



VISTA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Regular Board of Directors Meeting
Minutes – February 12, 2025

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.

SPECIAL AGENDA (10:00 AM – 12:00 PM)

Harassment Training (Workshop)

Pursuant to the requirements of AB1825 and AB 1661, the following local officials, and staff (those who receive compensation for their service or are eligible to have their expenses reimbursed) attended the required Harassment Training workshop presented by Christopher Cardinale, Alvarez-Glasman & Colvin:

Vista Fire Protection District

Director:

James Elliott
Robert Fougner
Read Miller
John Ploetz

Staff:

Karlena Rannals, Administrative Manager/Board Clerk

BUSINESS SESSION – REGULAR AGENDA

FLAG SALUTE

President Ploetz led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

CALL TO ORDER

President Ploetz called to order the regular meeting of the Vista Fire Protection District Board of Directors at 1:05 PM at the “Smart Space” conference room located at 450 South Melrose Drive, Vista CA.

A. Roll Call

Directors Present: Elliott, Fougner, Hill, Miller, Ploetz

Directors Absent: None

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

ORAL COMMUNICATION (PUBLIC COMMENT)

Daniel Gomez, Vista Valley Drive, Vista: provided an update on the FireSafe Council of Vista. They are revising the completion of projects planned and updating temporary refuge areas. A meeting is planned for March 21 and the council is adding new members.

Curt Thiele, Skyline Drive, Vista: seeking to appeal the districts ordinance requirements to trim the 60-foot palm trees. He distributed photos and spoke about the significant cost to remove the dead palm fronds. He was informed that the item was not on the agenda. The board requested that staff add to the March agenda and provide the property owner with a copy of the notice that the fire department tried to post to his property. He was also encouraged to coordinate with fire department personnel for additional information.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

A. Understanding the Metrics Provided in the Monthly Effective Response Force Report.

Division Chief Wecklich explained the metrics used to provide a detailed report, based upon the contract, which is 15-year-old data.

Director Fougner distributed documents for the board members to review as he asked the fire department staff questions. He noted that the reports distributed were long standing reports that they used to receive. He was reminded by Chief Wecklich that the department lost its capability to prepare the specific report since the individual employed by North County Dispatch left employment and they no longer have the expertise to prepare or distribute the specialized report. Director Fougner stated that his overarching concern is that the district citizens are treated the same as city citizens with increased response times. He is always looking at trends and learning as to what are the external dynamics affecting comparison.

Director Ploetz stated that response times are increasing, and everyone should understand why. There is increased traffic, traffic calming devices (speed humps, roundabouts), etc.

Chief Wecklich stated that the fire department uses the Standards of Cover as a lookback for five years, which provides the fire department with a clear picture and direction for the department.

At the conclusion of the discussion, it was recommended that a separate workshop is scheduled to determine exactly what the Board of Directors is seeking, and a report that all can agree on.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION BY DIRECTOR ELLIOTT, SECOND BY DIRECTOR MILLER, CARRIED 5 AYES; 0 NOES; 0 ABSENT; 0 ABSTAIN to approve the consent calendar, calendar with the removal of 2.d.i(1) FY25 Budget to Actual GF – December 31, 2024:

- 1. Board of Directors Minutes (Approve)
 - a. Minutes (Special Meeting) January 15, 2025
 - b. Minutes (Regular Meeting) January 15, 2025
- 2. Payroll Register (Approve)
 - a. Payroll paid on February 7, 2025 \$5,000.00
 - b. Payroll taxes paid on January 7, 2005 382.50
 - \$5,382.50**
- 3. Accounts Payable (Approve)
 - a. Accounts Payable Check 4269 thru 4278 to be paid February 12, 2025 \$596,802.98
 - b. Auto withdrawals(s) paid January 10 – February 7, 2025 \$1,088.77
 - Total \$597,891.75**
- 4. Receive and File (Information)
 - a. Financial Reports
 - i. FY25 Budget to Actual GF – December 31, 2024
 - ii. FY25 Budget to Actual FMF – December 31, 2024

- iii. FY25 Combined Balance Sheet – December 31, 2024
- iv. Portfolio Summary Report – December 31, 2024
 - 1. Interest Rate Summary
- b. Monthly Reports
 - i. Fire Chief
 - ii. Fire Marshal
 - iii. District Inspector
 - iv. Effective Response Force Report – December 24
 - v. Southern Operations Seasonal Weather Outlook – December 2024 – March 2025
 - vi. Administrative Manager’s Report
 - vii. Correspondence
 - 1. Incoming
 - None
 - 2. Outgoing
 - Supervisor Jim Desmond, 5th District, San Diego County Board of Supervisors

Director Miller asked the Administrative Manager to speak about the financial report published in the consent calendar on the budget status of the district. She responded that the District’s estimated revenue over expenses for six months exceeds \$330,000. The investments are doing better than budgeted, and she does not anticipate any notable change for the next six months. She responded to questions from the board.

MOTION BY DIRECTOR MILLER, SECOND BY DIRECTOR HILL, CARRIED 5 AYES; 0 NOES; 0 ABSENT; 0 ABSTAIN to accept the balance of the consent calendar as published.

DISTRICT BUSINESS

A. *Financial Audit Services*

The Administrative Manager summarized her staff report noting that the firm the board selected for the last five years had provided her with a cost to continue the audit services. The estimate from the current firm was expected to increase 79% in the first year, with a 3% adjustment for each subsequent year. The proposed increase represents several factors including increased insurance, professional service fees, specialized software, and people. She did reach out to other fire districts for their fees, and the fees quoted were higher, noting that the size of the budget did not matter, it was the complexity of the audit required. The options were to authorize a contract extension, or request that staff distribute an RFP.

The board members concluded that based upon the significant planned increase, they requested that staff distribute an RFP for audit services.

B. *Buena Creek Fuels Management*

Chiefs’ Washington and Davidson provided an update on the status of the grant application. Staff discussed expanding the scope of the project to include building a program for fuels management, establishing “hand crews” in partnership with the City of Oceanside. There are several strategies that they are discussing, in addition to collaborating with Supervisor Desmond’s office to obtain seed money to establish a pilot program. The workshop planned for February 27 will discuss in greater detail the need to enact an aggressive

ordinance that would include photo enforcement. The goal is to apply for a broader grant, working in partnership with other agencies, and show a greater amount of fuel reduction. The City of Vista will remain the lead agency and intends to submit the grant application by the deadline February 28, 2025.

C. Board of Directors Meeting – April 9, 2025

Ms. Rannals reported that a scheduling conflict exists for her and one board member for the April 9 Board of Directors meeting and requested consideration of moving it one week. She informally polled the board members and with a potential remote option, all members were willing to adjust their calendars.

MOTION BY DIRECTOR PLOETZ, SECOND BY DIRECTOR MILLER, CARRIED 5 AYES; 0 NOES; 0 ABSENT; 0 ABSTAIN to reschedule the April 9, 2025 Board of Directors meeting to April 16, 2025, at the same time, 1pm and same location.

10-minute recess

ORAL REPORT(S)

- a. *Fire Chief:* No additional information to report.
- b. *Deputy Chief – Administration:*
 - 1. A resident residing off Ora Avo Dr. in the County / VFPD has a concern along with many of the residents on that street about parking and could the fire department consider requiring this road to have “no parking” posted at least on one side of the street if not both. They have also submitted complaints to the Board of Supervisors. He reported that this is a law enforcement matter, and the fire department does not have the ability to place laws about parking on the public roads.
- c. *Administrative Manager:*
 - 1. A reminder that the board workshop for vegetation management is scheduled for February 27, 2025 at 1pm.
- d. *Legal Counsel:*
 - 1. He confirmed that there was no action taken on the request to appeal from the owner on Skyline Drive, Vista.
 - 2. He has been having discussions with the ad hoc committee on the board policies and procedures and hopes to have the matter for discussion at the March meeting.
- e. *Board of Directors:*
 - 1. Elliott: *conveyed* his appreciation for the April board meeting adjustment.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEM(S)


None proposed.

CLOSED SESSION

Pursuant to Gov. Code Section 54956.9 (d) (4) the board convened in closed session from 3:08 – 3:38 pm to conference with legal counsel on anticipated litigation. Upon reconvening, the legal counsel announced that there was no reportable action resulting from closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

President Ploetz adjourned the meeting at 3:39 pm.



Karlena Rannals
Board Clerk



John Ploetz
President