VISTA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Board of Directors Meeting
Minutes – September 9, 2026

These minutes reflect the order in which items appeared on the meeting agenda and do not necessarily reflect the order in which items were considered.

BUSINESS SESSION – REGULAR AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER
President Ploetz called to order the regular meeting of the Vista Fire Protection District Board of Directors at 1:04 PM at the Vista conference room located at 200 Civic Center Dr., Vista CA.

a. Roll Call

Directors Present:	Elliott, Hill, Miller, Ploetz
Director's Absent:	None
Staff Present:	Karlena Rannals, Administrative Manager; Mark Vierow, Fire Marshal; and Chris Cardinale, Legal Counsel

FLAG SALUTE
Director Hill led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

BOARD VACANCY – DIVISION B
1. Interview – Board of Director Vacancy

Staff informed the board that an application for the vacant position on the Board of Directors had been received. The applicant, Mr. Jose Torre-Bueno, was present at the meeting to provide an overview of his qualifications and answer any questions from the board.

Mr. Torre Bueno summarized his interest in serving on the Board of Directors, highlighting his relevant experience, skills, and commitment to serving the community. He provided an overview of his professional background and how he could potentially assist the District. He responded to questions from the board members.

MOTION BY DIRECTOR MILLLER, SECOND BY DIRECTOR ELLIOTT, and CARRIED 4 AYES; 0 NOES; 0 ABSENT; 0 ABSTAIN to appoint Mr. Jose Torre-Bueno to serve the unexpired term of the vacant position in Division B, until the next general election, November 2026.

2. Oath of Allegiance –Appointed Board Member

The following member was sworn-in as members of the Vista Fire Protection District Board of Directors for terms prescribed by law:

Jose Torre-Bueno – Division B

Kallison Leahy, Notary Public, administered the *Oath of Allegiance*.

ORAL COMMUNICATION (PUBLIC COMMENT)
Mr. Daniel Gomez, Vista Valley Dr., Vista, CA: Mr. Gomez, member of the Fire Safe Council Vista, provided an update on current Fire Safe Council and Firewise activities. He advised that revisions to the Community

Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) are due this month and invited Board members to submit any recommended changes. Proposed revisions are being coordinated with Morgan Dioli and will ultimately be forwarded to Chief Butz and other fire chiefs for review.

Mr. Gomez also discussed concerns regarding vegetation and other potential hazards along Gopher Canyon Road, which is identified in the CWPP as a primary evacuation route. The Firewise Committee has documented several areas of concern and would like to coordinate with District representatives to identify affected parcels and determine the appropriate jurisdiction for corrective action. Cal Fire has indicated it can follow up on properties within its jurisdiction once parcel information is provided.

Mr. Gomez further suggested conducting a community evacuation drill, particularly given the number of elderly residents who may require assistance during an emergency. He noted that previous evacuations identified residents who needed help with issues such as operating garage doors and leaving their homes safely.

Lastly, Mr. Gomez requested assistance with developing an address-related information flyer that had previously been discussed with City staff. He indicated that the Fire Safe Council and Firewise Committee will continue coordinating with the City on these matters.

MOTION WAIVING READING IN FULL OF ALL RESOLUTIONS/ORDINANCES
MOTION BY DIRECTOR ELLIOTT, SECOND BY DIRECTOR TORRE-BUENO, and CARRIED 5 AYES; 0 NOES; 0 ABSENT; 0 ABSTAIN to waive reading in full of all resolutions and/or ordinances.

CONSENT CALENDAR
MOTION BY DIRECTOR ELLIOTT, SECOND BY DIRECTOR HILL, CARRIED 5 AYES; 0 NOES; 0 ABSENT; 0 ABSTAIN to approve the consent calendar as submitted:

1. Board of Directors Minutes – APPROVE
   a. Regular Meeting August 12, 2026
2. Payroll Register (Ratify)
   a. Payroll paid on September 4, 2026 $6,250.00
   $478.13
   $6,728.13
3. Accounts Payable (Ratify)
   a. Accounts Payable Check 4453 through 4462 paid September 9, 2026 $123,610.00
   b. Auto withdrawals(s) paid August 11 – September 4, 2026 $1,057.18
   Total $124,667.18
4. Receive and File (Information)
   a. Monthly Reports
      i) Fire Chief
      ii) Fire Marshal
      iii) Workforce Program Superintendent

iv) Effective Response Force Report – July 26
v) Southern Operations Seasonal Weather Outlook – September – December 2026
vi) Administrative Manager's Report
vii) CSDA Annual Conference Summary – Director Ploetz
viii) Correspondence
(1) None

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Final Budget Fiscal Year 2026/27

President Ploetz opened and closed the public hearing. Ms. Rannals reported that there were no written comments submitted.

DISTRICT BUSINESS

1. Resolution No. 2026-11

Ms. Rannals summarized the staff report and explained the purpose of the resolution establishing committed and/or constrained fund balances for FY26. She noted that staff review the District's equity, or fund balance, to ensure reserves are appropriately allocated in accordance with GASB Statement No. 54 and to address the District's short- and long-term financial needs.

Resolution No. 2026-11 was prepared to meet GASB 54 requirements, with Exhibit A reallocating unassigned fund balances to support the District's identified short- and long-term financial obligations. Ms. Rannals responded to questions from the Board.

MOTION BY DIRECTOR ELLIOTT, SECOND BY DIRECTOR PLOETZ, and APPROVED to accept staff's recommendation listed in Staff Report 26-19 and ADOPTED Resolution No. 2026-11 *entitled* a Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Vista Fire Protection District Establishing Committed and/or Constrained Fund Balances for FY26 on the following roll call vote:

AYES:	Elliott, Hill, Miller, Ploetz, Torre Bueno
NOES:	None
ABSENT:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

2. Final Budget FY2026/27

Ms. Rannals presented the FY27 Final Budget and noted that there were few substantive changes from the preliminary budget. She reviewed the District's FY26 unaudited financial results, including approximately $5.6 million in revenue, $4.8 million in operating expenditures, and the impact of the one-time $2.4 million fire station replacement expenditure on the District's year-end net position.

For FY27, staff is projecting approximately $5.8 million in revenue and $5.2 million in operating expenditures. Property tax revenue remains the District's primary revenue source, with taxes and assessments projected conservatively based on an approximately 8% increase in assessed valuation. The budget also includes $333,000 for vegetation management activities. After all projected expenditures, including vegetation management, staff anticipate positive net income of approximately $303,000.

Ms. Rannals also reviewed the District's projected cash position, fire mitigation fee activity, investment earnings, and the status of grant opportunities. Staff estimated the District's FY27 ending cash balance at approximately $14 million and noted that the District has issued an RFP for on-call grant-writing services to pursue funding opportunities for which the District may be eligible.

Following discussion and questions from the Board, Resolution No. 2026-12 adopting the FY27 Final Budget was presented for consideration.

MOTION BY DIRECTOR TORRE-BUENO, SECOND BY DIRECTOR HILL, and ADOPTED Resolution No. 2026-12 *entitled* a Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Vista Fire Protection District Adopting a Final Budget for Fiscal Year 2026/27 on the following roll call vote:

AYES:	Elliott, Hill, Miller, Ploetz, Torre Bueno
NOES:	None
ABSENT:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

ORAL REPORT(S)

1. *Fire Chief*

   Fire Marshal Vierow reported that In addition to the Chief's report, the following information was discussed:

   - He reported that an appeal related to the proposed senior facility project on York was denied. The appeal concerned a downstream sewer easement and required sewer improvements through private backyards, rather than the development itself. The project may therefore proceed.
   - The Fire Department's annual open houses will begin on October 3 and continue each Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., rotating through Stations 1 through 6. A flyer is being prepared, and the schedule will be provided for distribution.
   - Recruitment for the Assistant Fire Marshal position is continuing, with three candidates advancing to a second round of interviews.
   - He provided an update on the recent fire near Brengle Terrace Park. The preliminary cause was associated with homeless encampments located within the drainage area. Although nearby apartment buildings experienced some heat exposure, no structural damage was reported. Evacuation orders were issued during the incident, and residents generally complied. Vista High School was identified as an evacuation gathering point. Additional shelter resources, including Red Cross support, would have been activated if the incident had continued for a longer period.

     The fire generated significant ember cast, with debris reportedly traveling more than a mile from the fire area. Engines were deployed to patrol nearby neighborhoods, including Vale Terrace and Alta Vista, for potential spot fires.

     The Board discussed vegetation hazards within the drainage area. Much of the property is privately owned, and vegetation management is complicated by environmental and permitting requirements associated with drainage areas. Staff have been pursuing grant funding to support vegetation reduction efforts on private property.

2. *Administrative Manager*
   In addition to her report, she added:
   - Ms. Rannals reported that additional California Conservation Corps hours were authorized to continue vegetation management within the previously approved project amount of up to $200,000. Staff expect CCC work to continue through the end of October. Fire Department staff will provide an update at the October 21 Board meeting using data from the District-supported wildfire risk model. The model uses historical fire data, terrain, wind, and temperature to identify areas most vulnerable to wildfire. The analysis will help the District prioritize future vegetation management and long-term risk-reduction efforts.
   - She provided an update on implementation of the recently approved Facility Use Agreement. The goal is to be fully relocated to the new office at Vista Station 3 by October 1. Before the move, the City needs to complete minor modifications, including removal of cabinetry and painting. Staff noted that the District must also coordinate installation of phones and internet service, arrange for movers, and provide the required 30-day notice for the current location. Board members expressed concern regarding the length of time the relocation process has taken and encouraged continued follow-up with City staff to ensure the remaining work is completed promptly.
   - For planning purposes, she informed the board members of the required upcoming mandatory 2-hour training schedule that includes the following schedule:
     - Ethics: 10:00 AM – 12 NOON: Wednesday, December 9, 2026
     - Harassment: 10:00 AM – 12 NOON: Wednesday, February 10, 2027
     - Financial: 10:00 AM – 12 NOON: Wednesday, March 10, 2027
3. Legal
   - Mr. Cardinale reported that, following completion of the facility-related matters, a meeting was held with the Administrative Manager, Fire Chief, and City Legal to discuss private access agreements needed for weed abatement work on private property. The City Attorney is preparing the appropriate agreement form, and staff will continue to follow up on that process.
   - He also identified the District's policies and procedures as the next major administrative priority. Updated materials are being prepared for review and will be provided to the Administrative Manager for placement before the Board.
4. Board of Directors
   - Ploetz: he reported that he and Ms. Rannals on their attendance at the California Special Districts Association (CSDA) Annual Conference. They noted that CSDA represents special districts throughout California and provides valuable resources, training, legislative updates, networking opportunities, and educational programs designed to support effective special district governance.

     The conference included workshops and presentations on Board responsibilities, applicable California laws, and best practices for special district operations. The Board member commented that the conference was worthwhile and encouraged directors, particularly newer Board members, to consider attending CSDA leadership training and future conferences. It was also noted that next year's CSDA Annual Conference will be held in San Diego and that CSDA provides extensive educational and informational resources through its website and publications.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEM(s)

No additional items were added to the list.

President Ploetz adjourned the meeting at 2:10 pm.

Karlena Rannals
Board Clerk

John Ploetz
President