LAFCO has not received enough votes to constitute a quorum, so they extended the period by 60 days, they received a few more votes but still not enough to create quorum. Mr. Bramfitt will reach out to those special districts that have not voted to see if he can solicit the vote for a candidate.

c. Political Action

Director Hemmindinger reported there are revisions to the emergency covid requirements. The new requirement will require unvaccinated employees to wear a mask when indoors (or in vehicle) and that the employer will need to track the vaccination of employees-be careful to keep HIPAA Compliant.

Sec/Tres Grinnell asked if the employer needs to treat this documentation like an I-9? Insofar as well need to see the vaccination record but are we required to keep a copy. Director Hemmindinger said that we just need to see it then record they are vaccinated. All confidential info.

d. FSWG

Chief Schroth-Cary reported they met today, they discussed the allocation plan, and estimated we could meet with district reps by the end of June. We have been focused on the Bodega Bay issues, North County and CSA 40. And a little time on the tax measure. The County's new expenditure plan that placed a large amount of money into fuels management. Initially the expectation was the plan would not change all that much from before since we would not have enough time to educate the public, so we are stalled out now.

V-P Peterson said he was confused by recent info that came out from FSWG and to meet, then the Ad Hoc invited to meet and talk. It was a shift from the original intent was.

Chief Schroth-Cary said the original Measure G had about 9% that would fund alert warning & Fuels management. What we got for G 2.0 was a bigger ask for fuel management and a higher percentage of the tax revenue.

Director Hemmindinger commented the county continues to express its intent at a top-down distribution plan, which is concerning. I think the county is headed down the road to failure again if they push the current plan.

Director Taylor said the county has not come to a consensus of what they want. Its difficult for FSWG to do anything if the county can't agree amongst themselves, a different story each time they talk.

Chief Schroth-Cary added we ought to just tell them what we need in order for the stakeholders to be in agreement. Labor is not going to support a large percentage going to fuels management in a county run program-They heard that from us. I am hopeful if we put a plan in front of them, they will consider it.

e. Measure G 2.0

Director Taylor had nothing more to add to what was reported in the FSWG portion. V-P Peterson said he was hoping the chiefs through FSWG would forcefully approach the fire ad hoc in terms of our concerns and the measure, its clear from Chief Akre's email the ad hoc has no desire. The one thing that was said, we don't have the time to go back and do this. Okay if you don't have the time to do right this time, you do it again in a hurry? We heard from Chief Heine and Akre who told us that the county has to be the one to

disperse the funds since they are the body that oversees the funds. I think we have other governance options. There are other models in use today. The Sups say they want out of the fire business, but if G 2.0 passes, they will be deep into fire and they control the purse strings. The people will not vote in favor of it if the Board of Sups control the purse strings. How can we be the ones to go out and get the funds to pass this yet not have any say in it? After the first measure failed, we should have taken leadership, we missed that.

We set out to do it better than we did last time, added Chief Schroth-Cary, and we might need to delay when the measure goes out, but we need some freedom to govern the money and that is our concern and they are not giving us the power to make decisions, but they are asking for the works, and that needs to change.

Director Taylor added depending on which supervisor you talk to some items are non-negotiable like vegetation management. How do we get around that? A) Hopefully she is listening, Labor is not going to support something that has such a high percentage of funds going to a county program said Chief Schroth-Cary. VP Peterson added that recent conversations with Supervisor Gore-he does not want to entertain concerns about sales tax measures, as it barley failed. At some point we need to step it up, this is a way to get you out of the fire service. They are trying to lump too much into one pot. The intent is to put more firefighters on the ground said Shepley. Director Hemmindinger added that any opposition will kill the tax measure. Director Taylor also said it seems the county keeps adding poison pills to everything we offer them. Director Lachman added that Gold Ridge supports what Chief Schroth Cary is trying to do and to keep pushing as hard as they can, the key is labor. VP Peterson added there was no after action done on the original measure, so its flawed going forward, and then they shuffled all the numbers around to there favor. Chief Schroth Cary said FSWG still intends to hold the meetings with each agency rep (Chief & Board member). Next is to meet with Chris Godley to ask why his allocation went from 5% to 10%.

5. Program (none)

6. Old Business

a. Approve Past Minutes April/May

Director Lachman moved to approve the April and May meeting minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Director So, all were in favor, none opposed.

b. EMS EOA RFP Update – Chief Heine

Sec/Tres Grinnell said the State has not yet responded to the County RFP. Director So also confirmed.

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

VP Peterson said he wanted to leave this item on the agenda for regular updates as they occur. Chief Tuberville reported that Northern Sonoma County Coast got a grant, as did North Sonoma County Cloverdale (large), Sonoma Valley got a grant and maybe Timber Cove got a grant. VP Peterson added that since they allocated 8 million of the 25 million in projects that means there should be about 4 million left for projects for next fiscal year. The current projects have a sunset of December of 2022 added Chief Tuberville.

d. Northern Sonoma County FPD Update – VP Peterson

VP Peterson said we are out now doing community outreach in Lower Dry Creek (Sotoyome), Fitch Mountain, and the geysers. This is the big push since we got the SOI completed, now we need the tax exchange agreement. Without it we cannot proceed with annexation. We Support all the other efforts such as Bodega or coming up with a rational decision in the south county and Sonoma. At this point we are pushing as hard as we can, we not going to slow down to motivate the sups to get this done in Northern Sonoma.

## 7. New Business

### a. Annual dues-President Akre

President Akre joined the meeting and apologized for the tardiness. He asked to circle back to inform and to ask a question. Chief Akre asked if anyone had received information about FAIRA. We just got an email and our finance officer followed up with someone regarding FARIA renewals. Premiums are increasing by 70-100% and our time is limited to when we must give notice to FAIRA that we might be leaving FAIRA- by July 1, 2021. The catch is if we do not send the letter giving notice of withdrawal we are then locked in for 2 years. We would be subjected to the increases. President Akre was interested to know if any other districts had been contacted. Chief Grinnell added, Manny of George Peterson Insurance. I informed my Board Budget Committee and then sent an email to Jenifer Jobe at FASIS. This is what Jennifer had to say:

*the liability and property market in California is upside down and in many cases worse than it was in the early 1980's when risk pools were formed. I did hear some of FARIA's renewal numbers, the insurance marketplace, as a whole is absolutely horrific right now. Carriers are severely reducing public agency coverage limits, implementing rate increases of up to 300% (in some instances, WITH reduced limits), and in other cases, non-renewing. Several of the liability and property programs we manage and work with are still – today, waiting on insurance rates and unable to finalize budgets due to the state of the market.*

I scaled back my excitement, discussed the matter with my Board President, and will also speak with Susan at FASIS.

President Akre added that while we were looking at shared services with FDAC, the EBA, and we tried to get FAIRA to join with us but they declined. Even with their declination, FASIS and the EBA were going to look at offering at property/liability insurance but were not able to at this time due to the market. President Akre asked those in attendance if they would let us know if any are successful soliciting insurance at lower rates. If you have any questions, please ask.

Director Hemmindinger related his experiences, both professionally and privately, and acknowledged the status of the industry as well as what happened to Rancho Adobe.

Director Mark Hemmindinger: mh@rafd.org

Contact Info for SDRMA: Ellen Doughty; edoughty@sdrma.org

Web site: <https://www.sdrma.org/>

Chief Plakos mentioned her experience with recent info from FAIRA and is interested in sharing information and rates, perhaps we can make change if needed. FASIS was talking about adding property and liability to the FASIS program, what happened to that? A) President Akre said FASIS and the EBA were looking to consolidate and made the offer FAIRA, FAIRA was not interested. FASIS and the EBA moved ahead and have a JPA for shared services for now. FASIS and EBA looked at adding property and liability but found they could not make the offer at this time due to the market. They will continue to look.

President Akre asked Chief Grinnell if he missed anything. I could not have said it any better than that. I did have an experience with the SDRMA risk pool, but it was going to cost even more than current FAIRA/FASIS agreements.

President Akre said thank you for your support and open communication. Chief Plakos asked if there are other options? Director Hemmindinger said the pools offer the best rates, however, you have every right to seek other options through a broker. The catch we have is with the noticing requirements of FAIRA, make sure you are not locked into something longer than you want to be. Our experience with moving to SDRMA saved us \$25,000, and they offered all three property, liability, and work comp. But cost is different between agencies based on experience.

Since there were no more insurance questions, President Akre presented the idea of raising annual dues and first asked Sec/Tres Grinnell his opinion as the treasurer. He said we have a couple of issues. The audit work that Doug Williams and Mike Nicholls completed showed a reduction in savings between fees and low interest rates and suggested options to stop the loss. The second reason to bring the dues up was when payment was required, annually-calendar year said Director Trainor last month. Dues are also going down with consolidations, so there is that impact.

President Akre then mentioned this brings about a broader conversation about our successes as an association to go down a path where we are more relevant, more responsive, and we have a strong voice and we are exercising that voice. With upcoming issues, our associations (districts, chiefs, IAFF) can campaign while we cannot as our professional serves or as board members. So this begs the question-what can each district afford, what is the correct amount to charge to back that voice, to publicize our voice is very important. Many ideas were expressed, like a sliding scale, budget size, career versus volunteers, or like LAFCO based on proportional tax revenue, or needs based with additional funding for other activities. This item will return next month for further discussion. Doug Williams provided President Akre with the policy statement: annual dues will be set by majority vote at the associations last meeting of the calendar year. It looks like November will be the time to discuss this, please send us your ideas for November's meeting.

Director Hemminger added a change in by-laws to address the creation of a fund.

Director Campbell said she likes the idea of a separation of funds for operations and for a "war chest" as well as an alteration of the bylaws to affect the change.

#### 8. Good of the Order

VP Peterson brought the idea of the next "in person" meeting. If we can make sure everyone is vaccinated, or what other concerns do we have? President Akre reported there is no restriction for us as we are not an employer, nor are we a mega event. There are some soft issues such as general comfort coming to a group meeting. Dinners are a separate issue as well considering possible contamination, add to this, appearance might be an issue as well. VP Peterson said he needs a head count, those in attendance were in favor. RSVP by July 5 for the rest in an email out to all members. Chief Plakos expressed her desire for a hybrid meeting so more might be willing to participate in at least the business aspect of the meeting. More of this aspect was discussed more and the idea that business will be conducted early, and the social aspect can happen later in the overall meeting format.

President Akre acknowledged Mike Nicholls resignation from Cazadero and thanked him for his help and insights over the years.

#### 9. Next Meeting July 22, 2021, @ 5pm, And in person!!!!

#### 10. Close 8:50pm