



VISTA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT Regular Board of Directors Meeting Minutes – March 13, 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 1:00 PM at the “Smart Space” conference room located at 450 South Melrose Drive, Vista CA.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

President Elliott led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll

Directors Present: Elliott, Fougner, Gomez, Miller, Ploetz

Directors Absent: None

Staff Present: Karlena Rannals, Administrative Manager; Gerard Washington, Fire Chief (participated via Zoom); Bret Davidson, Deputy Chief; James Kozakiewicz, Fire Inspector; Fred Pfister, Legal Counsel

3. Special Presentation(s)

a. *Weed Abatement*

Inspector Kozakiewicz delivered a PowerPoint presentation outlining the 2024 Weed Abatement program that included the following:

1. The Importance of Weed Abatement: critical program in reducing the risk of wildfires by clearing combustible vegetation that can function as fuel.
2. The Timeline: the program will run from late March to mid-April with courtesy notices and “Notices to Clean Premises.” Followed by site inspections beginning in June, with follow-up inspections for non-compliant properties in July. Forced abatement processes usually start in August.
3. Visual Aids: included a map of district properties in the “high” and “medium” wildland threat areas that will require an inspection.

Staff reported that the goal this year is to inspect 100% of the properties within the District, which is estimated to be more than 5,100 parcels. Inspector Kozakiewicz also distributed sample correspondence for the board’s information which each property owner will receive. This is a notable change over previous years, as the focus in the past has been vacant parcels. Since the recent update of the District’s ordinance, the inspection staff will be able to address palm trees on parcels with structures. Staff responded to questions from the Board. At the conclusion of the discussion, staff agreed to amend the proposed notices for further clarity.

b. *Standards of Cover*

Chief Davidson delivered a PowerPoint presentation *entitled* Community Risk Assessment & Standards of Cover. His presentation included a five-year look back period of data, the demographics of the City and District, and the various threats (Fires, Earthquake/Weather Events, Hazmat, EMS, MCI, Active Shooter) that emergency personnel respond to.

He explained that the Standards of Coverage looks at effective response force for each risk factor. He reviewed various data pieces that included:

1. travel times and the total response times, which includes the 9-1-1 call processing, turn out time and travel time;
2. Call volume by stations and time of day, including peak times for calls;
3. Response times for structure fires;
4. Response times for medical responses;
5. Responses to the most frequented addresses;
6. Wildland fire risk;
7. Permitted Hazardous Material facilities;
8. Fire station distribution.

He summarized his presentation as to how this data will impact the next 5-year strategic plan with the Community Risk Assessment that identifies risks to the community; the Standards of Cover will assist in providing performance recommendations, and the VFPD Strategic Plan will assist in establishing measurable goals for the future. Staff responded to questions from the board.

At the conclusion of both *Special Presentation(s)*, President Elliott on behalf of the Board of Directors conveyed their appreciation to the staff for the presentations and the detailed information provided.

10-minute recess

4. Open Discussion with the Board (Public Comment)

No one requested to speak to the Board.

5. Consent Calendar

MOTION BY DIRECTOR PLOETZ, SECOND BY DIRECTOR FOUIGNER, CARRIED 4 AYES; 0 NOES; 0 ABSENT; 1 ABSTAIN (*Fouigner*) to approve the minutes included on the consent calendar as submitted:

a. *Board of Directors Minutes*

- i) Board of Directors minutes of February 14, 2024

MOTION BY DIRECTOR PLOETZ, SECOND BY DIRECTOR FOUIGNER, CARRIED 5 AYES; 0 NOES; 0 ABSENT; 0 ABSTAIN to approve the minutes included on the consent calendar as submitted:

b. *Payroll Register*

• Payroll paid on March 7, 2024	\$6,024.28
• Payroll taxes paid on March 7, 2024	\$ 460.86
Total	<u>\$6,485.14</u>

b. *Accounts Payable*

• Accounts Payable Check 4169 thru 4175 paid March 13, 2024	\$311,651.23
• Auto withdrawal(s) paid on February 10 – March 9, 2024	<u>965.88</u>
Total	<u>\$312,617.11</u>

- 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) None

6. Continuing Business

- a. None

Director Gomez departed the meeting at 2:55 pm

7. New Business

- a. *Request for Records Destruction*

Ms. Rannals submitted a staff report requesting authorization to destroy records pursuant to the adopted records retention schedule.

MOTION BY DIRECTOR PLOETZ, SECOND BY DIRECTOR FOUNGNER, and CARRIED 4 AYES; 0 NOES; 1 ABSENT (*Gomez*); 0 ABSTAIN to authorize the destruction of records pursuant to the records retention schedule and authorize the President to sign the document showing approval for the destruction of records and authorize any costs associated with the destruction.

- b. *Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Legal Services*

President Elliott summarized his reasons for seeking the distribution of the RFQ. He reiterated that he is not unhappy with the District's current legal counsel, however, he believes that as the District improves processes and the relationship with the contractor (City of Vista) there is a need to have a firm that has special district experience. Mr. Pfister informed the board members that he is not offended by the discussion or distribution of an RFQ. He understands the board's goal and is certainly happy to assist in finding a suitable replacement.

The board members discussed the necessity of a formal RFQ and discussed the possibility of holding off and consider simplifying the process. Cost and having a local presence are all factors that should be taken into consideration. Ms. Rannals reminded the Board that the purpose is for transparency and the staff's request was only to distribute the RFQ to seek interested firms. This matter will continue as an agenda item as the next steps are taken. At the conclusion of the discussion, MOTION BY DIRECTOR PLOETZ, SECOND BY DIRECTOR FOUNGNER, and CARRIED 3 AYES; 1 NOES (*Miller*); 1 ABSENT (*Gomez*); 0 ABSTAIN to authorize the distribution of the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Legal Services. Ms. Rannals agreed to provide a verbal update at the next meeting since the response due date is April 16.

c. *FY25 Budget Direction*

Director Ploetz led the discussion on the possibility of creating a “Community Outreach Coordinator” position. He believes that there is a real need to create a position in which an employee or contractor could submit for grants that could seek the removal of non-native species in areas of the district such as Buena Creek or Gopher Canyon, serve as a dedicated individual for community outreach such as assist the Fire Safe Council of Vista. The board members discussed the pros and cons, and Chief Washington reminded the board that there are other factors that must be evaluated and considered, such as: 1) to whom does this person report? 2) Are they “uniformed” personnel? 3) Where are they housed? 4) Will a vehicle be provided?

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Board of Directors directed staff to research costs for such a position, create a draft position description, including salary ranges, and agendize further discussion at a future board meeting for inclusion in the FY25 budget.

8. Oral Report(s)

1) *Fire Chief* – Chief Washington in addition to his report:

- The Navigation Center is up and running. If any board member is interested in a tour of the facility, please let Ms. Rannals know for arrangements.
- The City has funded the \$1.3 million GPS Opticom project. This will hopefully improve 114 intersections within the City.
- He plans to speak to the City Attorney regarding the current contract language between VFPD and the City of Vista to seek clarity.

Chief Washington departed the meeting at 4:11 pm

2) Deputy Chief - Administration

- The San Diego County Wildland Drill is scheduled for April 30, May 1-2. If any board member is interested in observing, please let Ms. Rannals know for scheduling. Also, personnel are participating in the Wildland Extended Attack Academy April 23-24, with multiple agencies participating in this academy.

3) *Administrative Manager – Ms. Rannals*: In addition to her report, she reported on the following:

- She transferred \$3 million from the County of San Diego to California CLASS as the interest rate was higher.
- A reminder that the April board meeting date changed from April 10 to April 17.
- She will be away from the office from March 21-28.

4) *Legal – Mr. Pfister – No report.*

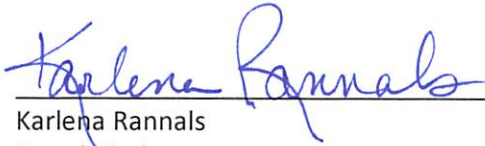
5) *Fire Safe Council of Vista – Update*: Director Gomez prior to his departure reported that there is a general membership meeting planned for March 16. The council is discussing the annual budget along with their annual goals. They have established a bank account thru the San Diego Regional Fire Safe Council, and they are still awaiting approval of the CWPP, which is expected early April.

6) *Board of Directors*

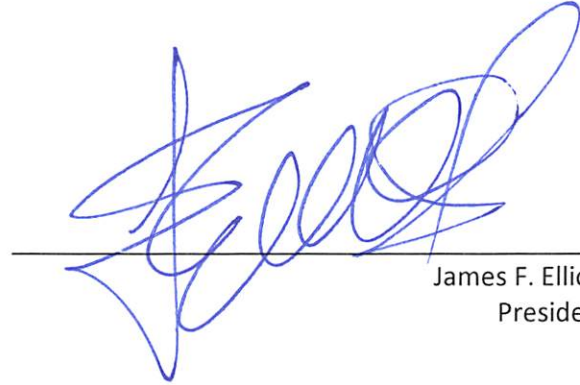
- Miller: expressed his concern with the Chief speaking about updating the current contract language between the City and District. He requested that this matter be considered as an agenda item on the next agenda.

9. Adjournment

President Elliott adjourned the meeting at 4:28 pm.



Karlena Rannals
Board Clerk



James F. Elliott
President