



**VISTA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
Board of Directors Special Meeting  
Minutes – April 10, 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 – AGENDA**

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Ploetz called to order the regular meeting of the Vista Fire Protection District Board of Directors at 11:30 AM at the “Smart Space” conference room located at 450 S. Melrose Dr., Vista CA.

a. Roll Call

Directors Present: Elliott, Hill, Miller, Ploetz,

Directors Absent: None

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

**FLAG SALUTE**

Director Elliott led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ORAL COMMUNICATION (PUBLIC COMMENT)**

No one requested to speak to the board.

**MOTION WAIVING READING IN FULL OF ALL RESOLUTIONS/ORDINANCES**

MOTION BY DIRECTOR ELLIOTT, SECOND BY DIRECTOR HILL, and CARRIED 4 AYES; 0 NOES; 0 ABSENT; 0 ABSTAIN to waive reading in full of all resolutions and/or ordinances.

**DISTRICT BUSINESS**

1. Board Vacancy

Ms. Rannals summarized the staff report. She reminded board members that at their last meeting, the Board adopted a resolution establishing procedures for filling a vacancy by appointment. The matter before the Board today was to determine whether to fill the vacancy by appointment or to conduct a special election. Should the Board elect to proceed by appointment, a special meeting would be required to conduct candidate interviews. Staff responded to questions from the board.

MOTION BY DIRECTOR MILLER, SECOND BY DIRECTOR ELLIOTT, to proceed with appointing a qualified individual to fill the vacant seat and to schedule a special meeting for May 13, 2026, beginning at 1:00 p.m., with the start time of the regular meeting adjusted accordingly to accommodate the appointment process, on the following roll call vote:

AYES: Elliott, Hill, Miller, Ploetz

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

## 2. Workforce Development Update

Chief Washington presented the staff report regarding a proposed partnership with the City of Vista for a Workforce Development Program. The City of Vista, in collaboration with Vista Unified School District, was awarded a one-year grant of \$208,480 from the San Diego Workforce Partnership to establish a Vegetation Management Crew Training Program. This pilot program will enroll 15 participants, provide 200 hours of paid training, and prepare financially disadvantaged and underrepresented high school senior students for careers in fire service and emergency medical services.

The City of Vista requested that the District serve as a funding partner, committing \$200,000 over eight months (May – December 2026) to fund 75% of the participant stipend costs, reflecting the direct benefit to the District from vegetation management work performed within the District. The fiscal impact is estimated at \$30,000 in FY 2025–26 and \$170,000 in FY 2026–27, for a total not to exceed \$200,000. A formal funding reimbursement agreement would be drawn up between the two agencies.

Staff recommended that the Board approve the District's participation in the program, approve the cost-sharing commitment, and authorize staff to negotiate and execute a funding reimbursement agreement with the City of Vista.

Each board member had the opportunity to ask questions of staff regarding the pilot program. At the conclusion of the discussion the board members expressed their support of the program, with the ultimate goal to create a safer community by removing vegetation.

MOTION BY DIRECTOR MILLER, SECOND BY DIRECTOR ELLIOTT approve and/or authorize the following on a roll call vote:

1. Approve Vista Fire Protection District in partnership with the City of Vista for a Workforce Development Program;
2. Approve cost-sharing workforce development grant program committing funding up to \$200,000 for a period of May – December 2026 to fund the stipends for the Workforce Development participants for vegetation management work performed;
3. Authorize staff to negotiate and execute a funding reimbursement agreement with the City of Vista, with all documentation required for auditing purposes.

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

**CLOSED SESSION**

Pursuant to the following Government Code Sections, the Board of Directors convened in closed session from 12:35 – 12:45 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, Karlene Rannals, Administrative Manager, Christopher Cardinale, Legal Counsel and Gerard Washington, Fire Chief*

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

President Ploetz adjourned the meeting at 12:46 pm.

  
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Karlene Rannals  
Board Clerk

  
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John Ploetz  
President