



## Nevada County Consolidated Fire District

*"Excellence in Emergency Service"*

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS MINUTES AUGUST 18, 2011

Regular Meeting held in the Conference Room,  
Station 84, 10135 Coyote Street, Nevada City, CA

#### NCCFD DIRECTORS:

**Present:** Grueneberg, Hanson (Chairman), Hitchcock, Knox (Vice Chairman), Leonard, Rhodes

**Absent:** Bass (Treasurer)

#### STAFF:

**Present:** Chief Fike, Board Sec. Bennett, B.C Newby, B. C. Ray, DFM McMahan, HR Admin.  
LaBarbera

**Absent:** Fin. Mgr. Henthorn, OSS Long, Curtis (District Counsel)

#### REGULAR MEETING: 7:00 p.m.

#### STANDING ORDERS:

Chairman Hanson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., at Station 84, 10135 Coyote Street, Nevada City, which was the time and place scheduled for the Regular Meeting. After the Pledge of Allegiance, Chairman Hanson welcomed everyone in the audience. Asking for and finding no additions or deletions to the agenda, Chairman Hanson moved the meeting on to the Consent Calendar.

#### CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Acceptance of Minutes – 07/21/11
2. Fund Balances and Check History Reports
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Fire Prevention Bureau Report

Chairman Hanson pulled Item 1 from the Consent Calendar to make one correction. There was no Treasurer's Report; therefore Item 3 was tabled.

Director Knox moved to accept Consent Calendar Items 2 and 4 as presented. Director Rhodes seconded. **MOTION** unanimously carried.

Chairman Hanson pointed out that, on page 5 of the draft minutes, it should have been noted that the Board not only thanked the firefighters for their response to reducing the looming deficit, but had also thanked the Administrative staff and Board members as well. Board Secretary Bennett noted the correction.

Director Rhodes moved to accept Consent Calendar Item 1, with the correction as stated above. Director Knox seconded. **MOTION** unanimously carried.

#### \*PUBLIC COMMENT ON MATTERS NOT ON AGENDA

NONE

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Standing Committees**

Finance – Mark Bass, Chair

Operations – Dave Hanson, Chair

Personnel – Bob Rhodes, Chair

Public Relations – Warren Knox, Chair

### **Ad Hoc Committees**

Board Policy and Procedures – Ralph Hitchcock, Chair

Director Rhodes reported that the Personnel Committee met on August 2, 2011 with Chief Fike and the HR Administrator LaBarbera to review various Health Plan options. The meeting resulted in recommendations from the committee that are contained in the Staff Report for Agenda Item No. 7 below.

Director Knox reported that Chief Fike had emailed a report about the Arizona Wallow Fire. He stated that he was very familiar with the area described as he had lived near there. He said that the report clearly showed that, with the cooperation of the U.S. Forest Services, setting up quarter-mile deep shaded fuel breaks saved at least two, and possibly three, towns from loss of life or structures. Director Knox summed up by saying that the report strongly supports similar work being done locally by the Fire Safe Council.

Chairman Hanson asked Director Hitchcock if there was anything new regarding the draft Board Policy and Procedures Manual. Director Hitchcock reported that there was not but hoped there would be time to meet and complete it in the next couple of months.

There were no other committee reports.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Discussion and possible action concerning Requesting Bids for a proposed New Engineered Fire Suppression Special Benefit Assessment or a Special Tax to Provide Funding for the District to Maintain its Level of Service.**

Chief Fike reported that this item was added because a meeting with SCI, the new assessment engineering firm, was to take place the day of the Board meeting. However, SCI notified him three days before that they would not be available for the meeting as planned. He finished by saying that the meeting would take place in a few weeks. Chief Fike added that he had clarified a few things for SCI in recent phone conversations.

Chairman Hanson asked who else would be attending the meeting with SCI. Chief Fike replied that the Finance Committee members, Directors Bass, Grueneberg, and Knox, would be there. Chairman Hanson offered to substitute for any of the committee members if one of them couldn't attend.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Discussion and possible action concerning (RFPs) Bids for Training Props to be purchased with 2010 DHS-Assistance to Firefighters grant award funds.**

Chief Fike reminded the Board that at the July Board meeting, the first award was rescinded due to an error in the first RFP. Staff was now returning with the outcome of and recommendations from the second bid process.

### **Bids for Training Props ... (cont.)**

Chief Ray referring to his written Staff Report explained that, for the second bid request for the three LPG props to be purchased with funds awarded through the DHS AFG Program, three new, valid bids were submitted. All three bidders with their bid amounts were listed in the Staff Report. Staff's recommendation to the Board was to award the bid to the lowest, responsible bidder, Kidde Fire Trainer ("Kidde").

Director Grueneberg asked how Kidde's track record was. Chief Fike concurred, stating that they had supplied the 2003 Live Fire Trainer and that their service support over the last 8 years has been good.

Director Rhodes asked about the note in the Staff Report regarding Excess Funds. Chief Ray described possible items that could be purchased with the excess funds, pending approval from the DHS-AFG Program.

Director Knox moved to award the bid to Kidde Fire Trainer in an amount not to exceed their bid of \$65,794.31, including tax, shipping, and training for all three LPG training props and authorizing Chief Fike to sign all related documents on behalf of the District. Director Grueneberg seconded. **MOTION** unanimously carried.

### **Discussion and possible action concerning Health Care Plans.**

Chief Fike recapped the various presentations regarding possible Health Plans, including one given that week to those who could not attend the first presentation. Chief Fike was sure that at least 90% of NCCFD personnel had been to at least one of the meetings. He continued that, at the most recent meeting, the employees represented by the Local 3800 voted to approve Staff's recommendation to proceed with the proposed health plans.

Chief Fike noted that there were several plans to choose from with the biggest one being the Health Savings Account (HSA), a tax deferred plan. He explained that the HSA is an 80/20 split and, if the District puts in the "Savings Account" \$4,800 toward a family plan, the employee would be responsible for \$1,200. The employee would then use those funds to pay for medical expenses. If the family only uses \$4,000 in one year, then the balance of \$800 would roll over toward the next year's expenses. However, if the family has \$10,000 worth of expenses, then the employee would be responsible for up to \$1,200 out of pocket. The rest would be covered by the health plan until the end of the year. Chief Fike continued by saying that it is a Blue Shield plan that is accepted by most health providers locally. There is also a Kaiser plan available for the few that currently use them.

Chief Fike noted that this change would be a win-win for everyone. He did say that a concern was with the age-based premiums, especially for those over 60. HR Administrator LaBarbera explained that compared with next year's premium rates with the District's current Blue Shield Health Plan, the HSA plan premium would be lower. She also explained that those with a 457 Plan, which is also a tax deferred savings account, could rollover funds to the HSA to fund their first year's \$1,200 deductible, if they so choose.

Chairman Hanson thanked HRA LaBarbera for all of her work in this matter. Chief Fike added that the research on this issue had been exhaustive. HRA LaBarbera commented that it was a learning process for all to understand the change from an HMO driven market to a consumer driven one.

### **Health Care Plans (cont.).**

Chief Fike added that a letter would be sent to FDAC to inform them of the District's withdrawal from their insurance pool and asking them if we could do so on December 1<sup>st</sup> rather than January 1<sup>st</sup>, as originally agreed to with FDAC. If they agree, then the District would save \$53K, even after paying the 80% deductible for the HSA. If they don't agree, the District would still have a savings, but it would be \$35K.

Director Grueneberg moved to accept Staff's recommendation for the District to move from their current health plan carrier, FDAC-EBA, to the non-pooled, brokered Small Business Group (2-50 employees) utilizing the plans offered by Stone Meadow Benefits & Insurance Assocs. Director Hitchcock seconded. **MOTION** unanimously carried.

### **Rescind Staff Resolution R02-07. Memorandum of Understanding with District Management Employees to Provide Compensation for Work on Federal and State Mutual Aid System Incidents.**

Chief Fike explained that there was a change in compensation agreements with federal agencies. The agencies had already limited the chief's level compensation when responding to Mutual Aid requests. However, although chiefs are no longer eligible for compensation at time and a half, battalion chiefs remain eligible to have the District reimbursed at time and a half, as explained in the Staff Report.

As stated in the report, Staff recommends rescinding Resolution R02-07, including Exhibit "A" and adding the following statement to the MOU between the Regular Classified Safety Management Employees and the Nevada County Consolidated Fire District:

26. Battalion Chiefs may be compensated at time and one-half, portal to portal, for responses to Mutual Aid requests received from USFS CalEMA, or CAL FIRE when authorized by the Fire Chief.

Director Rhodes moved to accept the Staff's recommendation as described above. Director Grueneberg seconded. **MOTION** unanimously carried.

### **CHIEF'S MONTHLY REPORT**

Chief Fike reviewed is written report.

Chairman Hanson commended Captain Menet and his crew for receiving the Nevada County Fairgrounds Director's award for the Fire Safety Trailer exhibit at the 2011 Fair. During Board Discussion, Director Grueneberg added his commendation, saying that he was nearby, watched their activities, and said that what he saw was very professional. He later convinced his wife, who had worked in a major training center, to go through the training, and she said that she had not seen anything like it before and was very impressed.

Chief Fike reported that the Fire Safe Council wrote a letter to the State Fire Board recommending, should the proposed CAL FIRE \$150 fee survive the anticipated multitude of lawsuits, then the money should be used to fund local fire prevention activities. He explained the concern is that, if the money goes directly to CAL FIRE, local agencies would never see it.

## **CHIEF'S MONTHLY REPORT (cont.)**

Chairman Hanson commented that no one knows where the money from this fee is going. Chief Fike added that it was the state department of finance that told the state to institute the fee, that there was no actual "author", and CAL FIRE does not support it.

Chief Fike congratulated Engineer Entz and Firefighter Menth on their outstanding performance certificates from the CHP at the First Annual Driving Rodeo.

### **\*BOARD DISCUSSION**

Director Rhodes asked about an item that he thought was to be on the agenda that was discussed at one of the Personnel Committee meetings regarding a potential retirement. Chief Fike replied that it was a negotiation item that would be resolved when negotiations were completed before next month's meeting.

Director Leonard noted the cuts at the local hospital over the last three years due to the economy, that others are experiencing the same problems, and that he commended Chief Fike for all that he is trying to do to keep the District afloat while taking the heat for making difficult choices. Chairman Hanson added that we all will be taking the heat soon.

Chief Fike replied that things are looking up. The finance manager had called that day with news that some of the revenue projections were looking better.

Director Knox asked Chief Fike about a recent Fire Rescue Magazine article that the chief had forwarded. He understood from the article that the California FIREScope's incident management system was being adopted nationally.

Chief Fike explained that he had been a member of the FIREScope Taskforce for over ten years representing northern CA special districts and volunteer departments while offering a Team Incident Commander's perspective. He continued that the most recent work by FIREScope was to rewrite the Field Operations Guide (FOG), removing the CA specific items to convert it to be a model for the National Incident Management System (NIMS). It came down to be a competition between an incident management model from Arizona and the CA FIREScope's model. The article was a good overview of the history of FIREScope and why it was chosen as the model to be adopted nationally.

Director Knox thanked Chief Fike for working on this important project.

Director Hitchcock noted how everyone was giving up a lot to help the budget situation and he felt it was time to either reduce or cancel the Board's stipend. He wanted to know how that might be done. HR LaBarbera answered that those director's who wished to should send her an email stating that they wished to suspend their stipend. Director Hitchcock stated that if it was taken out of the budget all together, there would be a savings of \$6,000 per year.

Chairman Hanson reported on a JOA/JPA meeting that took place the day before and resulted in an article in The Union newspaper the day of the Board meeting reporting of the decision to place the agreement on hold until better economic conditions surfaced. He noted that a "county-wide" tax was discussed. He also thanked Chief Fike for his excellent presentation regarding the District's current fiscal crisis.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There were no closed sessions or further Board discussion. The Board voted to **change the date of the next Board meeting**, allowing more time to complete the Final Budget, to Thursday, September 29, 2011, to be held at 7:57 p.m. at 10135 Coyote Street, Nevada City. The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Attest:

Approved by:

*Signature on file*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Darlene E. Bennett  
District & Board Secretary

*Signature on file*

\_\_\_\_\_  
David S. Hanson  
Chairman of the Board