



Long Valley Fire Protection District
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MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
February 12th, 2025

Date: Wednesday, February 12th, 2025

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: 3605 Crowley Lake Drive, Crowley Lake, CA 93546

Members Present: Lorinda Beatty, Ron Day, Kim Czeschin, Dan Gordon, David Melchior

Members Absent: none

Others Present: Fire Chief Scott McGuire, Division Chief Fred Stump, Secretary Kathryn Durgin (via Google Meet), Billy Czeschin, Karen Scholl, Becky Davis, Scott Winghartlein, John Millane, Keith McCue, Hap Hazard

Others Absent: None

1. Call to order, roll call, Pledge of Allegiance, and announcements. The meeting was called to order at 7:03pm. Commissioner Melchior led all in attendance to the Pledge of Allegiance. No announcements were made.
2. Opportunity for the public to address the Board on items of interest to the public that are not agendized and within the jurisdiction of the Board. No public comments were made.
3. Report and provide direction on the progress of the Sunny Slopes Station 2 project. Commissioner Beatty opened the discussion with staff reports followed by public comment.

Staff Reports:

Chief McGuire provided a financial update on the Sunny Slopes Station 2 project, reporting that Mono County Administrative Officer Sandra Moberly and District Supervisor Rhonda Duggan recently traveled to Washington, D.C. to seek federal appropriations funding. He explained that the Senate typically funds projects between \$500,000 and \$1.5 million, with a preferred amount around \$1 million. However, he shared that given the high cost of the Sunny Slopes Station 2 project, securing Senate funding seems unlikely. He noted that Congressman Kevin Kiley's office, which funds

up to 15 projects annually, also has budgetary constraints, making it difficult to obtain the necessary funding. Chief McGuire shared that the project's cost and feasibility need to be discussed further, and that a Mono County consultant will be assisting with further appropriation funding efforts.

Chief McGuire has reached out to the Southern Inyo Fire District, which received federal funding for its station, to explore using the same contractor. He aims to compare the costs of constructing a similar station in Mono County, using the findings to justify the higher costs in Mono County and strengthen the case for securing funding. Chief McGuire also shared that Mono County is reaching out to the Department of Water and Power (DWP) for letters of support in obtaining funding for the project. Given the approaching appropriations deadlines, he emphasized the need for a well-defined funding request.

Providing a progress update, Chief McGuire reported that the R.O. Anderson site plan has been completed. He distributed the updated plans at the meeting, and he requested direction from the Board on whether to proceed with the existing plan and budget, redesign the project to reduce costs, or consider a prefabricated metal building.

Division Chief Fred Stump reported that the primary objective has been to secure entitlements for the building of the station. He believes the current site plan is sufficient to begin the county entitlement process but acknowledged that adjustments may be needed. He explained that redesigning the project before securing entitlements would lead to further delays since modifications can be made at the time of the building permit. He shared that at this point the Board needs to consider whether to borrow funds, use existing reserves, or scale back the project to meet financial limitations. Fred emphasized that the community has always been aware of the project's funding challenges and reassured the public that the department has been diligent in pushing forward despite difficulties and extensive documentation requirements. He shared that once entitlements are secured, the department can proceed with obtaining a building permit without repeating prior administrative work.

The Board discussed the information presented. Commissioner Day reiterated that the original goal was to complete the entitlement process. He recommended proceeding with the current design to secure entitlements, as modifications could be made later. He supported continuing with the existing plans to ensure the project remains on track. A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER DAY TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE SITE PLANS AS PRESENTED. Commissioner Beatty confirmed that the motion stood and opened the floor for Board and public discussion.

Commissioner Beatty reminded the Board that an ad hoc committee was formed in early 2024 to oversee the project. She stated that the committee should remain involved in project discussions and suggested increasing their reporting frequency from quarterly to monthly. The Board and committee discussed the extent of the committee's involvement, with committee members expressing a preference for participating in final design and funding decisions rather than every minor detail of the project's development.

Public Comment:

Several Sunny Slopes community members provided input on the Sunny Slopes Station 2 project. Sunny Slopes community member Hap Hazard expressed concerns about the updated site plan, questioning the necessity of features such as retaining walls and details on the leach field. Chief McGuire clarified that these elements were included by R.O. Anderson as part of the preliminary site plan. Hap emphasized that the original station plans, previously discussed with the community, had support but believed the latest version deviates from those initial discussions. He shared that the latest updated plans should have been reviewed by the ad hoc committee before being presented to the Board and recommended returning the project to the committee for further discussion. He also noted that funding is often uncertain but can sometimes become available unexpectedly, as seen in past projects like the Mammoth library. He advocated for a simpler structure that meets essential needs and is more likely to receive community support.

Sunny Slopes community member Karen Scholl reiterated that the priority is to move forward with submitting the site plan to the county in order to obtain the entitlement, allowing adjustments to be made later. She acknowledged the difficulty in securing grants and funding given the current political climate but stressed that getting an official plan submitted to the county will be beneficial so that they have something to evaluate and begin the process of entitlements as the department continues to pursue funding opportunities. She emphasized that the community's primary goal is to have a fire station, regardless of its complexity. She also commended the department for its dedication to the project.

Sunny Slopes community member Keith McCue agreed that the community needs a fire station and raised concerns about the project's costs, particularly the necessity of the retaining wall and retention pond. Division Chief Fred Stump explained that these features were added by engineers due to the slope of the lot. He clarified that, aside from the removal of the drive-thru bay, the building remains consistent with previous plans. However, he acknowledged that rising costs may make the current design impractical and suggested modifications may need to be made later.

Sunny Slopes community member John Millane raised environmental concerns, specifically regarding potential contamination from engine maintenance runoff affecting the aquifer. Sunny Slopes community member Scott Winghartlein, who owns adjacent lots, sought clarification on road easements. Fred Stump confirmed that Crowley Lake Dam Road has a recorded county easement and offered to provide documentation.

Sunny Slopes community member Becky Davis thanked the Board and staff for their hard work, appreciating the open discussion and the Board's willingness to address community concerns. Other community members also expressed gratitude for the Board's efforts. Karen Scholl added that Mono County is experiencing increased scrutiny over land use regulations, making it critical for the department to follow the most efficient path toward project approval.

Hap Hazard reiterated concerns that submitting the site plans to the county as currently designed could trigger additional environmental studies and regulatory requirements, increasing costs and causing delays. Chief McGuire clarified that an engineered site plan is required to move forward to obtain a conditional-use permit. He noted that the community had previously approved the building design for this lot, and the plans presented reflect that input. If a redesign is necessary, it would result in further delays as a new engineer and site plan would be required. Hap maintained that these details should have been reviewed by the ad hoc committee before Board action, stressing that the more elements included in the site plan, the greater the potential for costly environmental studies and permitting challenges.

Board Discussion:

Commissioner Czeschin asked Division Chief Fred Stump to explain the necessary steps to advance the project. Fred Stump clarified that in order for the county to consider allowing a fire station on the parcel, the department must submit an engineered site plan. Fred shared that although Long Valley Fire owns the parcel, zoning regulations do not currently permit a fire station on the property. He explained that the first requirement was addressing the Birchim Community Services District's expansion, which the department has already completed. Next, he shared that the department must submit utility easements, an engineered site plan, and supporting documentation to the county. He further explained that once received, the county will review the submission and determine the necessary level of environmental documentation. Once the environmental process is complete, the project can be placed on the planning commission agenda for entitlement approval. Fred emphasized that the ad hoc committee should explore potential design modifications to reduce costs.

Commissioner Gordon stated that the engineered site plan as presented meets submission requirements and does not allow for negotiation. Commissioners Melchior, Commissioner Day, and Commissioner Beatty concurred, with Commissioner Beatty clarifying that this is not the final plan but a necessary step to begin the approval process. She noted that the county may reduce the project's scope but it will not be expanded upon. A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER DAY, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MELCHIOR, TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE SITE PLANS AS PRESENTED. Motion passed 5-0.

Chief McGuire explained that an appropriations request can be submitted to Congressman Kiley without a conditional-use permit, though funding would not be received until the permit is secured. He noted that given the annual appropriations cycle, delaying a funding request could set the project back another year. Chief McGuire asked whether the Board wanted to proceed with the existing design or consider alternative designs due to budget concerns. He proposed researching the Southern Inyo Fire District's construction process, as their federally funded station could provide a lower-cost design model. Stump agreed that researching Southern Inyo's model could provide valuable cost-saving options. The Board supported exploring alternative designs.

Commissioner Beatty asked for community input on a prefabricated metal building for the station. Karen Scholl suggested that the ad hoc committee review prefabricated metal building options, emphasizing the need for a structure that can store water without freezing. While aesthetics are a concern, she believed this could be discussed further. Keith McCue echoed the concern about water storage and noted that modern prefabricated metal buildings are both visually appealing and cost-effective, which could improve the project's feasibility. He believed that most community members would support this approach. Hap Hazard noted that the ad hoc committee had already discussed the option of a metal building with wood siding. Commissioner Beatty concluded that it would be beneficial to revisit these design options to make sure everybody agrees. A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER GORDON, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CZESCHIN, TO DIRECT THE FIRE CHIEF TO PURSUE REDESIGN OF SOME ASPECTS OF THE STATION 2 BUILDING TO EXPLORE COSTS. Motion passed 5-0.

4. Approval of the Minutes of the January 8th, 2024 Regular Meeting. A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER DAY, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MELCHIOR, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 8TH, 2024 REGULAR MEETING. Motion passed 5-0.
5. Chief's Report.
 - A. Volunteer Report. Chief McGuire reported to the Board that the department's volunteer count has decreased to 23 firefighters. Despite this, he stated that call volume has increased by approximately 30% compared to the previous year. Over the past 12 months, the department has responded to 143 calls, with 16 calls recorded so far this year. He noted that volunteer response per call is averaging 8.25 firefighters, emphasizing that while the total number of volunteers has declined, the consistency of volunteer response has improved. Chief McGuire informed the Board that one former junior firefighter has now become an active volunteer at age 16 and that two additional junior firefighters have been regularly attending training and demonstrating strong dedication. He stated that current volunteer training efforts are focused on Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) courses, which will continue through the end of March.
 - B. Report on Current Fire Department Activities, Assignments, and Schedule for potential Board direction. Chief McGuire reported that on Monday, he attended a Mono County Chiefs Association meeting in Lee Vining, where Captain Soibian Spring presented an airport expansion plan. He stated that the Town of Mammoth Lakes manager has directed the airport to expand its offerings, including the potential development of a regional training center. This center may feature a helicopter base and a 100-person classroom to accommodate training for multiple agencies.

Chief McGuire informed the Board that representatives from CalFire attended the meeting and discussed recent changes in the State Responsibility Area (SRA) and response jurisdiction negotiations. He reported that the Forest Service will no longer

be staffing its stations in Rock Creek, June Lake, or Mammoth, with only the Bishop and Crestview stations remaining staffed.

Chief McGuire also shared that CalFire has a temporary defensible space investigator, who is currently working in Inyo County and is scheduled to begin investigations in the Crowley area in April. He explained that as a CalFire investigator, she has the authority to enter private property, take photographs, and document defensible space violations.

Chief McGuire reported that he and Secretary Durgin have been working on organizing the department's OneDrive and Google Drive. He stated that they have discussed the possibility of Secretary Durgin coming to the station this summer to begin inventorying paper records as part of an effort to digitize department documents. Lastly, Chief McGuire reported that the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) has been submitted. However, he noted that Lexipol indicated uncertainty about whether federal grants under the AFG program will be fulfilled.

C. Long-Range Planning Discussion.

a) Personnel. No news.

b) Airport. Chief McGuire reported on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Airport and the Town of Mammoth Lakes, sharing that the MOU is complete and has been signed. Chief McGuire has a meeting at the airport next Monday to begin reviewing the inspection plans now that the MOU is in place.

c) Geothermal. No news.

d) Station Maintenance. Chief McGuire shared that the department website has been updated to be ADA compliant.

e) Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance. Chief McGuire reported that Equipment Manager Billy Czeschin was able to fix the compressor.

f) County and Community Updates. Chief McGuire stated that behavioral health is a county-wide challenge and reported that a proposal has been made for Mono County Behavioral Health to provide iPads to each fire district. He explained that in the event of a behavioral health emergency, the iPad would allow the patient to connect remotely with a representative from Mono County Behavioral Health for immediate assistance.

6. Board review/approval of payment warrants since the last meeting. A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER DAY, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER GORDON TO APPROVE PAYMENT WARRANTS SINCE LAST REGULAR BOARD MEETING. Motion passed 5-0.

7. Discussion and possible action concerning the dedication of a portion of Highway 395 to former Captain Vidar Anderson. Division Chief Fred Stump provided an update on the dedication, stating that State Senator Alvarado-Gil's office has rescheduled the planned phone interview to February 19th. He noted that he expects both Rick Turner and Supervisor Duggan to be interviewed as well. Fred hopes that there will still be enough time to get the legislation done this year to create the dedication.
8. Discussion and action on refurbishment of the Memorial Garden. Chief McGuire reported that there is no news and that he is still waiting for sketches from Delfino Leguna.
9. Board Secretary Report. Secretary Durgin reported that since the last meeting, she has continued with regular tasks, including processing warrants, payroll, and tax forms, as well as progressing through the online California Special Districts Association (CSDA) secretary's bundle training. She has been working on organizing OneDrive and expects to complete the cleanup by the end of the week. She informed the Board that all requested documentation for the Fechter Financial Audit has been submitted and is waiting for further requests from the auditor. Looking ahead, she noted that upcoming responsibilities include payroll next week and the anticipated correspondence for the State Controller's Office Government Compensation Report for the 2024 calendar year. She also mentioned that the first draft of the fiscal year 2025-26 budget will be included in the April meeting agenda. Secretary Durgin stated that she has not yet received any updates from Mono County Auditor's Office contact Shannon LeGrand regarding the Education Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF) payout as per the district's agreement with Mono County. She has followed up twice, and Shannon has assured her that she will provide an update once she hears from Janet Dutcher. She also reported that most recent correspondence since the last meeting has involved past due notices from vendors, despite the fact that the payments had already been processed. She has followed up on these notices providing proof of payment receipts to the vendors. Lastly, she noted that since the last meeting, the department has received December's property tax revenue in Account 320 and Fire Mitigation Fees in Account 321.
10. Review correspondence received since the last regular meeting. All correspondence was included in prior agenda item reports.
11. Review and adjust current fiscal year budget line items as necessary and accept. Chief McGuire reported that only \$2,681.35 remains in line item #212 for Training, while the cost of the EMR courses is approximately \$340 per person, with 15 participants enrolled. He requested permission to reallocate funds from another line item to increase the training budget and cover the cost of the EMR courses. A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER BEATTY, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MELCHIOR, TO INCREASE THE TRAINING BUDGET TO ACCOMMODATE THE COST OF THE EMR TRAINING COURSES. Motion passed 5-0.

12. New business and Board member reports. Chief McGuire stated that he has the county-stamped and sealed Oath of Office documents for the newly appointed Commissioners, which need to be signed.
13. Call for Agenda items for the next regular meeting. Staff report on the progress of the Sunny Slopes Station 2 project; Discussion and action on refurbishment of the Memorial Garden; Discussion and possible action concerning the dedication of a portion of Highway 395 to former Captain Vidar Anderson. Commissioner Beatty informed the Board members and the public that if there is ever an item they would like to have placed on the agenda, they are welcome to submit a request through the Chief.
14. Adjournment. A motion was made by Commissioner Melchior, seconded by Commissioner Czeschin, to adjourn the meeting and reconvene in regular session on March 12th, 2025, at 7:00pm at the Long Valley Fire Station, 3605 Crowley Lake Drive, Crowley Lake, California. Motion passed 5-0.

Katie Durgin
Secretary to the Board
Long Valley Fire Protection District