NORTH SAN JUAN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, February 25, 2025
Adopted March 25,2025

PRESENT: Samantha Hinrichs, Chair; Rhea Williamson, Treasurer; Tim Tschantz, Pamela Morey
STAFF: Tom Browning, Deputy Fire Chief; Lynn McGarva; Amy Rodriguez

ABSENT: Bruce Boyd

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Meeting called to order at 6:01 PM. Roll taken. Quorum established. Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **APPROVAL OF February 25, 2025, REGULAR BOARD MEETING AGENDA**
   Rhea Williamson moved to approve the January 28, 2025 Regular Board Meeting Agenda, Tim Tschantz seconded, motion carried 4-0-0-1.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**
   Boyd Johnson complimented the improvements made to the website, noting that it is now much more informative. He also requested the addition of two more links: one to the Fire District Formation Act, which explains the justification for collecting taxpayer money, and one to the Brown Act.

   Tim had questions regarding the clarity of the wording used in the public comment section.

   Tom Browning clarified the wording issue and explained its relevance.

4. **MINUTES:**
   A. Draft Minutes of January 28, 2025, Regular Board Meeting
   Rhea Williamson moved to adopt the Draft Minutes of January 28th, 2025, Pamela seconded it, motion carried by the following roll call vote:

   Rhea Williamson: Aye
   Pat Leach: Aye
   Tim Tschantz: Aye
   Samantha Hinrichs: Abstain

Bruce Boyd: Absent

Aye: 3 Noes: 0 Abstain: 1 Absent: 1
(Samantha abstained due to her absence at the previous board meeting)

B. Draft Minutes of February 11, 2025, Special Board Meeting
Rhea moved to adopt the Draft Minutes of November 26th, 2024, Tim seconded it, motion carried 4-0-0-1

5. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**
Samantha provided an update on her progress toward obtaining her teaching credentials, highlighting that she is nearing the completion of the process.

6. **Penn Valley Consolidation – Bruce Stephenson**
Tom Browning introduced Bruce Stephenson, the Board Chair of Penn Valley, and shared that Bruce is a retired Captain Paramedic from Roseville Firefighters.

Bruce Stephenson gave an update on the challenges faced by his district, including the consolidation process and the difficulties with the county and LAFCO. He explained that the consolidation, which involves merging four fire departments into one entity, is moving forward under the name "Nevada County Fire and Rescue." He addressed concerns about rumors and provided firsthand information on the progress of the merger.

Stephenson explained that the department's structure had to undergo a "reorganization" to consolidate with the other departments. He outlined how the consolidation would be funded, how fire engines would be staffed with one paramedic, and the plans to incorporate ambulances into their district to generate additional revenue through hospital transfers.

Bruce Stephenson shared the obstacles the county had presented, including opposition to the promotion of three Battalion Chiefs. He explained that the promotion was necessary for individuals who had been performing those duties for 10 years, as there were no Battalion Chiefs in place.

Stephenson mentioned that rumors may be circulating, and he attended the board meeting to address and clarify the situation personally, to prevent confusion or misinformation.

7. REPORTS

A. Board Chair Report – Bruce Boyd
Bruce Boyd

i. Correspondence

- The Grand Jury of Nevada County Special Districts sent a brief survey, stating that it was not an investigation but requested a response from the district. Samantha suggested forwarding the survey to Board to follow up before the deadline.

Tom suggested that he and Amy could respond to the Grand Jury, informing them that the board is solid. And recommended that the survey response be sent only

to the Board Chair or Vice Chair to avoid serial communication, in compliance with the Brown Act.

- Sara Greensfelder sent an email about a webinar regarding the update of the District's CWPP and suggested it might be beneficial to distribute the information to the board members.

B. Chief's Report –Tom Browning

i. January 2025 Statistics

Chief Browning introduced Jordan Vargas, a new firefighter who recently graduated from the fire academy.
Tom Browning reported that 13 people are currently in the process of joining the department, with a goal of recruiting 25 new members for the year, and the department is halfway to meeting that target.

Tom shared that he and Amy have worked on a spreadsheet to track the progress of each new recruit. He also explained the process recruits must go through to officially join the department.

Tom provided a summary of the **January 2024, Statistics**

During the statistics section, Tom shared that the goal of staffing each shift with two people is working well, and the number of calls with only one responder is decreasing.

Boyd Johnson expressed appreciation for including the out-of-district response data for incidents where our firefighters responded to the wildfires in LA in January. However, he also raised concerns about the lack of coverage and emphasized that the district should be better equipped to respond to calls. In response, the board stated that with 13 new recruits joining the department, staffing levels will improve, helping to cover more shifts.

ii. Current Department Activity

Tom presented his goals for the current year.
He shared that the training schedule is changing, with firefighters now having one training session on a Saturday per month. He also mentioned that, while the training needs to cover basic topics for new recruits, it must remain engaging to maintain the interest of veteran members who have already completed these trainings multiple times.

Nathaniel, Battalion Chief, and Chris Rainville have been reconfiguring the training plans for the department.

Tom provided an update on the accident involving the water tender, which occurred while returning from fighting fires in LA.

iii. Social media report

Amy Rodriguez presented a social media report, explained the significant exposure the social media accounts have gained, highlighting the interactions and engagement the videos and photos have received.

Amy clarified that the language used on social media is primarily intended to celebrate the firefighters and their service. She emphasized that no personal or sensitive information about the calls firefighters respond to is posted.

C. Treasurer's Report – Rhea Williamson

i. Financials- January 2025: Funds Summary, Disbursement Detail, Deposit Detail, Cal Card

Rhea Williamson presented the Financials January 2025.

Rhea Williamson moved to approve the November and December 2024 Financials and Cal Card as presented, Pamela Morey seconded, motion carried 4-0-0-1.

Boyd Johnson stressed that all public information should be available on Transparent California and should not be provided only upon request.

He questioned whether the board members are aware of how much each firefighter earns, to which it was explained that they are aware, as every payment must be signed off by at least two people, such as the Fire Chief and a board member, or two board members.

Rhea, a member of the finance committee, confirmed she is aware of each person's pay.

Tom explained that firefighter pay fluctuates because they are paid per call, not by hour, and that administrative pay is explicitly disclosed.

After several minutes of discussion, Samantha requested to move forward with the agenda, as it was getting late.

ii. Draft Audit FY 2024-25

Rhea Williamson presented the FY 2024-25 Audit, prepared by Pehling's PnPCPA and announced that there were no findings identified or requests, and that it was a successful audit that covered all the required areas.

Rhea Williamson moved to approve the FY 2024-25 Audit as presented, Pamela seconded, motion carried 4-0-0-1.

D. Firefighters Association Report – Sambhava Burke

Tom gave a brief report, stating that the firefighters have set goals for the current year, primarily focused on supporting the firefighters themselves. He also mentioned that an association meeting would be held soon.

E. Fire Safe Council /FireWise Coalition/Ridge FireWise Communities Report – Pat Leach

Samantha shared that she met with Sara Greensfelder, she also reported that the fuel break project has begun, with the road being cleared.

Sean Ryan has been working with a crew on Jackass Flats, and the required archaeological report was reviewed before starting the work, allowing the clearing of the road to begin.

She mentioned that her understanding is that the work will progress from Jackass Flats to the Governor's Trail (Stagecoach Trail), and then move on to Milhous.

F. NCFA Report – Tim Tschantz

No Report

G. Auxiliary Report – Sasha St. John

No Report

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. Rental Agreement

- Tom Browning presented the amendments to the rental policy agreement, explaining that he used a change-tracked mode so everyone could see the revisions.

  He made several changes, including a restriction on selling alcohol and a new policy regarding the rental or removal of equipment and kitchen utensils from the premises.

  He also sought clarification on whether kitchen utensils can be used if someone rents both the hall and the kitchen.

- Liz Walsh shared that the auxiliary does not want to take ownership of any donated items, and that anything left in the station belongs to the department.

- Tom clarified that this was the first reading of the amendments, and there would be a second reading before the changes are approved.

B. Hydrant Committee Update – Tom Browning

Tom explained that the period for the LAFCO special assessment district was approaching its expiration, so a meeting was held the previous week to extend the timeline.

This extension is necessary because the assessments cannot be implemented until the project is completed, and they have one year to finish it.

The county needs to conduct a reassessment for the grant's paperwork.

Although Tom was unable to attend the meeting, he spoke with the SR and wrote a letter that was passed to the board members in the meeting. He confirmed that progress on the hydrants is still moving forward, though slowly.

C. Forest Reserve Fund Grant

Tom Browning gave the report on the water tanks, sharing Bruce Boyd's architectural plan drawing and the easement for their installation. The project is moving forward, and a budget proposal for the engineering of the project has already been prepared.

Rhea commented that the chosen location for the water tanks is a really good spot.

D. Newsletter

- Amy gave a quick report on the newsletter planning, confirming that two community members are willing to help with it. The plan is to have two newsletters: one for spring/summer and another for fall/winter. Amy shared that she and Rhea met to discuss possible topics, and the goal is to release the spring/summer newsletter by the end of April.

- It was discussed how to inform the community that donations are received.

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution 2025-01 Applying a COLA to Measure Q for FY2025-26

Rhea Williamson announced that the Finance Committee voted to apply a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to Measure Q in the amount of 2.38%.

Samantha opened the Public Hearing. Having no comments, the Public Hearing was closed.

This was the first reading, and the second reading will be held at the next meeting. After that, the resolution can be approved.

B. Salary Increase for Finance and Facilities Manager – Tom Browning

Tom Browning announced that Lynn McGarva received a positive evaluation and recommends Lynn receive a 3% COLA increase which would take her hourly rate from $33.26 to $34.29. Effective April 6th.
Motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Samantha Hinrichs – Aye
Rhea Williamson – Aye
Pamela Morey – Aye
Tim Tschantz – Aye
Bruce Boyd – Absent

Aye: 4 No: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1

C. Board Goals

Samantha suggested presenting the board goals at the next meeting

10. NEXT MEETING: March 25, 2025, at 6:00 PM.

11. ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Amy Rodriguez
Amy Rodriguez, Board Secretary