



South Coast Fire Protection District

P.O. Box 334 Gualala, California 95445 (707)884-4700

Minutes from the Special Meeting on May 20, 2021
Location: 39215 Church Street, Gualala, California

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by Pete Slunaker.

2. Roll Call

Present: Chair, Pete Slunaker; Directors Kevin Callanan, Rick O’Neil, Flavia de Oliveira
Absent: Chuckie Sorensen

3. Public Expression – 3-minute limit

Gregg Warner shared his appreciation for the SCF Board, and support for his son Jason Warner. On behalf of the board, Pete Slunaker gave his thanks to Gregg for his excellent service and dedication to the Gualala community.

Several members of the fire department were present to show their support for Jason and demonstrate their appreciation for Gregg’s years of leadership.

4. Financial Report

Maureen said that we purchased and installed Quickbooks bookkeeping software for the District. We had previously been using Quickbooks purchased by our former bookkeeper Jane Kelley. She said that if we establish our district as a non-profit the amount we would have to pay for Quickbooks would be reduced.

She also said that the district had received additional tax revenue from an unfamiliar source—the Teeter Tax. The amount the district received was \$155,606.

5. Announcements

None.

6. Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting

Kevin Callanan motioned to approve the minutes from the last meeting. Rick O’Neil seconded the motion. All approved, the motion passed.

7. New Business – Preliminary Budget Approval, Appointment of Chief, Jet Ski Purchase, Chief’s Pay, Strategic Planning

Kevin requested that we move the appointment of Fire Chief to the first order of business. Pete Slunaker agreed. Pete Slunaker announced that only one application had been received during the application period; and he requested a motion to appoint Jason Warner as the new Fire Chief for South Coast FPD.

Rick O’Neil motioned to appoint Jason Warner as South Coast Fire District’s new Fire Chief. Flavia de Oliveira seconded the motion. All approved. The motion passed.

Jason was welcomed as the new Fire Chief by the attending members of the fire department and all the board members.

The second jet ski that we bought, used, from Mendocino is becoming unreliable and is running at half power. Jason has found a potential buyer for it, and suggested that we replace it. Jason said that a new jet ski would be hard to get right now, there is a strong demand for this equipment and shortages in supply. He said we could finance it through a dealer and put one on order.

Flavia motioned to approve purchase of a new jet ski. Kevin seconded the motion. All approved. The motion passed.

Pete proposed that we examine raising the Chief's salary. Or, perhaps paying some of the other officers or volunteers through the stipend program to take on some of the responsibilities and tasks that the Chief has been doing up until this time. Jason said that he would like a combination of both proposals. Kevin asked Jason if he knew what our neighboring departments were paying their Chief. Pete proposed that the salary be raised to \$60,000 a year for a period of one year. At the end of the period the board would revisit the Chief's salary and see if any adjustments needed to be made. Kevin also proposed that we look into health benefits. Jason said that he appreciated those proposals and he would see what his hourly commitment was and if the stipend program was relieving him of some of his duties. Flavia suggested that we revisit the salary issue in six months rather than a year. Jason will have Chris look into health benefits for him.

8. Old Business—

Jason presented some of the changes he has made in the budget categories. He separated out the income coming from State for strike team participation so that it would not be counted on in the budget calculations for our operations. In the current budget, he said that we were running \$39,000 over budget. He would like to put more money in our building upgrade categories. He also said that we do not have enough funds in our reserve account and would like to see us contribute 7 to 12 percent to our reserves. He mentioned several funding sources, the newly approved TOT tax, and the County is working on capturing some of the cannabis taxes.

Jason also mentioned that the district has the ability to raise the special taxes without having to put it up for a vote. The wording of the original tax measure provided the ability to raise the tax up to a certain limit, and the district has not hit that cap. Pete opened it up for discussion. Flavia did not like the idea of raising the tax by \$25 per unit, though it was unclear about how many units the district has and how much it would increase our revenue. Also, the tax would not have to be raised to the maximum amount (\$25). Other members were supportive of the tax increase to cover the district's operations and extensive facility repairs. Pete and Kevin also mentioned that the district should open up a line of credit to cover payroll expenses while the district is waiting for reimbursement from the State. Pete suggested that we have a special meeting on the last Thursday in June to discuss our options for funding resources to meet our budget needs.

Kevin Callanan motioned that we have a special meeting in June to discuss funding options and possibly raising the special tax. Flavia de Oliveira seconded the motion. All approved. The motion passed.

Kevin announced that the third Thursday in June would be June 17th, and the meeting would take place on that date.

9. Chief's Report

- Covid-19 vaccines have been going well at the Station 1. The fire department has been involved in helping RCMS staff with their mobile vaccine clinics.
- Calfire has made changes to their assistance by hire agreement, they used to start paying for volunteer participation after 4 hours of service. This year they are changing it to over 12 hours.

- The knox box system program is moving forward. Jason asked the board what they thought of requiring new businesses to participate in the knox box system. It's a one-time charge of \$280.00. Kevin asked about requiring current businesses to participate. Jason said that introducing it to the current business owners could be folded in with the fire inspection program that he is initiating.
- Jason has started a pilot stipend program. The pay will be \$100 for an 8-hour shift. The participant will be responsible for rig checks, station duties, and other assignments. He has three people lined up for it so far.
- The water tank grant is still moving forward. It must be completed by October 1st. The tanks will be coming in and be distributed throughout the portions of the district without fire hydrants.
- Jason says volunteer numbers and morale are good. He says we currently have 41 volunteers.
- Jason said he is concerned about this fire season. Calfire is saying that the last two years have been the driest consecutive years on record for the last 50 years.

Sheriff Kendall has been working on evacuation zones for the coastal residents. Jason said he also wants to work on a contingency plan for storing fuel at one of the stations in case the two gas stations in town run out of diesel. Both the stations ran out of diesel during the influx of evacuees from fires inland. The money in the fuel budget could cover those costs.

10. Closed Session

None.

11. Open Session after Closed Session

None.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20pm, next regular meeting is on July 15, 2021.