**VISTA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**
**Board of Directors Meeting**
**Minutes – August 12, 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 1:08 PM at the "Smart Space" conference room located at 450 S. Melrose Dr., Vista CA.

a. Roll Call

| | |
|---|---|
| Directors Present: | Elliott, Hill, Miller, Ploetz |
| Director's Absent: | None |
| Staff Present: | Karlena Rannals, Administrative Manager; Gerard Washington, Fire Chief; and Chris Cardinale, Legal Counsel |

**FLAG SALUTE**

Director Hill led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ORAL COMMUNICATION (PUBLIC COMMENT)**

Mr. Jose Torre-Bueno, a candidate for Division B in the November election introduced himself as a longtime Vista resident with approximately 20 years in the community. He has a strong technical and environmental background, including 10 years as technical director of a solar energy company and the past five years leading a nonprofit organization that promotes green energy. He holds a Ph.D. and was originally trained as a physiologist specializing in animal energy, experience that he noted has translated well into his work with building energy and solar technology.

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

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

1. Board of Directors Minutes – APPROVE
   a. Regular Meeting July 8, 2026
   b. Special Meeting July 17, 2026
2. Payroll Register (Ratify)
   a. Payroll paid on August 7, 2026 $6,250.00
   $478.13
   $6,728.13

3. Accounts Payable (Ratify)
   a. Accounts Payable Check 4442 through 4452 paid August 12, 2026 $148,929.04
   b. Auto withdrawals(s) paid July 7 – August 10, 2026 $1,158.77
   Total $150,087.81
4. Receive and File (Information)
   a. Financial Reports – Quarterly
      i) FY26 Budget to Actual GF – June 30, 2026 (unaudited)
      ii) FY26 Budget to Actual FMF – June 30, 2026 (unaudited)
      iii) FY26 Combined Balance Sheet – June 30, 2026 (unaudited)
      iv) Portfolio Summary Report – June 30, 2026
      v) Interest Rate Summary
      vi) FY27 Assessed Valuation History
      vii) FY26 Fire Mitigation Annual Report
   b. Monthly Reports
      i) Fire Chief
      ii) Fire Marshal
      iii) Workforce Program Superintendent
      iv) Effective Response Force Report – June 26
      v) Southern Operations Seasonal Weather Outlook – August– November 2026
      vi) Administrative Manager's Report
      vii) Correspondence

**DISTRICT BUSINESS**

1. Resolution No. 2026-09-Vista Fire Protection District Conflict of Interest Code

Staff summarized the staff report. The State requires a biennial review, and because of a change in State law, the District's Conflict of Interest Code requires an amendment. Staff explained that the change is required because the Administrative Manager manages public investments and must therefore file the required Form 700 directly with the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC), rather than with the County of San Diego. This is the only substantive change to the Code, and the District remains within the required compliance timeline of completing the review by September 1.

MOTION BY DIRECTOR ELLIOTT, SECOND BY DIRECTOR MILLER, and ADOPTED Resolution 2026-09 list *entitled* A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Vista Fire Protection District Amending the Fair Political Practices Commission's Standard Conflict of Interest Code and Candidate Disclosure Statement and Repealing Board Action On August 14, 2024 on the following roll call vote:

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

2. Resolution No. 2026-10

Staff informed the Board that this routine resolution is necessary to change the location of its regular meetings beginning September 1. Future meetings will be held at City Hall for the City of Vista rather than the current meeting location. Staff indicated that meetings will most likely be held in the Vista Room,

adjacent to the City Council Chambers, although the specific room had not yet been finalized. The purpose of the resolution is to formally notify the public of the change in the Board's meeting location.

MOTION BY DIRECTOR HILL, SECOND BY DIRECTOR MILLER, and ADOPTED Resolution 2026-10 *entitled* A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Vista Fire Protection District Reestablishing Time and Place of Regular Meetings, Holiday, and Emergencies on the following roll call vote:

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

3. Request for Proposal (RFP) for On-Call Grant Research, Writing and Management Services

Staff summarized the staff report provided. Staff proposed the issuance of an RFP to establish a pool of on-call consultants for grant research, writing, and management services. The proposed arrangement would not obligate the District to retain or compensate a consultant unless a specific grant opportunity is identified and a scope of work is authorized. There would be no retainer or guaranteed compensation.

Staff explained that the purpose is to give the District timely access to professional grant-writing expertise, particularly for opportunities for which the Fire District may be eligible, but the City is not. Grant opportunities would continue to be screened internally by District and City staff to determine eligibility, strategic value, matching requirements, implementation capacity, and likelihood of success before being referred to an on-call consultant.

The Board emphasized the importance of being selective about which grants to pursue. Members discussed evaluating the cost of preparing an application, the probability of success, potential matching requirements, and any long-term financial or operational commitments. Staff noted that grants involving a required match or other significant commitments would be returned to the Board for approval in accordance with the District's existing grant application policy.

The on-call arrangement is intended to eliminate the need to conduct separate procurement each time a grant opportunity arises, which is particularly important when application deadlines are short. Once consultants and their rates are approved, staff could quickly obtain assistance within existing authority, while matters involving significant financial or long-term obligations would still come before the Board.

Board members also discussed the potential conflict inherent in having grant writers evaluate opportunities they may later be paid to pursue. Staff and legal counsel indicated that internal screening, oversight by District staff, the possible selection of multiple on-call firms, review of prior success rates, and reference checks would provide safeguards.

Staff reported that the RFP will be posted on the District's website and distributed statewide through the California Special Districts Association RFP network. Board members expressed strong support for the proposal, describing it as a proactive tool to expand access to grant funding, particularly for fire prevention and other District initiatives.

MOTION BY DIRECTOR ELLIOTT, SECOND BY DIRECTOR HILL, CARRIED 4 AYES; 0 NOES; 0 ABSENT; 0 ABSTAIN to the accept staff recommendation and authorize the distribution of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for On-Call Grant Research, Writing and Management Services to qualified consulting firms.

4. Board of Directors Meeting – October 14, 2026

President Ploetz requested consideration to reschedule the regular meeting for October 14 due to his inability to attend.

MOTION BY DIRECTOR ELLIOTT, SECOND BY DIRECTOR HILL, CARRIED 4 AYES; 0 NOES; 0 ABSENT; 0 ABSTAIN to the change the meeting from October 14 to October 21 starting at 2pm. Staff will update the calendar accordingly on the website.

**ORAL REPORT(S)**

1. *Fire Chief*

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

   - The Fire Chief provided an update on several organizational and operational initiatives. He reported that the department's administrative reorganization is progressing, including the creation of a Fire Administrative Manager position, the addition of an account clerk and part-time communications specialist, and the restructuring of command staff to include two Deputy Chiefs—one overseeing Training/EMS and one overseeing Operations. The reorganization is largely a reclassification of existing positions rather than an increase in staffing. He noted that the recruitment for the Assistant Fire Marshal position is also underway.
   - The Chief also reported that the Pathway Pilot Program is progressing successfully with 13 participants. Participants are receiving first responder, CPR, first aid, and other fire-service-related training, with support from department subject matter experts and the California Conservation Corps (CCC). The program is intended to provide workforce development opportunities and may be expanded in future years.
   - The Board and Chief discussed the value of partnerships among the District, City, CCC, school district, Public Works, and other agencies in advancing vegetation and fuel management projects. The Chief emphasized that the collaborative approach is producing measurable results and attracting interest from neighboring jurisdictions.
   - An update was also provided on the XyloPlan wildfire risk assessment initiative. The Chief described the program as potentially transformative for the District because it can demonstrate how home hardening and fuel management improvements affect community-wide wildfire risk. He plans to use the information in future community town halls and believes the District's programs can become a regional model for wildfire prevention and risk reduction.
   - The Board briefly discussed community outreach, including the SDG&E Wildfire Safety Fair, and emphasized the importance of continued public education regarding wildfire preparedness. Members expressed support for the Department's proactive approach and collaborative efforts.
   - Additional discussion addressed several properties identified as potential vegetation management concerns. Staff confirmed that the property information had recently been updated and would be reviewed for possible action. The Board also requested an update on the District's weed abatement program. The Chief indicated that properties have been inspected and staff are following up on outstanding concerns, with an expectation that public inquiries will receive a response within 48 hours.

2. *Administrative Manager*
   In addition to her report, she added:
   - 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.
   - She updated the candidate filings for Divisions B, D and E, noting that only one candidate filed for each division. Therefore, all candidates will be appointed by the Board of Supervisors and sworn at the December meeting.
   - She informed the board that she has started the noticing requirements for the vacancy in Division B. The letters of interest will be received until September 2, and the candidates will be interviewed for appointment at the September 9 board meeting.
3. Legal
   - He reported that he may have a conflict in attending the October meeting, as he is committed to a 3-week trial. He will keep the manager informed.
4. Board of Directors
   - None.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEM(s)**

No additional items were added to the list.

President Ploetz adjourned the meeting at 2:13 pm.

Karlena Rannals
Board Clerk

John Ploetz
President