

Minutes from the January 28th, 2019, Bolinas Fire Protection District Board Meeting

Pres. Kimball called the regular meeting of the Bolinas Fire Protection District to order at 7:00PM. Vice Pres. Chiera, Dir. Martinelli, Dir. Torrey and Dir. Molesworth were present. Also present: Chief Brown, Administrative Assistant Cadance Lynam, Asst. Chief Krakauer, Judith Shaw and Renee Emunah.

MSC Chiera/Molesworth (unan.) to approve the agenda with the modification from Chief Brown to remove item number six under general business as an action item and keep for discussion.

CHIEF'S REPORT

NERA

Chief Brown attended the January 23rd Governing Board meeting. Topics included continuing work on customer design review of Gen II, and hiring a new Project Administrative Assistant as Alex Anderson has resigned. The Independent Audit of Measure A Funds was accepted and the Next Gen System Project Budget was updated to reflect the approval of recent change orders. This budget reflects a \$4,000,000 contingency. Work continues on the Draft SEIR and its anticipated completion is early this year.

Prevention

No Update.

Roads

No Update.

Inspections

Bolinas Clinic – Fire and Life Safety

Planning

Ongoing-

20 Nymph Road – Demolish existing residence, new construction

324 Ocean Parkway – Addition

350 Fern – Studio addition

415 Yucca – Legalize Second Unit

380 Larch Road – New septic system, habitat restoration

210 Laurel – Legalize second unit

120 Horseshoe Hill Rd – Addition, remodel

10 Olema-Bolinas Rd – Second Unit

370 Overlook – Remodel, addition of 2nd unit

12 Olema-Bolinas Road – 2nd Unit
105 Wharf Road – Second Unit
46 Horseshoe Hill Rd – Addition/ Remodel
385 Ocean Parkway – Accessory Dwelling Unit

New
41 Wharf Rd. – Remodel
14 & 16 Canyon – Retaining Wall

Grants

None.

Training

Training began again on January 3rd. The focus has been on Safety and Storm Response, Team Building, SCBA's and Attack Lines.

Volunteers

No Update.

Apparatus

The new U219 is here awaiting radio and code 3 equipment installations. Once that is complete, it will go back to the fabrication shop for a small list of items that need to be addressed.

E283 had its Annual Safety Inspection completed. Besides needing four new batteries, no additional problems were found.

Disaster Council

Asst. Chief Marcotte has scheduled a meeting with all of the Disaster Council Area Coordinators for February 7th at 1800. The topics for discussion include reviewing procedures, updating information and talking about evacuation plans. He is also working on plans for a local CERT recertification class and the possibility of holding a local CERT class. The CERT class is a great deal of work as the class would be 20 hours long and would require instructors from other jurisdictions while the reCERT class is much simpler only requiring one or two instructors and four to six hours.

At the request and with the guidance of Marin County OES, we will be holding a Tsunami Drill on Thursday, March 28th. The exercise will focus on alert/notification and area evacuation. It is expected to last approximately two hours. Concern was expressed for limited participation from the public on a Thursday. Staff will contact OES to see if the date could be changed to a weekend morning.

The position of the West Marin Disaster Council Coordinator is currently being advertised. So far there has been a fair amount of interest in this position. Applications/ resumes will be accepted until January 31st.

A large Animal Evacuation planning meeting will be taking place at the firehouse on February 5th proposed by Anne Sands. Asst. Chief Marcotte will organize and lead the meeting.

District Wide Emergency Alerting Systems

Joyce Clements and Judith Shaw submitted letters expressing their support for an emergency siren system for Bolinas as a method of alerting residents of a disaster.

Asst. Chief Krakauer updated the Board on his discussions with Sentry Siren. Sentry Siren had provided a coverage map utilizing mechanical sirens. Sentry does offer the systems that utilize voice capabilities as well. We have been in contact with LRAD, Long Range Acoustical Device, which specializes in voice capable systems. You will recall Asst. Chief Krakauer attended a demonstration of the LRAD system. He found that the message carried well in some directions but not consistently. Topography and weather can degrade the message considerably. Chief Brown spoke with the Mill Valley Fire Department Chief regarding the upgrade of their siren system to an LRAD system. The system Mill Valley is installing is a different model from the one that Asst. Chief Krakauer saw demonstrated. He contacted LRAD to get information on a similar system for Bolinas. The system Mill Valley is installing has eight multi directional speakers on each pole, which could overcome problems such as topography, tree cover and weather.

Asst. Chief Krakauer received pricing information today from Sentry Siren. It is possible that one option is to place one large mechanical siren, which is tone only; on the Fire House as we already have power and emergency power, which the system needs. This could also be supported by several smaller ones in the community for areas that are not within range. The large one at the station is advantageous due to the location and the elevation. A very rough estimate is in the neighborhood of \$80,000. The voice capable system would require possibly twice as many sites due to its limited range. Asst. Chief Krakauer noted that the \$80,000 figure is very preliminary and does not include potential permitting fees, power, or site acquisition. Asst. Chief Krakauer reiterated that an LRAD system would need possibly twice as many sites. Chief Brown noted the system Mill Valley was putting in is five sirens at a cost of \$400,000 and would only cover their Wildland Urban Interface Areas. Asst. Chief Krakauer stated that the mechanical siren is tone only and would require some sort of messaging that residents could access. He noted that the mechanical sirens can penetrate topography and weather much further than the voice systems. Dir. Martinelli inquired about the activation of the system. Staff said that both systems could and should be capable of being activated remotely. This would allow our dispatch center to activate the system at our request. The voice system can have a prerecorded message delivered. Dir. Kimball inquired about the coverage, Asst. Chief Krakauer responded that with one large one at the station we may need another one at Agate Beach as well as downtown and in the Horseshoehill area. While this estimate may not cover one hundred percent of the fire district area, we believe our goal is to alert as many people as possible. The system would be another tool in a multi pronged approach for alerting residents and visitors.

At this point Chief Brown described the Mill Valley system in a bit more detail. They are currently upgrading from mechanical system to LRAD. The

Mill Valley Fire Chief noted that this is one tool and is not foolproof. He is talking to his community about the need to take responsibility for their own preparedness and awareness as we are trying to do here and many communities in Marin are doing. Chief Brown expressed serious concern about a voice system as the dynamics of a fire change very rapidly and the information that may need to go out could change very quickly. She believes we need to have a conversation with the community regarding their expectations of a system. It was made clear to us during our conversations with the siren representatives that neither of these systems are intended to be heard inside people's homes. The system may not wake anyone up unless they are very close to the siren and/or their windows are open. As we've stated before if we decide to go with a siren system it is only one tool in a tool box and we still have to encourage people to register at Alert Marin and do their preparation in order to be ready to evacuate. Another concern is that we typically staff with one sometimes two people. If we get dispatched to a fire we are quickly overwhelmed with immediate operational needs. Evacuation is always our first priority. Chief Brown is very concerned about our ability to craft a message, get it dispatched and keep it updated during an incident. She expressed concern about having an expensive system that we don't initially have the time to use. With a mechanical siren, we could set the tone off and alert residents. Either through Alert Marin or the Disaster Council, residents would receive further information and make a determination on how to proceed. Residents need to be aware of two ways out of their neighborhood, either on foot or by vehicle. We need to make a concerted effort to educate everyone about their options. It may not be a full evacuation out of town, rather, a movement of residents to a Temporary Refuge Area. It was noted that Mill Valley is different from Bolinas in that within minutes Mill Valley could have fifteen mutual aid engines on scene in addition to more employees whereas Bolinas has to wait much longer for engines from other departments.

Chief Brown stated that she believes a siren system could be a very beneficial tool for the town. It is left to be seen whether a voice system is the right choice. Mill Valley is hopeful their new system will be active by spring of this year. We would like to see how their system performs. She also believes several public meetings with the Bolinas community are very important in order to inform the public on the capabilities of a siren system and to hear what the public's expectations are of a siren system. She also strongly noted that with a siren system or not the road situation in Bolinas with the overgrowth of vegetation is a major problem and should be addressed with equal efforts. If there is a fire and residents are alerted they may not be able to get out anyway if the road is blocked by fire.

Vice Pres. Chiera inquired about other jurisdictions and what they are doing with this same issue. Chief Brown said that almost every city and town in Marin as well as the Office of Emergency Services is researching this issue. Many communities are waiting to see how the technology emerges and how the state may address this issue and/or require agencies to address this issue. Dir. Chiera said this is an important topic and he commended Asst. Chief

Marcotte for convening a meeting of the Disaster Council because it is critically important for everyone to be personally prepared.

Dir. Torrey inquired as to what the decision point is for putting a system in or not. Pres. Kimball asked Dir. Torrey to hold that question until discussion was done. Pres. Kimball asked if the siren companies spoke at all about the change in technology. Asst. Chief Krakauer responded that while the mechanical sirens have been around a long time the voice systems seem to be changing as they emerge. Pres. Kimball also would like to know where other agencies/ counties are in their research. Chief Brown responded that everyone is in different stages of the process. Pres. Kimball expressed concern about making a large capital investment at a point when all the information isn't in yet. Dir. Molesworth asked whether the companies provide incentives for keeping purchased systems current if the technology changes. Chief Brown responded that she wasn't aware of any.

Discussion was had regarding how the sirens would be used. Chief Brown reiterated that a siren system would only be one option of an alert in addition to the multiple existing options including Nixle, Alert Marin, WEA and reverse 911. Even if a siren system were in place, residents would still need additional information. No one system is fail safe. Pres. Kimball stated that from a health and safety standpoint he agreed that a focus on vegetation clearing is equally as important. He also cautioned people against thinking a siren system is the ultimate solution. He echoed Vice Pres. Chiera's statement about the importance of personally preparedness and responsibility.

Renee Emunah said it makes sense that people would need to understand that a siren would be but one of many methods of alert. When she heard of the idea of a siren it made sense as another tool to be used in case of fire. Anything that could alert people to get out quickly is helpful.

Judith Shaw said that in her original discussions with the representative from Sentry Siren they spoke of the layout of Bolinas and what it would take to cover the whole area. She believed that he walked the area with staff and provided a more detailed coverage map. Chief Brown replied that they never walked the area and that the original coverage map provided was an educated guess. Asst. Chief Krakauer explained that we would essentially have to put in what we think are enough sirens to cover the areas and then sound test it and see where we might have to fill in the gaps. Judith Shaw noted there are multiple companies in the U.S. that provide siren systems. She also noted work being done at UC Berkeley involving satellite technology for alerting neighborhoods. It seems to be a question for the Board to have a list of options that are emerging for alerting. She suggests the Board form a committee to gather the research around the issue.

Dir. Torrey asked about needs assessment for the District. Pres. Kimball feels it is important to know how a siren system fits into the entirety of emergency notification. Also, what is the capital investment needed? In order to make a decision, we need understand how this fits into other capital needs of the District including the possibility of clearing roads. We owe it to the community to keep abreast of what other agencies are learning and implementing. It needs to be a top priority but we need to be careful that we

do not go too quickly in a direction while local, state or federal agencies go in a different one. Pres. Kimball also feels it is critical the issue be vetted by the community.

Dir. Martinelli agreed that there is a great deal of research going on right now. He feels an investment in the roads is a more immediate need and would have a greater impact. From his experience, he has reservations about the ability of staff to do what they need to in regards to a message while they are initialing working the incident as it can and will be overwhelming with immediate needs.

Judith Shaw would like to see the roads get done and feels the issue has been dragging along.

Chief Brown stated we will continue to track the technology.

Resource Recovery

No update.

Building and Grounds

Update later in meeting.

General Operations/Administration

Chief Brown attended the Marin County Fire Chief's meeting on January 17th. Discussion focused on standardized responses to violent incidents, increasing focus on Get Ready training Countywide. (Get ready emphasizes vegetation fire preparedness and prevention.) Countywide, there is a great deal of discussion regarding the potential shift to more aggressive stances on vegetation clearing on roads and private property.

A proposed contract for bookkeeping services from Kaaren Gann's daughter, Shelly Redding, was received. After working with Kaaren for months, she will be taking over the business. The Personnel Committee will meet to review the contract and bring a recommendation to the full Board at the February meeting.

Due to extreme dissatisfaction with Bank of America, Cadance and Chief Brown are working to move the District checking account to Chase Bank. Bank of America has been unresponsive and very unhelpful in our attempts to update the signers on the account. Chief Brown met with a Chase representative to discuss a new account.

The Emergency Generator received its annual inspection with no problems found.

Surfers' Overlook Repair/Terrace Avenue

No Update.

Personnel

No Update.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Action Item #1 – Election of Officers

Discussion was had regarding the election of President and Vice President each January. There are no term limits on the positions and there is not an automatic cycling of the Board members into these positions. President Kimball expressed that he is willing to continue as President for another term. Vice Pres. Chiera stated he too would be willing to continue to serve as Vice President for another term. The Board felt this was a good option while the new members became more familiar with Board issues and activities. MSC Martinelli/ Molesworth (unan.) to elect Dir. David Kimball as President and Dir. Ed Chiera as Vice President.

Action Item #2 – Formation of Committees

Discussion was had regarding the structuring of committees. Chief Brown reviewed the typical tasks of the committees and what issues may be focused on including the approval of the Personnel Manual.

President Kimball made a recommendation for the District Committees as follows:

Finance and Budget – President Kimball and Dir. Molesworth

Personnel – Vice Pres. Chiera and Dir. Torrey

Buildings and Grounds – Dir. Martinelli and Vice Pres. Chiera

MSC Chiera/Torrey (unan.) to Approve Formation of Committees

Action Item #3 – Regular Meeting Schedule for 2019

Discussion was had regarding the dates for 2019 Board meetings. Staff pointed out that the May date coincides with a holiday and the December date was the week of Christmas.

MSC Torrey/ Molesworth (unan.) to Accept the Regular Meeting Schedule for 2019 with a change in the May date to May 20th and the December date to December 16th.

Action Item #4 – Review and Accept Draft Audited Financial Statements

Pres. Kimball presented the memo he provided the Board regarding understanding the audited financial statements. Lisa Doran, Doran and Associates will be attending the February Board Meeting to present the audited financials and answer any questions. Chief Brown explained that the bookkeeper has reviewed the draft as well as Pres. Kimball and Vice Pres. Chiera as the temporary Finance Committee. She also reviewed the comments provided by the auditor in the Management Letter. The majority of the comments suggest updates to the Districts Accounting Controls and Procedures and changes to our internal posting of transactions. Pres. Kimball requested a copy of the Accounting Controls and Procedures be provided to each Board member. He also inquired when the District would need to begin looking for a new auditor since we will be unable to continue with Doran and Assoc. due to state law. Staff will follow up with Lisa Doran.

Pres. Kimball reviewed the pertinent financial statements.

MSC Molesworth/ Martinelli (unan.) to Accept the Draft Audited Financial Statements FY 17/18.

Action Item #5 – Proposal to Maintain Old U219 as a Utility Vehicle

Asst. Chief Krakauer provided and reviewed his memo to the Board recommending the District maintain old U219 as a utility vehicle. His proposal included a description of how the Chief currently responds in her private vehicle. The Fire Chief will often respond to a call while “off duty” from a private residence or elsewhere. It’s commonly known that downtown can become very congested. A department vehicle with code 3 lighting would be able to respond quicker, whereas in a private car it can be very difficult to get through or find parking.

The Chief’s vehicle is often the first at scene to accidents on the roadways. The vehicle ends up playing an important role in identifying emergency scenes and preventing further accidents from occurring. Having a Chief’s vehicle with emergency lighting can reduce risk and achieve a better level of safety to all.

The Chief also attends regular meetings “over the hill”. Chief Brown often drives her own car, but also takes U231 on occasion. Having U231 out of the town leaves the District with no utility vehicle. The utility truck often plays a key role in our operational response and with it not available; we often depend on volunteers with pickups who may or may not be available.

In the past, a Chief’s vehicle was made available. Chief Brown was offered a department vehicle when she took the position but declined due to her situation, (a mom of 2) it wasn’t a practical option at the time.

Asst. Chief Krakauer provided a proposed budget with the memo outlining the immediate and ongoing costs to maintain the vehicle. Immediate costs of approximately \$5,000 and annual costs of approximately \$2,500.

Dir. Martinelli expressed his full support to proceed and suggested that potentially rotating vehicles as they wear out would save money.

MSC Chiera/Martinelli (unan.) to Maintain Old U219 as a Utility Vehicle.

Discussion – Review and Accept the West Marin Measure W Transient Occupancy Tax Memorandum of Understanding with Marin County and West Marin Fire Departments.

Chief Brown removed this item as an action due to her opinion that the draft MOU was not ready to be reviewed and accepted. She reviewed for the Board the passage of Measure W, the increase by 4% to the West Marin Transient Occupancy Tax. The proceeds are dedicated 50% to community affordable housing projects and 50% to the West Marin Fire Departments. The Fire Chiefs from each department met and discussed how the proceeds should be dispersed. It was agreed that the greatest impacts are felt by the Marin County Fire Department and the Stinson and Bolinas Fire Protection Districts. Another consideration was the current financial relationships between Marin County Fire and Muir Beach, Tomales and Nicasio. Annually, Bolinas will receive 17%, Marin County Fire 38%, Inverness Fire 14%, Muir Beach 8%, Nicasio 4%, Stinson Beach 17% and Tomales 2% . The Marin County Fire Department provided a draft MOU with the intent of memorializing the agreement and allowing the departments to anticipate an approximate amount of proceeds each year. Currently, we are unsure of how and when the funds will be dispersed. We would like to add wording speaking

to a clear accounting of the funds annually. Chief Brown will bring the final draft to the Board for consideration at the February meeting.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MSC Chiera/Torrey (unan. President Kimball abstained) to approve the Consent Calendar.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

None.

BOARD MEMBER REPORT

No Update.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Updates from Finance and Budget, Personnel, Building and Grounds and Operational Working Group.

Finance Committee – No Update, meeting to be scheduled.

Personnel Committee – No update, meeting to be scheduled.

Buildings and Grounds – No Update

Operations Working Group – Chief Brown explained that the expenses for the buildup of the new 219 are over budget by approximately \$5000 due to unforeseen complications. She also noted that the cost of new Type 1 engines has gone up considerably; our last engine cost approximately \$350,000. Currently they are costing anywhere from \$600,000 to \$800,000. We do not need to replace an engine at this time.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

None.

ANNOUNCEMENT

None.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Pres. Kimball spoke of Darrin Malvin passing away in an accident recently. He was passionate about installing solar energy here at the Fire Station and helped out tremendously. He was a large force in helping us finish the solar project and we are very appreciative of all that he did for the District and Community. He also mentioned that tonight's meeting length was highly unusually and offered his support and help to all Board members, especially new members.

Chief Brown expressed that she was glad to see President Kimball was back and feeling better.

ADJOURNMENT

MSC –Chiera/Molesworth (unan.) to adjourn at 9:50PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cadance Lynam
Administrative Assistant

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