



VISTA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Rescheduled Regular Board of Directors Meeting
Minutes – January 17, 2024

These minutes reflect the order in which items appeared on the meeting agenda and do not necessarily reflect the order in which items were considered.

REGULAR AGENDA

President Elliott called to order the regular meeting of the Vista Fire Protection District Board of Directors at 1:03 PM at Vista Fire Station No. 5, 2900 South Melrose Drive, Vista CA.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Director Ploetz led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll

Directors Present: Elliott, Fougner, Gomez (*arrived at 1:08 pm*), Miller, Ploetz

Directors Absent: None

Staff Present: Karlena Rannals, Administrative Manager; Gerard Washington, Fire Chief (*arrived at 1:14 pm*); Bret Davidson, Deputy Chief

3. Open Discussion with the Board (Public Comment)

No one requested to speak to the Board.

4. Consent Calendar

MOTION BY DIRECTOR FOUIGNER, SECOND BY DIRECTOR MILLER, CARRIED 4 AYES; 0 NOES; 1 ABSENT (*Gomez*); 0 ABSTAIN to approve the balance of the consent calendar, with the removal of item 4 a. i) Board of Directors minutes of December 13, 2023 as submitted:

a. *Payroll Register*

• Payroll paid on January 5, 2024	\$5,683.34
• Payroll taxes paid on January 5, 2024	\$ <u>434.78</u>
Total	\$6,118.12

b. *Accounts Payable*

• Accounts Payable Check 4149 thru 4155 paid January 17, 2024	\$1,337,221.40
• Auto withdrawal(s) paid on December 8, 2024 – January 7, 2024	<u>899.18</u>
Total	\$1,337,221.40

c. *Receive and File*

i) Fire Department Reports

(1) *Fire Chief*

(2) *Fire Marshal*

(3) *District Inspector*

ii) Administrative Manager's Report

iii) Correspondence

(1) County of San Diego – Annual Report of Fire Mitigation Fee

The board members discussed the following matter on the Consent Calendar:

a. *Board of Directors Minutes*

- Board of Directors minutes December 13, 2023

Director Miller stated that the Minutes under item 8. F. *Director Comments* is written in a manner that implies “financial assistance” which was not his intent. He requested that the minutes under his item 3 “Fire Insurance” is modified to the following:

Fire Insurance – asked if there was anything that the Board could do to assist residents about obtaining homeowners insurance. Not only have the costs increased significantly, but many policies are being cancelled. A consideration was to look at opportunities from the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) and target residents in the severe and high hazard zones.

MOTION BY DIRECTOR MILLER, SECOND BY DIRECTOR FOUIGNER, CARRIED 5 AYES; 0 NOES; 0 ABSENT; 0 ABSTAIN to approve the December 13, 2023 minutes, as amended.

5. Continuing Business

a. *None*

6. New Business

a. *Ordinance 2024-01*

Ms. Rannals, Administrative Manager reviewed the process for ordinance adoption, noting that the last time Ordinance No. 18 was approved was in 2003. Knowing that changes have occurred over 20 years, she requested that the City Staff review and update. Chief Davidson reported that the Fire Inspector and Fire Marshal have reviewed the proposed language and are ensuring that the notices to the residents are updated and that they are responsive to the public.

The Board members stressed the importance of communicating with the public and identifying clearly up front in the notice of what must be abated will help resolve issues. Chief Davidson reported that the new inspection program will allow the inspector to take photos of the violations and include that documentation along with the notice.

At the conclusion of the discussion the board was comfortable with the content of the ordinance and the President set the public hearing for February 14 and final adoption, with instruction to the Board Clerk to notice the hearing pursuant to all applicable codes. Ms. Rannals reports that based upon the date of the public hearing, the Ordinance would become effective March 15, well in advance of the first weed abatement notice being sent.

b. *Board of Directors Meeting – April 10, 2024*

Ms. Rannals reported that she is aware that two board members will be out of town on this scheduled meeting date, and that she will also be out of town; however, can video conference to attend the meeting. President Elliott requested consideration to reschedule the meeting to April 17th.

MOTION BY DIRECTOR GOMEZ, SECOND BY DIRECTOR FOUNGNER, CARRIED 5 AYES; 0 NOES; 0 ABSENT; 0 ABSTAIN to reschedule the regular meeting from April 10 to April 17, 2024, noting no change in meeting time or location.

7. Oral Report(s)

a. *Fire Chief* – Chief Washington in addition to his report:

- Board Workshop – January 31, 2024

President Elliott requested a 30-minute time limit on this topic, as it is intended to only identify topics and prioritize the agenda for the workshop. Chiefs' Washington and Davidson led the discussion for topics of concern, and not the strategic direction of the District. Chief Washington noted a separate strategic planning session is planned. The workshop ideas included:

- Role and Responsibilities of the Fire Inspector (In contract vs. out of contract)
- Standards of Coverage
- Board Responsibilities vs. Staff Responsibilities
- Board of Directors Relationship with Fire Safe Council
- Service Level Needs Outside of Contract
- Fire Statistics Reporting
- Legal Representation

At the conclusion of the time, board and staff agreed to the following agenda:

- Board vs. Staff Responsibilities
- Roles and Responsibilities of the Fire Inspector (2010 contract vs. Amendment #8)
- Standards of Coverage
 - Fire Statistics Reporting
- Legal Services

Chief Washington also reported on the shortage of firefighting personnel, noting that the Suppression force has fourteen vacancies in addition to a shortage of inspectors. They, along with numerous other agencies nationwide, are experiencing the same recruitment shortage.

b. *Deputy Chief – Administration*: Deputy Chief Davidson reported the following:


- As noted previously, there are two fire inspector vacancies and they received eighty-five applications. The selection process is progressing.
- Because of the 14 Firefighter vacancies, they may have to consider “brown outs.” The forced hires are taking a toll on the personnel, for they are not able to go home until a replacement comes in for them.

Director Gomez departed the meeting at 3:09 pm


- c. *Administrative Manager – Ms. Rannals:* In addition to her report, she reported on the following:
 - It is time to file the annual Form 700 Conflict of Interest Statements. Due date, April 1.
 - With the assistance of Robin Biglione, and the Management Analyst in the City’s Engineering Department, and Finance, the invoice and supporting documentation was provided for submission of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) in the amount of \$193,400. Once the money has been received from the Office of Emergency Services, a check will be issued to the City of Vista for the reconstruction of Fire Station 3.
 - All W2’s and 1099’s was processed and delivered.
 - She made an initial \$500,000 contribution to California CLASS, transferring funds from the Local Agency Investment Fund.
 - The annual State Controller’s Report will be submitted the week of January 22nd ahead of the January 31, 2024 deadline.
 - She has hired a temporary employee, Yadira Correa who worked at the City of Vista Fire Department. The temporary contract does not exceed four hundred hours.
- d. *Legal – Mr. Pfister – unable to attend. No report.*
- e. *Fire Safe Council of Vista – Update:* Director Gomez left the meeting early. There was no report.
- f. *Board of Directors*
 - Ploetz: reported that the Fire Safe Council of San Diego County has set up pilot program offering a free wildfire home assessment. To date, twenty-six residents have signed up. Notification for this program was conducted by sending mail through specific postal routes.

8. Adjournment

President Elliott adjourned the meeting at 3:25 pm.



Karlena Rannals
Board Clerk



James F. Elliott
President