

Minutes from the May 26th, 2021, Bolinas Fire Protection District Board Meeting, Via Zoom.

Pres. Molesworth called the meeting of the Bolinas Fire Protection District to order at 7:04 P.M. Vice Pres. Kimball, Dir. Martinelli, Dir. Torrey, and Dir. Dunne were present. Also present: Chief Krakauer, Asst. Chief Steve Marcotte and Administrative Manager Isaac Taylor.

Pres. Molesworth asked for unanimous consent to approve the Agenda with the amendment to move item 5a to the beginning of the meeting, once all parties are present. Seeing no objections, the Agenda is approved.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

No public expression.

CHIEF'S REPORT

AMERA

Chief Krakauer attended the MERA meeting on Wednesday, May 12th and updated the board. New MERA mobile radios are currently being installed in the vehicle dash of District trucks and engines.

Chiefs

Chief Krakauer was unable to attend the Chiefs meeting this month.

Prevention

Chief Krakauer discussed District wildfire preparedness and response in item 5c.

Roads

The County's parking restrictions proposal is expected to go to the Board of Supervisors in July, with implementation slated for late summer 2021. Chief Krakauer, along with County engineers and MCSO parking enforcement, plan to meet with a property owner on Terrace Avenue to look at a possible property line dispute that may impact one proposed parking spot.

Chief Krakauer also spoke with Al Minvielle of the BCPUD Downtown Parking Committee regarding downtown parking issues.

Inspections

Chief Krakauer updated the Board on a recent inspection along Horseshoe Hill Rd.

Planning

Chief Krakauer informed the Board that he is working with Scott Alber at Marin County Fire on a couple of local solar system installations.

Grants

Isaac Taylor completed and submitted a CAL FIRE Fire Prevention Grants proposal for replacement of the front loader at the Resource Recovery site and completion of fuel reduction work on BCPUD land around the site. Equipment funds requested are meant to either augment our previous MWPA proposal, or to replace those funds if not awarded.

We hope to receive award notification in June regarding a FEMA joint grant proposal to replace SCBAs at the end of their lifespan at Bolinas, Stinson Beach, Nicasio, Inverness, and Muir Beach Fire.

Training

Chief Krakauer updated the board on District training initiatives, including wildland firefighting and an upcoming controlled burn training, radio training, new apparatus driver training, training on dispatch and scene management software Tablet Command, and EMT training through the College of Marin.

Apparatus

Wildland engine 265 received its annual inspection this month with no major surprises. It is still running strong despite being 21 years old. All vehicles will have new mobile radios installed by this weekend.

Resource Recovery

Chief Krakauer reported that he has been working with Mike Aitken and Billy Pierce to identify a replacement front loader for purchase. The hope is that, if the CAL FIRE grant is successful, the District may have sufficient funds to acquire a new loader. Vice President Kimball inquired about the price difference for a new loader, and Chief Krakauer reported a rough estimate of approximately \$300,000, more than twice our budget of \$125,000 for the MWPA proposal.

Chief Krakauer shared that a new employee at Resource Recovery is working out well.

Buildings and Grounds

Chief Krakauer is working with the Firehouse Community Park Agency to address vegetation management at Mesa Park.

General Operations/Administration

Chief Krakauer attended the West Marin Summer Kickoff Safety Meeting with Supervisor Rodoni and other agency leaders from around the county.

Chief Krakauer plans to meet with Marin County Fire Chief Jason Weber and new Stinson Beach Fire Chief Jesse Peri to explore increasing staffing for the seasonal Medic 97 ambulance at Stinson Beach. This ambulance primarily serves the communities of Stinson Beach and Bolinas between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

COVID-19 testing for District staff has been terminated by Curative, as the California State insurance mandate for essential workers has expired. We are continuing to offer 20 community testing slots every other Monday between 9:30am and 11:00am. Community members should register beforehand at [curative.com](https://www.curative.com).

The District's trial membership with California Special District Association expires at the end of June, and Chief Krakauer and Isaac Taylor plan to sign on for an annual membership in July to continue taking advantage of this valuable resource.

Verizon's cellular lease with the District expires in January 2022, and AT&T's lease expires in October 2022, so we are looking forward to renegotiating these leases.

Administrative Manager Isaac Taylor summarized an ad hoc brainstorming session he led on May 24th, where Vice Pres. Kimball and Dir. Dunne joined Chief Krakauer and Asst.

Chief Marcotte to develop preliminary plans for an integrated communications strategy for the District.

Personnel

Chief Krakauer shared that Capt. Pete Smith has returned to regular duty after a short leave, and noted that Stinson Beach Fire Chief Kenny Stevens' last day will be May 31. Pres. Molesworth suggested that incoming Chief Peri be invited to a District board meeting sometime this summer, and Chief Krakauer supported the idea and reiterated the importance of the relationship.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Discussion – Wildfire Safe Bolinas

Pres. Molesworth welcomed MWPA Executive Officer Mark Brown and FireSAFE Marin Executive Coordinator Rich Shortall, along with Jon Cozzi and members of Wildfire Safe Bolinas. Pres. Molesworth then invited Jon Cozzi to present Wildfire Safe Bolinas' request to the District.

Mr. Cozzi summarized the packet of materials distributed to District board members, and explained that the group prefers full removal of identified eucalyptus groves, replacing them with native vegetation, rather than maintaining these groves through thinning and cleaning. He emphasized that, while the group is focused on removal and restoration of eucalyptus groves, this work is intended to supplement to the multifaceted approach to fire mitigation advocated by the District. Mr. Cozzi then summarized the group's progress to date, including a community petition and two arborist reports, which the group believes show support for removal of their identified eucalyptus groves. Mr. Cozzi thanked the board for their time, and asked to hear the District's perspective.

Pres. Molesworth invited Fire Chief George Krakauer to offer his perspective on the issue of eucalyptus groves. Chief Krakauer explained that he would not recommend complete removal of eucalyptus groves, or trees of any kind, based solely on fire danger. He explained that fire professionals advocate keeping fire on the ground by removing branches up to 6 to 10 feet, removing ground fuels, removing smaller trees, and creating crown spacing in the canopy. He also acknowledged that the lack of maintenance in the majority of eucalyptus groves in Bolinas poses a real danger. He noted that the District has submitted a grant proposal to perform additional treatment on the grove owned by the BCPUD surrounding the Resource Recovery site, which BCPUD has previously maintained through grant funding. With respect to trees along evacuation roads, Chief Krakauer explained that the District is working with PG&E to address specific hazard trees adjacent to power lines. Chief Krakauer summarized his position by explaining that there is an inherent risk of wildfire when living in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), and that this risk can be managed but not eliminated. In his opinion, complete tree removal provides a small risk reduction in relation to its cost, and funds could be better managed to make Bolinas a more fire-adapted community. Chief Krakauer would support an approach to eucalyptus groves more similar to what BCPUD has done — a better maintenance program. However, Chief Krakauer acknowledged that the District does not own any trees referenced in Wildfire Safe Bolinas' reports, and would not necessarily oppose complete removal projects, independent of District time or expense. Nevertheless, Chief Krakauer would not advocate complete removal of groves to the community as a necessity. In conclusion, Chief Krakauer invited MWPA's Mark Brown and FireSAFE Marin's Rich Shortall to share their perspective, and asked Wildfire Safe Bolinas to provide any specific request they have for the District.

Mark Brown shared his professional experience on many of the state's largest and most destructive wildfires, and argued for an approach emphasizing forest health and fuel management, rather than removal of any single forest type. Rich Shortall echoed these views, and argued that investing in defensible space and home hardening would provide greater protection from wildfire. Both recognized the importance of the efforts and concerns of Wildfire Safe Bolinas.

Director Martinelli asked Mr. Cozzi if the group has considered fire safety projects other than eucalyptus grove removal.

Mr. Cozzi responded that, while the group is focused only on eucalyptus groves, they understand this work to be above and beyond comprehensive fire fuel mitigation efforts.

Dir. Torrey asked if Wildfire Safe Bolinas has an incremental or prioritized strategy for their goal of eventual removal of full groves. Jon Cozzi responded that, although the group initially identified 14 distinct groves, they plan to begin by addressing imminent hazards such as trees along roadways. Dir. Torrey emphasized the importance of evacuation routes, and suggested that if the group plans on raising money in the community for reasons of "fire prevention," their plans should reflect a broader, more unified approach. Dir. Torrey also asked what exactly the Wildfire Safe Bolinas is requesting of the District, and Jon Cozzi responded that the group is not requesting anything other than encouragement.

Vice Pres. Kimball expressed his appreciation for the time, energy, and concern for community health and safety demonstrated by the Wildfire Safe Bolinas. He asked if the Wildfire Safe Bolinas have produced a preliminary budget for both tree grove removal and longer-term habitat restoration. Jon Cozzi responded that the group has not yet created a budget, but have obtained rough estimates for removal, ranging from \$100,000 per acre or \$14,300 per tree. Jon responded that this has not been budgeted, but that restoration is expected to be a major component of the eventual budget, perhaps 30%, and that Judith Lowry is being consulted regarding native plant restoration. Vice Pres. Kimball also asked if WSB has had any discussion with private or public landowners of identified groves. Jon responded that several private landowners have expressed support, and stated that WSB will be appearing at an upcoming board meeting of the BCPUD.

Dir. Martinelli commented that, in his experience, some people in the community are under the impression that removal of eucalyptus groves will make them significantly safer. He wondered if this may be related to the name "Wildfire Safe Bolinas," and the group appearing to have a more unified approach to wildfire safety. He concluded his remarks by reiterating the critical importance of working together as a community in Bolinas.

A public comment period followed this discussion.

Action Item #1 – Approve Draft Budget for FY 2021-2022

MSC Kimball/Torrey (unan.) to approve the Draft Budget for FY 2021-2022.

Administrative Manager Isaac Taylor introduced current budget totals and year-to-date actuals, alongside the FY 2021-2022 draft budget. Projections represent an income increase of 9.5% (approx. \$91,000) and an expense increase of 3.5% (approx. \$29,000). Property tax, our largest revenue source, is currently increasing annually by approximately 5%. Transient occupancy tax (Measure W) revenue continues to be

conservative, based on uncertainty related to the pandemic. MWPA (Measure C) revenue has been positively adjusted to include both defensible space and local agency funds. District leases for two cell tower sites are set to expire in January and October of 2022, but at this time we anticipate renewal of both leases under similar terms.

The budget for memberships has been adjusted to include annual membership in the California Special Districts Association. The computer technology budget has been reduced, with fewer anticipated projects. The extra hire budget has been increased to build in backfill capacity for essential safety employees. A MERA bond has been retired as of August 2020, reducing projected expenses to only membership fees. The budget for fire prevention projects has been increased due to new Measure C defensible space funds and for additional project staffing. Training budgets have been adjusted to better balance supplies, classes, and Chief training. General operations budget has been increased for firefighting equipment and potential road repair projects.

Isaac Taylor presented a 5-year projection of capital expenditures, including a new SCBA cascade system, building infrastructure, and replacements for two aging fire engines. The estimated total exceeds current reserves by approximately \$100,000. Pres. Molesworth noted that the Finance Committee met to review the draft budget in detail. Vice Pres. Kimball cautioned that funds will need to be carefully managed to prepare for contingencies related to apparatus replacement and/or changes in rental income. The Directors approved the draft budget by a unanimous vote.

Action Item #2 – Approve District Policy on Compensation for Reimbursable Assignments

MSC Torrey/Martinelli (unan.) to approve the District Policy on Compensation for Reimbursable Assignments.

Isaac Taylor summarized updates to the policy, including a limit to CFAA incident requests, and overtime calculation standards adjusted to align with Marin County Fire standards. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Discussion – District Wildfire Preparedness and Response

Chief Krakauer shared that the District has signed on as a potential sub-awardee for a pending grant proposal by UC Davis researchers to continue development of a wildfire simulation program for the community. If awarded, the District will be responsible for filling a part-time paid position tasked with liaising between the researchers, District and community. An early version is anticipated by late June.

FIRESafe Marin's Chipper Day program is in progress, with dates scheduled for June 1 and August 30. Chief Krakauer finalized plans for four additional District-sponsored chipper days with M&M Tree Service, and we have begun to take reservations.

The District anticipates County defensible space evaluators will not begin work in Bolinas until early Fall, given the relatively drier conditions on the east side of the County. However, the District plans to augment these evaluations in Bolinas using part-time firefighters and Measure C funding.

Chief Krakauer and Asst. Chief Marcotte are forming a list of access and egress roads for mowing on the big mesa and outlying areas in the District. To avoid interference with bird nesting, they aim to complete work from late July to early August.

Asst. Chief Marcotte led the submission of a joint MWPA core funds proposal with Stinson Beach Fire Department to replace the ailing front loader at Resource Recovery.

The District continues to offer Emergency Alert NOAA radios at a discounted price.

Chief Krakauer has developed a list of steps community members can take to make their homes safer from wildfire, solicited feedback from board members.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MSC Kimball/Martinelli (unan.) to approve the Consent Calendar.

BOARD MEMBER REPORT

Vice Pres. Kimball reported positively that MWPA has retained an environmental consulting firm to coordinate with the Technical Advisory and Operations Committees to advise on issues related to the California Environmental Quality Act. Chief Krakauer noted the recent addition of Anne Crealock to the MWPA team, along with her extensive history of environmental oversight and compliance.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee – Pres. Molesworth spoke about the meeting of the Finance Committee in item 5b.

Personnel Committee – Dir. Torrey shared that the Personnel Committee is still reviewing personnel costs for the upcoming budget.

Buildings and Grounds – No Update.

Operations Working Group –No Update.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Chief Krakauer shared that he spoke by invitation about retiring Stinson Beach Fire Chief at a meeting of the Stinson Beach FPD board, and that an additional event is being planned for September to commemorate his service.

Vice Pres. Kimball thanked Isaac Taylor and Dir. Dunne for their contributions to the recent communications planning session, and also thanked Pres. Molesworth for her continued leadership of the District board.

Pres. Molesworth thanked all attendees for taking the time to thoughtfully consider requests from the Wildfire Safe Bolinas group, and acknowledged the importance of these community efforts and discussions.

ADJOURNMENT

Pres. Molesworth asked for unanimous consent to adjourn. Seeing no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 9:44pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Isaac Taylor
Administrative Manager

Note: Minutes of all Board meetings are available for review at the Bolinas Library and on the District's website.