

MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MONTECITO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Held at Fire District Headquarters, 595 San Ysidro Road, February 23, 2015 at 2:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Director Powell at 2:03 p.m.

**Present:** Director Powell, Director Sinser, Director Venable and Director van Duinwyk. Director Keller was absent. Fire Chief Hickman, and District Counsel M. Manion were also present.

- 1. Public comment: Any person may address the Board at this time on any non-agenda matter that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Montecito Fire Protection District. (30 minutes total time is allotted for this discussion.)**

There was no public comment

- 2. Introduction of recently promoted and newly hired personnel: Engineer Jordan Zeitsoff; Captain Scott Chapman, Captain Drue Holthe, Battalion Chief Alan Widling, and Division Chief Kevin Taylor.**

Chief Hickman made the introductions and administered the oath of office to Battalion Chief Wilding and Division Chief Taylor.

The Board took no action.

The Board took a recess at 2:18 p.m. and reconvened at 2:25 p.m.

- 3. TIME CERTAIN: 2:15p.m.: Update from representatives of PARS on the District's OPEB investment strategies, and consider changes or modifications.**

Ann Wimmer and Salvatore Milazzo, from Highmark Capital, and Jennifer Meza from PARS provided a presentation about the District's post retirement health care plan and trust funding program. (Their presentation is available upon request.) Ms. Wimmer stated that she felt that the Balanced Objective is a good investment strategy for the District– but ultimately it is the Board who will determine the risk levels to take with investments.

Public Comment:

Warner Owens stated that only the Board can determine the amount of risk to accept when selecting an investment strategy and he was “distressed” that their management fees were not available.

Director Venable recommended that no changes be made to the investment strategy at this time. Director Van Duinwyk concurred.

Director Sinser asked for more detail and other performance options next time that Highmark and PARS make a presentation to the Board.

The Board directed the Finance Committee to request and review PARS quarterly reports and report this information back to the Board, and to make sure that fees are clearly stated.

- 4. Consider hiring human resource specialist to review hiring policies and evaluate ways to enhance diversity in the workforce at Montecito Fire.**

Chief Hickman reported that he spoke to the District's human resource counsel who indicated that California prohibits hiring based on sex race, creed, color, or ethnicity. He reviewed the District's recruiting process and counsel's recruiting recommendations. He reported on the Montecito Community demographics, Fire District employee demographics, and national demographics in the fire service. Ms. Ventura provided the demographics of local fire agencies.

The Board discussed diversity outreach that has been conducted by other agencies and suggested that the District find out more about these programs.

Public Comment:

John Ziliotto stated that the District should just get the best firefighter possible, regardless of sex or race.

On a motion by Director van Duinwyk, seconded by Director Powell, the Board directed the Fire Chief to seek out volunteers to work on an adhoc committee created to develop ways to enhance diversity in the workforce. Director's van Duinwyk, Powell and Venable voted in favor; Director Sinsler opposed.

The Board took a recess at 3:38 p.m. and reconvened at 3:42 p.m.

**5. Discuss land acquisition options for a third station in the east end of the District.**

Chief Hickman reviewed the actions at the last board meeting board relating to the adoption of Citygate recommendations to develop a Fire District presence on the east end of the District. He stated that if the Board is interested in other properties, the District would have to review the information previously studied and possibly develop new studies. Chief Hickman recommended that the District continue to focus on the "Palmer Jackson East" location for a third station. He stated that the District will need to certify the new EIR before we can enter into an agreement to purchase the property.

The Board asked that Mr. Gira of AMEC attend the next regular meeting to report on the progress of completing the EIR.

The Board discussed other options including smaller facilities, different site locations and whether or not to conduct a "straw poll" to identify which Directors would be willing to move forward with the "Palmer Jackson East" property and the possible timeline to certify the new EIR.

Director Powell asked counsel if Director Sinsler's conflict with the "Palmer Jackson East" parcel would affect his ability to participate on a straw poll specifically addressing that property. Mr. Manion stated that Director Sinsler can participate in a general discussions about a third station, but if the Board is specifically discussing the "Palmer Jackson East" parcel, Director Sinsler would have to recuse himself.

Public Comment:

Warner Owens asked if Director Sinsler's conflict only applies if he votes in the negative relating to the "Palmer Jackson East" property. Mr. Manion stated that his conflict relates to any participation that specifically involves the "Palmer Jackson East" property.

Sylvia Easton stated that she hopes that there are no more delays, and that AMEC get the EIR completed as soon as possible.

Director Powell pointed out that the delays in moving forward with the project are related specifically to the lawsuit and the lack of a completed EIR, not because of delays caused by the Board of Directors. He also stated that he is not inclined to ask Director Sinsler to step down to enable a straw poll on the specific "Palmer Jackson East" property.

The Board took no action.

**6. Report from the Finance Committee (copy of Agenda for Finance Committee Meeting attached).**

Director Sinsler provided an overview of the February 12, 2015 Finance Committee Meeting, including recommendation of approval of financials, review of PARS statement, an accelerated pay schedule for PARS, updated salary benefit schedule, and a need for long range budgeting.

**a. Review CalPERS Annual Valuation Report as of June 30, 2013 for Miscellaneous and Safety Plans.**

The Board directed staff to include the lump sum payment in the FY 2015/16 preliminary budget as part of the budget policy recommendations.

**b. Consider Committee's recommendation to approve January 2015 financial statements.**

The January 2015 financial statements were unanimously approved on a motion made by Director van Duinwyk, seconded by Director Sinser.

**c. Consider Committee's recommendation to approve revised Salary and Benefit schedule for fiscal year 2014-15.**

The revised Salary and Benefit schedule for fiscal year 2014-15 was unanimously approved on a motion made by Director van Duinwyk, seconded by Director Venable.

**d. Consider Committee's budget policy recommendations for fiscal year 2015-16.**

Chief Hickman stated that this recommendation would pre-fund the PARS account to 90% which is what Capital PFG had recommended, however he is cautious about how aggressively this is funded. He advised that he will contact Capitol PFG to see if they support funding this account to 90% with a lump sum.

The Finance Committee's budget policy recommendations to make contributions of \$4,367,000 in the 2015/16 preliminary budget year utilizing Fund 3653 (utilizing dollar cost averaging), with the requirement that 3653 be replenished, and the inclusion of 2.2% growth in preliminary budget were unanimously approved on a motion by Director Powell, seconded by Director Sinser.

**7. Approval of Minutes of January 21, 2015 Special Meeting.**

The Minutes of January 21, 2015 Special Meeting were approved on a motion by Director van Duinwyk, seconded by Director Sinser. Directors Powell, Sinser and van Duinwyk voted in favor; Director Venable abstained.

**8. Fire Chief's report.**

The Fire Chief reported that there were no significant calls; three new firefighters begin the District's Fire Academy; and there will be a press release sent out regarding the recent promotions and new hires.

Public Comment:

Sylvia Easton agrees with the need to continue to provide EMS services to all citizens in the community.

John Ziliotto stated that it shouldn't be hard to convince the Jacksons that a third station near their property will enhance their property.

**9. Board of Director's report.**

Director Sinser reported on the CSDA conference in Napa, and provided a brief summary to the Board. (Summary available upon request.)

Public comment:

Warner Owens stated that he has also attended the CSDA conference, and felt that it was very beneficial. He added that he senses that there is more listening and respecting of each other between the Directors on the Fire District Board.

Director Powell and Director Venable reported that they attended Chief McElwee's and Chief McLeod's retirement BBQ.

**10. Suggestions from Directors for items other than regular agenda items to be included for the March 23, 2015 Regular Board meeting.**

There were no requests for agenda items for the March 23, 2015 Regular Board meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

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John Abraham Powell

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Gene Sinsler