

COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

FIRE DEPARTMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION

Wednesday, Jul 17, 2024, 3:00-6:00 pm

Redwood Conference room, 701 Ocean Street, 5th Floor

Remote Participation Option for Guests: Join Teams Meeting (FDAC)

CALL IN: 650-564-3271 Conference ID: 887 871 738#

Commission Quorum: State law indicates that a quorum must consist of Commissioners in person pursuant

to AB 2449. Visitors and Guests may attend via internet.

I. ROLL CALL / INTRODUCTIONS

II. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

- a. Much more detailed than past minutes have been
- b. A few typos, but otherwise approved

III. WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE:

- A. Becky Steinbruner: Please Agendize and Discuss Recommendation to Supervisors re: Grand Jury Report on

Honoring Commitments to the Public

- B. Becky Steinbruner: Requesting FDAC to Agendize 2023-2024 Grand Jury Report re" CZU Fire-- Four Years Later

C. Becky Steinbruner: Supervisor Hernandez Publicly Wondered About Lack of FDAC Comment

IV. PUBLIC INPUT/ORAL COMMUNICATION FOR MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Any member of the public may address the Commission on any item within the jurisdiction of the Commission that is not already on the agenda. The Commission will listen to all communication, but in compliance with State law, it may not act on items that are not on the agenda. Members of the public may also address the Commission on any item on the agenda at the beginning of the discussion of that item. All Comments will be limited to 3 minutes per person.

V. COMMISSIONERS REPORTS (Oral reports; No discussion / action) This is an opportunity for Commissioners to comment briefly on issues not listed on the agenda, provided that the subject matter is within the jurisdiction of the Commission. No discussion or action may occur or be taken, except to place the item on a future agenda, as needed.

- a. There is concern brought up on complaints that have been brought up on the budget report and general complaints
- b. Also, a question on whether a wildfire fund was started regarding the county
 - i. Santa Cruz is pushing a ballot for more water allocation for firefighting

VI. SANTA CRUZ COUNTY FIRE REPORT

- C. General facility maintenance has been ongoing
- D. Annual maintenance is ongoing as well
- E. County engineers have been staffed and running smoothly
- F. Water tenders have been staffed as well to better prepare for a response
- G. County BFAA has been completed, their training is ongoing
- H. County emails for volunteers are going to be live soon
- I. Recruitment has been going well, recruitment has been going a lot smoother with the shorter wait times for the recruitment process
- J. Company activities
 - a. July 4th
 - b. Aptos Parade
 - c. Cookout
 - d. General community outreach has been going well
- K. There was a request for a general fire report in the entire state as opposed to just the greater Santa Cruz area
 - a. Chief Armstrong gave a general response to this
 - b. We are coming into a potentially dangerous next few months
 - c. Question on potential education that County fire could provide to the citizens
- L. Question on equipment up and running smoothly
 - a. Chief Filson said everything is running well
- M. Surplus process is going well
- N. Question on early detection and smoke detection
 - a. Detection program is highly efficient
 - b. Total of 21 cameras monitoring Santa Cruz County
- O. Spoke on expanding detection programs in the past and how the program has evolved over the years
- P. Question on naturally occurring fires (perfect storm example brought up)
 - a. Keeping companies and volunteers on alert will help a lot in this scenario

VII. VOLUNTEER REP REPORT

- A. For each of the 5 volunteer companies there is also a point of contact for FDAC
- B. Low response rate when attempting outreach to volunteer companies
- C. Company 29 responded to the outreach
 - a. 48 calls, 4 ½ responders was the average for the last two months
 - b. For the no shows, there were reasonable responses to why our volunteers were not able to respond
 - c. Gave eye witness stories of two incidents that were seen by FDAC members
- D. Brief overview given regarding the volunteer companies, their coverage, and other miscellaneous distance facts

VIII. BUSINESS MATTERS (NEW)

- A. SB620 – Low Impact Camping Areas
 - a. Need to take care of this at the state level and quickly
 - b. When we get a sense of something is happening, we need to be able to agree on talking points for the board of supervisors
 - i. This allows Board of Supervisors to get it to the appropriate personnel quicker
 - c. A counter viewpoint
 - i. Sometimes with the 35 sites in the community, there tends to be oversight. This makes it difficult to for leadership to pass along good information and enforce different rules at these sites
 - d. The regulatory framework needs to be understood more
 - e. Question on Fire Marshal should be more involved in the regulation process
 - i. General discussion followed
 - ii. Still back and forth on State vs county handling these various issues
 - iii. Need better understandings of local ordinances so that when there is a violation action can be taken immediately
 - f. Potential program to get community to report on potential incidents or violations of local laws
- B. FDAC Meeting Time – proposal to reduce back to 2 hours
 - a. Motion to move from 3-6pm to 1-4pm
 - b. General discussion on commute to new time compared to old time
 - c. Idea was brought up making the meeting a strict 2-hour meeting
 - d. Also discussed keeping the meeting in the county building as opposed to CZU HQ
 - e. New proposition for 3:30-5:30pm meeting time was brought up
 - f. MOTION PASSES FOR 3:30-5:30pm meeting time, LOCATION TBD ON A MONTHLY BASIS
- C. LAFCO Update
 - a. Purpose of new study was to explore the annexation of portions of CSA 48 to other fire districts
 - b. The annexation of Corralitos and PD is no longer continuing due to financial situation
 - i. This would also discuss the impacts of consolidation of fire districts and CSA 48
 - c. This study and completed draft are expected to take about 2-3 months
 - d. General discussion on what the study would cover, including the zoning of districts and single/multiple district stations

- e. LAFCO is going to be the group we wait on before making any official advisements
 - i. LAFCO can actually make districts consolidate...

D. Master Plan Update

- a. Still waiting to present presentation to the board until the LAFCO study is complete
- b. PV fire protection district rescinded annexation request
- c. The County fire Master plan will be delivered to Board of Supervisors 08/24/24
 - i. Goals included are...
 1. Complete 3–5-year strategic plan
 2. Improve volunteer companies' activity data collection
 3. (Cont. on ppt., put in minutes later)
- d. General discussion around Masterplan continued

IX. BUSINESS MATTERS (CONTINUING)

A. County Fire Budget for 24-25

- a. The budget was approved by board of supervisors on May 22nd
 - i. A supplemental was approved at the June 4th meeting
- b. In depth conversation on the changes that were made between both meetings
- c. End of year discussion
 - i. Accruals are still ongoing for previous fiscal year
 - ii. Certain accounting mistakes have been corrected, the new year end totals are now accurate
 - iii. Overall, we are showing we had to use 123,123 of the safety funds we had set up
 - iv. The general notion on this small of a deficit is a good thing for county fire
 - v. Chief Armstrong points out the fund balance may change for the better
 1. General discussion on this section of the year-end balance followed
 - vi. 2 million dollars in fixed assets also was a large part of the 23-24 budget
 - vii. 66-hour work week statutorily lengthen the fire season
 1. This means CalFire will be funded for longer with a shorter fire season
 2. We should also see a reduction of county firefighters needed for the Amador season
 3. The state is also buying out the purse of all state employees
 - a. This will help decrease the amount needed to put forward for the firefighter benefits
 - viii. Next years numbers are yet to be discussed, still developing a strategy for the next budget
 - ix. General discussion followed regarding potential changes that could be made to help save money

Future of FDAC – Continue discussion

- B. FDAC remains a Brown act commission

- a. Do we want to change to a departmental Advisory group or stay the same
- C. Long term goals
 - a. Keep County fire as a CSA
 - b. Convert County Fire to a special fire district
- D. Had in depth conversation on FDAC and its limitations in dealing with contracts and negotiations
 - a. There has been a motion to make the FDAC a departmental Advisory Group
- E. There is still a need for transparency, but also effectiveness,
 - a. There is an understanding that there needs to be more balance in the current FDAC/what the FDAC will become
- F. Motion was presented on screen
 - a. Reasoning behind motion is that with this motion it can be taken to Board of Supervisors
 - b. Part of the motion keeps the core responsibilities of FDAC in the purview of the future of FDAC
 - c. Also discusses the need for more members and participation from local fire departments
- G. The issue of transitioning from old to new was discussed
- H. Also brought up gray areas that this transition would bring up between different fire departments
- I. Next steps include including this motion as extension of master plan, work on revising motion as needed, preparing to present this to the board of supervisors, continue to discuss potential changes/improvements to the new DAG (new FDAC)
- J. This motion would also make it easier to make CSA 48 a special fire district, and for other nearby districts to join as well
- K. In depth discussion on the new motion followed
 - a. Advantages and disadvantages were measured
 - b. Publicity was brought up and how it has severely limited the abilities of the FDAC inside and outside of meetings
 - c. Question was brought up to clarify the department advisory of the new DAG
 - i. Michael Beaton clarified that with this change the DAG would switch to being under Michael Beaton, allowing more flexibility
 - d. In depth discussion on how this motion would be moved forward in the next months
- L. Vote took place, unanimous in favor of pushing the motion forward
- M. FDAC meetings will continue, but Beaton will continue to report back to FDAC

Jackson: reach out to Michael Beaton for potential advancement and participation in new DAG

IX. ADJOURNMENT – 5:15

Next regular meeting is scheduled for Sep 18, 2024

The County of Santa Cruz does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the

benefits of its services, programs or activities. This meeting is located in an accessible facility. If you wish to attend this meeting and you

will require assistance in order to participate, please contact the ADA coordinator at 831-454-2210 (TDD number is 831-454-2123 or 831-

763-8123 from Watsonville area phones) at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting, to make arrangements. As a courtesy to those

persons affected, please attend the meeting smoke and scent free