

Sonoma County Fire Districts' Association

MEETING MINUTES

Virtual meeting on March 25, 2021 at 1900 hours

1. Call to Order

President Akre called the meeting to Order at: 19:02 hours.

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
Rob Stewart	Northern Sonoma County		Doug Williams	SMART
Marshall Turbeville	Northern Sonoma County		Mark Hemmendinger	Rancho Adobe
Shepley Schroth-Cary	Gold Ridge		Jackie Gardener	North Sonoma Coast
Charlie Lachman	Gold Ridge		Bob Taylor	Cloverdale
Bill Adams	Johnston Thomas		Carol Pigoni	Cloverdale
Bonnie Plakos	North Sonoma Coast		Mark Bramfitt	LAFCO
Matt Atkinson	Sonoma Valley		Paul Barry	Cazadero
Daymon Doss	Kenwood		Mike Nichols	Cazadero
Paul Bernier	Northern Sonoma County			

2. Approve/Amend the Agenda

President Akre asked for an approval or amendment to the agenda, Director Pigoni moved to approve the agenda as presented, 2nd by Director Nicholls. President Akre called for the vote, all approved, no disapprovals were voiced.

3. Treasurer Report

With an apology, Sec/Tres Grinnell did not have a report for tonight.

4. Committee Reports (As appropriate)

a. FDAC/FDAC EBA / FASIS

President Akre reported on FDAC/EBA and asked Director Pigoni to report on anything missed since she and others were also in attendance for the joint FDAC/EBA and FASIS meeting. FDAC/EBA and FASIS have entered into a shared services agreement/MOU. The two Boards are working together to streamline the admin and management of the two organizations with the option of expanding the suite of services that we offer, such as general and property liability insurance. We approved the MOU for the next year and a half. We are hopeful that we can merge together and for a lower cost. FDAC is having a virtual conference on April 13/14, great classes offered, please take a look. Director Pigoni added that we entered into the MOU and letter of intent. We should work out the nuts and bolts for the long term future.

Director Pigoni added the FASIS report and told us she would offer a written report for the next meeting. Under the admin report, liability target date is July 1st. We received the draft actuary report and our safety rate will be 5.6% increase and non-safety is 6.38% increase. Dropping interest rates are the primary driver for the increase. We discussed the agreement between FDAC and FASIS and voted to continue the agreement. Had an extensive discussion about the pre-employment physicals offered by OccuMed, and discovered that only about 25-30% of our members use OccuMed, so we are looking at other wellness programs, such as Pinnacle and 1582, maybe even a return to safety dollars. More to follow in written report.

b. LAFCO

LAFCO Executive Mark Bramfitt reported he had five items, the first was the Commission successfully met at the beginning of this month, unlike the previous month when LAFCO had some technical issues. The Commission took two actions; approval of the dissolution of the Forestville Fire District and the subsequent annexation of the territory into the Sonoma County Fire District and now the protest proceeding- Info was sent to local newspapers and letters sent to all property owners. The second action was to adopt a municipal service review for North County as well as amending the spheres of influence for the agencies in that territory. There remains an ad hoc committee of the committee looking at spheres of influence issues for various fire and emergency service agencies, they meet next Tuesday, there are many requests pending. Staff will next work on a MSR for Rancho Adobe FPD as well as agencies in CSA 40, southern portion. Lastly we have an impending vacancy for a special district representative which we call class 1 (only candidates from fire and emergency service agencies). We have two candidates, Mark Hemmendinger and Bill Norton. Ballots are being sent out. Please agendize the ballots asap. We will be seeking an alternate member as well but will run this election first. President Akre thanked Mark Bramfitt and asked when was the deadline for ballots? Mark answered, about 6 weeks from now. President Akre asked the group if they had any questions, none were asked and Mark Bramfitt was thanked for his time.

c. Political Action

President Akre reminded everyone that former President Frank Treanor was our former political action reporter and will no longer be reporting, so please we need your help to fill this void.

d. FAIRA

No report

e. FSWG

President Akre asked FSWG Rep. Director Bob Taylor to report and invited other members present to speak after Director Bob Taylor. Bob reported they have been tasked with a strategic plan for the new tax measure, Looking at revisions to the distribution plan and stakeholder approaches. We will meet weekly until we get this all worked out. Chief Heine added we are supporting a couple of strategic issues-The CSA 40 issue with funding and the LAFCO actions for region 6. Director Taylor asked if the LAFCO ad hoc would be presenting their SOI finding in June? Executive Officer Bramfitt reported LAFCO composition has changed, as well as the ad hoc. They are meeting on Tuesdays. Their Charter was to conduct interviews they thought were needed and report back in June.

f. Measure G 2.0 Ad Hoc

Director Taylor then reported on the ad hoc activities. They met on Zoom and discussed several items-Who is in charge? The County thinks it is and they expect to have the new tax measure ready for a June 2022 election. We agreed the distribution plan needs to be redone due to recent changes. There was consensus to create a political action group. Concerns the Board should not be in charge of the distribution of money and all agreed there needs to be clear and timely communications between the FSWG and all the involved parties and the fire service needs to be involved in drafting the ordinance. Need to remove the language that requires consolidations. The campaign needs to address the concerns of the community and money to

finance the campaign. Director Hemmendinger and others did a great study of the voting records and it looks like we need to focus in the 101 corridor. Director Taylor invited Director Hemmendinger to speak and he said the 101 corridor was more no than yes and added that if you move East and West the votes were more in favor of G. Director Hemmendinger added that he believes we should publish the methodology for the distribution of funds but not the actual plan for it. Chief Heine stated the importance of the timeline for a June election. We need to have all documents must be submitted by November 20th and they want the final distribution plan in the next 30 days. They will only adopt the Ordinance with the distribution plan. They need to be the owners of the distribution plan as they are the ones to legally to collect it and distribute it. There overall opinion is they like the ordinance, but the distribution plan is a component of the ordinance and they must stipulate per the state board of equalization dictate how the funds will be distributed, but Chief Heine did not know to what level of detail the state board would need. Director Hemmendinger asked who could we approach for more info? Chief Heine answered the Fire Ad Hoc is meeting weekly and will ask the CAO and or the tax department. Director Doss asked who inherited Measure G, how was it [Distribution plan] developed? Chief Heine said not every single District was approached, not enough time, the methodology was dictated by the Supervisors (%). If you consider what is happening now, the Supervisors keep adding carve outs to Measure G-such as the vegetation management program. We need to know what they want off the top before we can know how to build the distribution plan. Polling said no money to the county. The County has been very clear, no more funding from the County when Measure G passes, so we better consider that. Director Hemmendinger added we need to be firm, they cannot keep taking off the top, especially when you consider they do not want us involved with things like vegetation management, so they should not get any money. Chief Heine added the propose of Measure of G has always been boots on the ground, stations, and apparatus. Director Lachman asked if money is set aside for consolidation, what happens to that money? Chief Heine answered that consolidation is not a part of the new measure. Chief Heine said there is likely to be a funding gap cause by different tax rates of agencies so some money being set aside for consolidation is good. Chief Plakos confirmed the plan within 30 days? Chief Heine said they actually wanted it 3 weeks ago and a strategic plan. The June election is good for the ability to politic outside of the fire season. Bonnie further asked how do we get the verbiage changed in the ordinance and how, if we need to change the distribution plan, how do we could help FSWG do that? Chief Heine said the ordinance piece could be done fairly easy between us and your ad hoc, a simple red line version or notes written in the margin push up to Steve to us is good. The sups are not pushing the consolidation piece like they were last time. The distribution plan needs to be a stakeholder approach whether FSWG is leading that or your ad hoc is, we just need to get your president and the chiefs to each to the meetings to sit down and tell us what has changed in your organization that necessitates a change to the distribution plan for you. I think we brought in the chiefs before and that was a mistake we needed to bring in the boards to. There needs to be a bigger say for all the boards. Director Hemmendinger suggested that it should be plausible to get notice out to the boards and fire chiefs on almost two figures, a minimum and a maximum and your wish list so people are honest about the minimums they could live with. Rancho Adobe could use some support getting salaries raised to match our neighbors amounts. Other needs might be more pressing. We could get the info back to the FSWG quickly. Does that info need to be discrete or can it be more of a global plan or if we need to drill down into it. Chief Heine said they toyed with the idea of a survey monkey to solicit info quickly. There needs to be a mechanism to change things as future needs change. Director Pigoni asked if we could go with a plan that says x percentage goes to personnel, and x% to facilities and x% to vegetation management until it gets to the 100%-it will change over time. This helps prevent the county from siphoning off a percentage from the tax revenue for their needs and allows for changing needs of all districts, a programmatic distribution type of plan. Chief Heine agreed with Director Pigoni's programmatic approach to it and offered the original reason for the level of details in the last plan was stated so future Boards could not make changes. Director Lachman said the difficulty is our various staffing levels, the ordinance should highlight some kind of incentive for volunteers. Chief Heine agreed and reminded the group we started originally trying to solve for CSA 40 and get it out from county control. Chief Schroth-Cary mentioned the distribution plan might not make everybody happy initially, its that governance of the money and having the trust down the road for changes as changes are needed. Chief Heine said we are starting with better collaboration this time around. Director Taylor said the Sups were going to establish and oversight committee. Chief Heine suggested that the chiefs along with there boards need to determine the organizational needs and present those ideas in lock step. Director Hemmendinger

suggested the use a 5-year business plan that includes equipment replacement and reserves at the end of 5 years. We can talk about our current needs and our needs 5 years out. The other districts need to in that position too. We need a change mechanism built into the new ordinance. If everyone is not just a little unhappy, we have not done the right job. Chief Heine added one thing we missed the boat on was a percentage carve out to establish a reserve fund for those crisis events that might happen. President Akre praised all for the discussion and thanked Director Taylor for his work and asked him to air on the side of setting meetings sooner than later in order to be nimble with all the various inputs.

5. Program (none)

Please give us your ideas for future programs. We want to provide programs on our quarterly meeting months.

6. Old Business

a. Approve Past Minutes (Jan & Feb)

President Akre asked for a motion to approve or to revise the posted minutes. Sec/Tres Grinnell mentioned being contacted by Director Gardener, she was left off the roll call of the last two meetings, the final version includes Director Gardener, as well as the corrected Spelling of Director Hemmendinger's name. Director Lachman also suggested adding his name and the remaining alternate members to the committee. With that, Director Nicholls move to approve the minutes of January and February with revisions, 2nd by Director Gardener, approved by all present, none were opposed.

b. Approved Audit Report for 2020 (Williams/Nicholls)

President Akre introduced the audit by way of thanking Director Nicholls and Chief Williams for their work on the audit. The audit report was attached the meeting notice. Chief Williams said the books were in order and in good shape. We did identify account fees and a small interest rate as two items the association might want to look at, at a later date. Director Nicholls suggested placing excess funds with LAIF or the County, although we are not sure we can keep funds with the county. President Akre asked for questions, there were none and a motion to accept the report was made by Director Lachman and 2nd by Director Pigoni, approved by all present, none were opposed.

c. EMS RFP for EOA 1 Update (Heine)

President Akre invited Chief Heine to speak. Chief Heine said the county is a specific timeline working backwards from June 30 of 2022, when the current EOA expires. The draft RFP came out last Wednesday, there are a couple very contentious aspects. Bells area being added to the RFP was very controversial, on two points. Why is it in there and it was help very close and caught people off guard. The County under H and S code has only two choices, put them in the EOA or don't; and if they do not, they are acquiescing on the behalf of Bells any exclusivity. You are an open competitive market now. There are some very basic things that are odd to see included-list of fees the contractor needs to pay the county, which makes it difficult to fiscally sustain a system. It has a couple of items that are illegal such as adding a fee of \$1.50 per transport mile and return to the county-so lots of little things like that. There four factions that were speaking up and in writing before Tuesday's meeting. Bells, Us, AMR and AMR's union. The union wants whoever takes over to pay existing salary and benefits. All of the various ideas that any of us brought up the Sups jumped on and directed the ad hoc to address them. Chief Heine has seen this play out before, the county needs to be very careful if they mandate salaries and benefits, they could create a relationship that makes them agents of the county and open the door for PERS retirement benefits. Chief Heine is asking the sups for a fair chance to bid the system, which appears in jeopardy now with the many issues ID'd. April 13, is when the Sups will look at the recommendations from the ad hoc. President Akre thanked Chief Heine for his efforts.

d. Fire Impact Fee Program Update (Akre/Heine)

President Akre update the group that the Supervisors approved the fire impact fee programs for Sonoma Valley and Sonoma County Fire Districts. This is noteworthy for several reasons. We were the first ones the county has ever approved. We have created a road map for others to follow. It will be an easier process for the next agencies to invoke. President thanked all the people that helped them get this passed. For the county to approve future agencies all they have to do is a consent approval. Chief Heine offered up himself and his staff to help others through the process, as did President Akre for his agency. No questions were asked.

7. New Business

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

President Akre asked VP Peterson to speak on this item. VP Peterson said the Sups are putting 8 million of 25 million PG&E funds to work on projects. The input process was flawed from the get-go, the results were skewed, the county wants to be in control, and they entrusted the ag and open space, who has some expertise in this area. They hired a director of 3 years for 220k a year, ½ mil for training programs to teach the workforce. Its frustrating for me since they did not look at what we are doing up here in North County. We have many shovel ready projects, but we are not likely to get funded before the end of the fire season. We will keep trying to get a program that reflects the experience of the local communities that puts firefighters in the decision-making process. Chief Heine added that his speaking points to the Supervisors was neither the fire chiefs association nor the fire districts association were consulted on this subject. President Akre suggested that we reach out to Ag and Open Space with some of our expertise. Director Doss wondered about the political motivation, why would they want to be in control of this and measure g, if they want to be out of this business why are they trying to be in this business from another angle? President Akre added one of the reasons we created the fire council was to help get them out of the fire business. \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ VP Peterson agreed to reaching out to Ag and Open Space. President Akre will reach out personally to the Ag and Open Space Commission between now and the next meeting.

b. Northern Sonoma County Fire District Update

VP Peterson reported Northern Sonoma County Fire finally had there SOI amendment hearing at LAFCO and the commission expressed their support. We are now embarking on negotiating the tax exchange agreement with the county for part of the geysers, Fitch Mountain and Lower Dry Creek. I might be approaching our association asking for support in that process, its frustrating, if we were annexing other districts, the tax money would follow, but since the county is dissociated those areas from CSA 40 and transferring tax money to the successor (us) the county sits as judge and jury on what is transferred. Without the funding, we as the new district (and Cloverdale) cannot deliver a better level of service to those areas, which would be a huge disservice. President Akre thanked VP Peterson for the update and asked to keep us informed.

8. Good of the Order

President Akre asked for items for the good of the order. Chief Heine mentioned the issues at Dry Creek Rancheria Fire, the new CFO is replacing firefighters and released two captains and two resigned. The positions are to be replaced by non-safety members. We stand with Matt. President Akre added more the fire impact fees. We are in a better place, you all voted to support the efforts to support us and SCY. It's noteworthy as we move forward, and we are united and speak with one strong voice. Its politically powerful. Sec/Tres Grinnell thanked President Akre and Chief Heine for their efforts to carry the fire service fees program and to establish a path for others to follow. VP Peterson thanked President Akre and Chief Heine as well. VP Peterson informed the group of a National Wildfire Mitigation Award given to Chief Marshall Tuberville. Premiering at the Alexander Film Festival (online) will be the Kincade Fire Documentary that we had commissioned and perhaps we can use it as a presentation. Director Lachman suggested that we agendize a discussion as we move out of the Covid lockdowns. President added a suggestion that we maintain a return to quarterly meetings while also using the Zoom format for the

monthly meetings. Chief Tuberville suggested for us to comment on the veg management proposal that is funding a position that is going to be funded via Ag and Open Space, as much as 660k for three years, perhaps a firefighter position or delegate out to fire districts. We could get a CEQA exemption for the burned areas. As far as Dry Creek, they need a contract for the casino operation, but they need a formal agreement and Matt Epstein has my support.

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be a zoom meeting on April 22, 2021.

10. Close

The meeting closed at 8:43pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by Sean Grinnell.

Minutes approved on _____

President Steve Akre _____