

**Woodside Fire Protection District
Board of Directors Meeting
Administration Building
808 Portola Rd.
Portola Valley, CA 94028
April 4th, 2023**

Meeting was called to order at the special meeting time of 6:00pm by Director Miller

Directors Present: Cain, Miller, Holthaus

Staff: Chief Lindner, Deputy Chief Cuschieri

Public Comment Non-Agendized Topics: None

Closed Session: Director Miller adjourned the meeting to closed session at 6:01pm for interview with Deputy Fire Chief Cuschieri regarding Fire Chief position which will be vacant pending Fire Chief Lindner's retirement at the end of June 2023. Interview was completed at 6:55pm. There was a brief discussion among Board members after.

Return from Closed Session: The Board returned from closed session at 7:01pm. No final decision was made.

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors was called to order at 7:02pm by Director Miller

Directors Present: Cain, Miller, Holthaus

Directors Absent: None

Staff: Chief Lindner, Deputy Chief Cuschieri, Finance Manager Edwards, Finance Manager Liu, Fire Marshal Bullard, Battalion Chief Dagenais, Battalion Chief Smith, Battalion Chief K. Hird, Battalion Chief Zabala, Interim Battalion Chief Nannini

Other Attendees: Mike Wassermann (CPM), Jon Holtzman (RPLG)

Public Comment Non-Agendized Topics:

MJ Lee (volunteer with Portola Valley Wildfire Preparedness Committee) announced the upcoming Wildfire Preparedness Fair on Saturday April 22nd from 10:00am to 2:00pm at PV Town Center. Over 20 exhibitors will be present. There will also be a speaker series at 10:00am, 11:30am, and 1:00pm. Will also have reps from San Mateo County DEM, California Dept of Insurance also. Hoping to have a good turnout. She also wanted to thank Fire Marshal Bullard and Selena for their assistance with the Fair. She wanted to thank FM Bullard for his appearance at the last WPC meeting to give updates on new ordinances and state of the District. She also wished to comment on the need for transparency and was requesting the draft ordinances be included on the District website to provide feedback, as well as the announcement in the Almanac. She requested it to be included as an article, and not an advertisement so it would be searchable.

Rusty Day wish to comment on the recent incidents of trees falling and blocking Alpine Road. He wished to comment on the assistance from WFPD as well as Fire Safe SMC representatives to get remediation performed by landowners where the trees fell and getting that performed quickly. He commented on the District's upcoming hazard and risk assessment and how the potential dangers are being recognized throughout the District.

Consent Agenda:

Prior to the motion to move items to the consent agenda, Chief Lindner introduced new Finance Manager Tracy Liu to the Board members, to give them the opportunity to advise her of any helpful words of advice to assist in getting the Board information they feel is important.

Director Holthaus motioned to move items 1, 2, 3, and 4 to the consent agenda, 2nd by Director Cain. Motion passed 3-0.

The Directors introduced themselves to FM Liu.

Item 5: Fiscal Year Spreadsheet

Finance Manager Edwards advised the Board of no pertinent information, advised March and April will be the months of revenues coming into the District. She also advised of the upcoming loan payment in April as well.

Director Miller wished to advise FM Liu of the need to monitor the impact to the District of paying the overages for the Station build project(s).

Item 6: Station 7 and Station 8 Project updates

Mike Wassermann of Capital Program Management gave the Board an update of the Station 7 and Station 8 projects.

Station 7 – Rain has had an impact on the schedule. Progress has been made, but not the amount to keep the projects on time. The T-Mobile cell site remains a concern with trying to accommodate them on the new site. Weekly meetings have been established between the project team and T-Mobile to keep momentum going in a positive direction. No plans have been submitted to the Town of Woodside yet, which is concerning. PG&E is no longer a concern as commitments have been made. The new generator is a new concern as lead times have pushed the arrival of the new generator out to around December. There may be a need for a temporary generator if the station is completed prior to the arrival of the permanent generator. Current completion date is projected to be October 2023. (Pictures of the construction were shown).

Director Holthaus inquired about the reason for the generator delay. Mr. Wassermann advised the builder, Cummins, did not give a specific reason. Director Cain asked if the manufacturer will be responsible for added costs if the District needs to rent a temporary generator. Mr. Wassermann advised they will inquire and keep up the pressure to get it before any additional costs to WFPD.

Station 8 – Rain also had an impact on the schedule. PG&E coordination is still a concern. A remote meter location has helped mitigate some of the impacts. Most of the work will be completed around June 2023. Additional time to the completion (around November 2023) will be the new electrical service. (Pictures of the construction were shown).

Item 7: Renne Public Law Group – Woodside Fire Protection District Legal Services Agreement.

Chief Lindner provided the Board with a staff report. WFPD has had legal services provided by the County of San Mateo. Recently, legal issues and various times have had the potential to involve multiple county agencies. This put the District in a potential situation of having our legal services with a conflict of interest and having to opt out of providing service to the WFPD. Staff began researching a new legal counsel, one who would have experience with special districts, experience with providing services to public safety entities, and a staff capable of providing multiple services “in-house” to assist in the district’s current and future needs. Renne Public Law Group was interviewed by WFPD staff. WFPD was very appreciative of what RPLG could provide and is making the recommendation to the Board to retain RPLG as counsel for the District.

Attorney Jon Holtzman introduced himself and gave a brief presentation to the Board. RPLG is located in San Francisco, consisting of approximately 25 lawyers. The firm has been in existence for approximately 20 years, initially providing services to the City of San Francisco. They are devoted to providing public sector representation. Mr. Holtzman is District Counsel to the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and has been for 6 years. Work in the prevention division with MOFD is very similar to what WFPD is dealing with. His vision is to concentrate on fire prevention ordinance structure, as well as providing assistance administratively with Brown Act compliance, other required training, but also assisting with making sure rules and procedures are in place to keep the Board, as well as WFPD, up to date legally.

Director Miller was encouraged with RPLG’s work with MOFD and their experience with many similar fire prevention issues. He also is appreciative of the help they can provide. He was hopeful the District could keep working with SM County Counsel with routine issues as it could be more cost effective. Mr. Holtzman responded that RPLG would have the title of district counsel but would also have the fiduciary obligation to provide the best services for the least costs.

There were no other questions by Board members.

Rusty Day commended the District with reaching out to find competent counsel to help the district, who are confronting a new era with the wildfire hazard and risk which will challenge the District as an independent agency with an elected board. He is appreciative and feels RPLG undersells itself with the positive work they have done. He also underscored Mr. Holtzman’s comment on his fiduciary responsibility and once again was appreciative of the District’s choice in legal counsel.

Director Holthaus made the motion to support bringing on Renne Public Law Group as chief counsel for the WFPD and authorizing Chief Lindner to sign on the District’s behalf. Motion was 2nd by Director Cain. Motion passed 3-0.

Staff Reports:

Director Holthaus and Director Miller commented on M107’s numbers and that the trend continues with M107 providing over 90 transports, with only 18 in District. The board continues to be concerned with the District providing a disproportionate amount of workload outside the WFPD.

Fire Chief’s Report:

Chief Lindner advised the board of continuing weather events. The last event (rain and severe winds) once again had significant impacts to the District. Hwy 84 damage has increased. An evacuation advisory was put in place secondary to a mudslide in a residential portion of the District. This was put in place due to potential ingress/egress issues, as a blocked roadway could prevent emergency resources from accessing residences.

Call volume has increased approximately 40% this year. Additional personnel were utilized during the weather events.

The Alpine Road incident not only resulted in the death of a citizen, but an incident within an incident occurred as multiple trees fell during the rescue, damaging one WFPD apparatus, and coming extremely close to striking personnel performing operations at the scene.

Chief Lindner was appreciative of the public and professional outreach to the landowner of the area involved in the incident. Mitigation efforts were in place to remove multiple trees. Chief Lindner also expressed that this outreach has been positive in raising awareness throughout the District for the potential impacts on ingress and egress, given there are already so few in the District.

Director Cain asked why these trees were more apt to falling. The erosion of the nearby creek, along with the saturated soil, appears to have contributed to the vulnerability of these trees.

New Business:

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

One thank you letter was provided by the public, thank WFPD for serving the citizens.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:50 P.M. and entered closed session.

Closed Session:

Chief Lindner gave the Board an update on personnel issues. There was no further action taken by the Board.

Chief Lindner and the Board had discussion from the earlier closed session interview for Fire Chief. Chief Lindner reiterated his intent to retire at the end of June 2023, pending all appropriate retirement paperwork being approved through CalPERS.

Return from Closed Session: The Board returned from closed session at 8:27 P.M.

There was no formal announcement made on naming the next Fire Chief of the WFPD. This announcement is tentatively scheduled for the next Board meeting.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 P.M

The next scheduled meeting will be a special meeting to be held April 25th, at 7:00 P.M at the WFPD Administration Building, 808 Portola Rd. Portola Valley, CA 94028.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pat Cain – Board Secretary