



**VISTA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Board of Directors Meeting
Minutes – January 21, 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 1:00 PM at the “Vista” conference room located at 200 Civic Center Dr., Vista CA.

a. Roll Call

Directors Present: Elliott, Hill, Miller, Ploetz

Directors Absent: Fougner

Staff Present: Karlena Rannals, Administrative Manager; Gerard Washington, Fire Chief;
Bret Davidson, Deputy Chief; and Chris Cardinale, Legal Counsel

FLAG SALUTE

Director Hill led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ORAL COMMUNICATION (PUBLIC COMMENT)

Tim O’Hara, Happy Hill Dr, Vista: he informed the board on the formation of a fire brigade in San Marcos that will also affect the City of Vista and Vista Fire Protection District. He volunteers at TERI Campus of Life. TERI has built model programs for individuals with developmental and learning disabilities and those who support them across their life span. The fire brigade is being formed to help in their insurance rates, and they will assist the 20-acre campus and their residential group homes in following the fire code and bring their safety steps up to speed. They will not be providing fire suppression or medical services.

Tom Hunt, Carmel Ridge Rd., San Diego: he summarized how he became involved with TERi, and how the fire brigade was formed. The Fire Brigade is formed under California Title 8, Code of Regulations Section 3411 and it outlines the requirements for the Fire Brigade. Right now, the Fire Brigade stands with about 20 members, all volunteer. Their efforts are on basic fire prevention patrols, hazard identification and reporting fire alarm awareness and notifications. They have purchased a Type 6 brush engine, which is currently being outfitted with equipment, then training will begin. They are looking for people who are retired firefighters who could use their expertise to help with training and also to help guide the current 20 members, with the goal of increasing to 40 volunteers. They have a landscape architect, and they will be going out to all facilities and removing all vegetation within 5 feet and then following the guidance of the State Fire Code.

President Ploetz thanks the speakers for their information.

MOTION WAIVING READING IN FULL OF ALL RESOLUTIONS/ORDINANCES

MOTION BY DIRECTOR ELLIOTT, SECOND BY DIRECTOR MILLER, and CARRIED 4 AYES; 0 NOES; 1 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 4 AYES; 0 NOES; 1 ABSENT; 0 ABSTAIN to approve the consent calendar as submitted:

1. Board of Directors Minutes - APPROVE
 - a. Regular Meeting December 10, 2025
2. Payroll Register (Ratify)
 - a. Payroll paid on January 7, 2026 \$6,300.00
 - b. Payroll taxes paid on January 6, 2025 \$481.95
 - \$6,781.95
3. Accounts Payable (Approve)
 - a. Accounts Payable Check 4377 through 4381 paid January 21, 2026 \$1,291,822.92
 - b. Auto withdrawals(s) paid January December 8, 2025 – January 5, 2026 \$1,046.84
 - Total \$1,292,885.02
4. Receive and File (Information)
 - a. Financial Reports – Quarterly
 - i) FY26 Budget to Actual GF – December 31, 2025 (*unaudited*)
 - ii) FY26 Budget to Actual FMF – December 31, 2025 (*unaudited*)
 - iii) FY26 Combined Balance Sheet – December 31, 2025 (*unaudited*)
 - iv) Portfolio Summary Report – December 31, 2025
 - (1) Interest Rate Summary
 - b. Monthly Reports
 - i) Fire Chief
 - ii) Fire Marshal
 - iii) Effective Response Force Report – November 25
 - iv) Southern Operations Seasonal Weather Outlook – January – April 2026
 - v) Administrative Manager’s Report
 - vi) CSDA Annual Conference Summary – Director Elliott
 - vii) Correspondence
 - (1) Special District Advisory Committee Election Results

DISTRICT BUSINESS

1. After Action Report – Vegetation Management

Deputy Chief Davidson summarized the documents included with the meeting material. The prevention staff identified areas for improvement and how to streamline the process. They are reviewing the notices for clarity, and they will be starting the program earlier. The goal is to have the vegetation removed and/or abated

by the fall in which the Santa Ana winds are typical. He noted that with the new severity zones, the amount of lots that will need to be inspected is up to over 8,000 lots. He noted that for the 2025 year, only 25 lots were force abated, with 22 within the Vista Fire Protection District. He responded to questions from the board.

Director Miller acknowledged, as a long-time Vista Fire Protection District resident, this year's vegetation management efforts have been by far the best he has seen. He is very pleased with how much was accomplished this year.

2. Budget Authorization (Time Certain: 1:45 pm)

Chief Davidson introduced Kira Greco, Scott Chessman, and Chief Dave Winnacker of Xyloplan to review and demonstrate software developed to assist agencies with community risk reduction. Chief Davidson noted that while several companies can help predict fire behavior, he is not aware of any other company that has developed mathematical calculations capable of predicting fire transition from wildland to structures and from structure to structure. Chief Winnacker provided an overview of his fire service experience, noting that fuel mitigation is challenging and requires ongoing maintenance. He explained that asking residents to prepare by hardening their homes to achieve Zone 0 is even more difficult. When professionals understand the network effects—how topography, fuel, and weather align to form fast-moving fire pathways that can outpace suppression efforts—they can better prioritize mitigation and fire adaptation efforts and track progress over time.

Chief Winnacker demonstrated the software by showing how the Eaton Fire transitioned from a wildfire into an urban conflagration. He explained their approach, which focuses on identifying fire pathways by analyzing areas where topography, fuel, and weather combine in ways that can support rapid fire spread.

The ultimate goal, he explained, is to prepare the community and the built environment to receive fire through a combination of fuel breaks, defensible space, home hardening, and ember-resistant retrofits. These actions can be classified into a series of work units. Communities can be divided into work units aligned with available capacity for defensible space work, home hardening, inspections, and incentives. This allows agencies to develop prioritization results and evaluate how many homes would benefit from proposed treatments.

In several examples, Chief Winnacker demonstrated that while a relatively small number of homes may require the full suite of mitigation measures, a much larger number of homes benefit overall. This approach helps identify where mitigation provides a public benefit and where public funds can be most effectively invested. By identifying areas with numerous beneficiaries, agencies can make informed decisions about prioritizing wildfire resistance efforts.

The Xyloplan representatives responded to questions from the board.

At the conclusion of the presentation, staff requested that the Board of Directors authorize reimbursement to the City of Vista in the amount of \$29,875, representing a 50% cost share for a contract with Xylo Risk, Inc. (dba "XyloPlan") to conduct a Fire Pathways Vulnerability and Mitigation Prioritization Analysis. This analysis will evaluate and quantify wildfire risk within the Vista Fire Rescue response area. Additionally, staff requested that staff be authorized to reallocate the requested funds from the Vegetation Management

Rebate allocation (\$333,333) to establish a new budget line-item titled Vegetation Management Contracts. Staff responded to additional questions from the board.

MOTION BY DIRECTOR HILL, SECOND BY DIRECTOR ELLIOTT, and CARRIED 4 AYES; 0 NOES; 1 ABSENT; 0 ABSTAIN to approve staff' recommendation and approve the cost share in the amount of \$29,875 contingent upon the City of Vista participation; and authorize staff the ability to reallocate the requested funds from the Vegetation Management Rebate funding identified in the current FY26 budget and establish a new budget line item for this expenditure.

3. Community Town Hall

Staff announced that since a majority of the Board of Directors will attend the community presentation on January 22, 2026, it has been posted as a special meeting as staff will deliver a summary report on the 2025 vegetation management program starting at 10 am at The Havens Country Club. In addition, the staff and Board will recognize the district's first Firewise USA® community

4. Board Workshop

President Plötz notified the public that the Board of Directors will participate in a workshop to update the District's strategic plan with an emphasis on community risk reduction on February 4, 2026 in the Vista Conference Room located at 200 Civic Center Drive. Vista CA. As a special meeting the agenda will be posted no later than 24 hours prior to the meeting.

ORAL REPORT(S)

1. Fire Chief

In addition to his report, the following information was discussed:

- Chief Washington distributed the comment letter prepared by Fire Marshal Vierow to the County of San Diego referencing the 1050 Ora Avo proposed project noting the requirements to comply with the current standards. *The board requested that legal counsel make an inquiry with the County to determine the status of the project and report back at the next meeting.*
- He reported that the new completion date for fire station 3 is April 1, 2026.
- Chief Davidson discussed the sheriff's response report that was included with the meeting material.

2. Administrative Manager

In addition to her report, she added:

- Form 700 E-Filing: April 1, 2026: She reminded the board of the upcoming deadline. If you need assistance, please reach out for help.
- State Controller's Report – Confirmation of Filing: the required filing is complete.
- She reported that she authorized the emergency access road repair work. The quoted cost by Aztec is \$6,500 for the work. She is awaiting a report back on the timeline to complete the repairs.
- She distributed the proclamation as information that will be presented to the Vista Valley & The Havens Country Club on January 22nd.
- She will be out of office January 24 – 31, 2026.
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3. Legal

- No report.

4. Board of Directors

- No report.

Ten-minute recess

CLOSED SESSION

Pursuant to the following Government Code Sections, the Board of Directors convened in closed session from 3:30 – 3:44 pm:

1. CONFERENCE WITH REAL PROPERTY NEGOTIATIONS

Pursuant to Gov. Code Section 54956.8

Property: 200 Civic Center Dr., Vista, CA

Agency Negotiator: District Administrative Manager and District Counsel

Negotiating Parties: Vista Fire Protection District and City of Vista

Under Negotiation: Price and terms.

Attendees Present: all board members listed, Karlana Rannals, Administrative Manager, Christopher Cardinale, Legal Counsel

Upon reconvening, legal counsel reported that there was no reportable action on the topics listed.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEM(S)

No additional items were added to the list.

ADJOURNMENT

President Ploetz adjourned the meeting at 3:45 pm.


Karlana Rannals
Board Clerk


John Ploetz
President