



April 12, 2010

The Advisory Fire Commission met at a regular meeting on Monday, April 12, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. Vice Chairman Egan called the meeting to order and led the salute to the flag.

**ROLL CALL:**

|                 |                     |  |
|-----------------|---------------------|--|
| <b>Present:</b> | Commissioners:      | Barry Cunningham – District IV<br>Don Delcollo – District I<br>Mike Egan – At Large #1<br>Walter Fields – District V<br>Bill Granados – District II<br>Ed Haynes – District III<br>Melvin Chappel (Alternate – District V) |
|                 | Interim Fire Chief: | John Ross  |
| <b>Absent:</b>  |                     | Dylan Reinhold (Alternate – District IV)   |
| <b>Vacancy:</b> | At Large #2 Seat    |  |

**SERVICE AWARDS:** No one was present to receive a service award.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Vice Chairman Egan recognized the following guests: Deputy Chief James Williams of Oakland Fire Department and Assistant Chief Daryl Louder of Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, Virginia.

**CONSENT ITEMS:**

**February 18, 2010 MEETING MINUTES:**

Commissioner Cunningham made a motion to approve the February 18, 2010 meeting minutes as written. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Delcollo. All in favor, motion carried.

**ACCEPT AND FILE REPORTS:**

After review, the reports listed below were accepted and filed.

Personnel Report – Reviewed/discussed report of April 6, 2010.

- Chief Ross introduced Battalion Chief Mark Ferrara who was appointed as Acting Assistant Chief of the Operations this date. Chief Ferrara gave a brief summary of his career with the District. Many thanks were extended to Battalion Chief Henry Warren who was the previous Acting Assistant Chief of Operations and who retired from the Fire District on March 31, 2010.
- Commissioner Egan noted that firefighter vacancies are missing from the staffing report. It was explained that this statistic had previously been removed from the report as the District was not planning to fill the firefighter vacancies due to the economic downturn. Chief Ross commented that we currently are 33 below minimum staffing.
- Fire Chief Recruitment – Interviews of the three finalists are scheduled for tomorrow with the Board of Supervisors with a decision expected by the end of the day.

Operating Budget – Reviewed/discussed report of March 11, 2010.

- Commissioner Haynes noted that he had received an email communication from C.A.S. Mike George that answered his questions from the February meeting.
- Account #3620 – Gen Svc-Requested Mntce: Commissioner Egan commented on the amount expended (\$45,777) over projected appropriation (\$1,000). Chief Ross believes that this is for maintenance for new radios that we purchased. He will check into this to verify.
- Commissioner Chappel extended his appreciation for the email information that is relayed to the Commission members by C.A.S. Mike George in response to meeting queries.

Fire Prevention Report – Reviewed/discussed February/March 2010 report.

- Piedmont Lumber Fire – Commissioner Granados inquired as to an update on the cause of this fire. Chief Ross noted that the cause of this major incident, after extensive investigation, is being listed as undetermined by the Fire Investigation Unit.
- Contra Costa Canal Water Rescue, 4/11/10, Mrs. Janet Hogan of Walnut Creek – Chief Ross gave a description of water rescue efforts that saved Mrs. Janet Hogan of Walnut Creek from drowning. Engineer-Paramedic Dave Manzeck of the District's Swiftwater Rescue team was lowered into the water by CHP helicopter and he was able to get the victim to safety. This was an extraordinary rescue by all agencies involved.
- Commissioner Chappel was impressed with the efforts of the Investigations Unit on their success with juvenile arrests. Congratulations to staff for their diligent work.
- Fatality Auto Fire on 12/4/09, 969 Hunsaker Canyon Road, Lafayette / West County Auto Arson Fires: Commissioner Delcollo asked for an update on these incidents. He knew the victim in the Hunsaker Canyon Road incident who was a resident of El Sobrante. He and other community members would like to know the cause/ conditions of this fire. Chief Ross will get an update on the Hunsaker Canyon Road incident. Chief Ross also commented that a biweekly report from the Fire Investigations Unit is sent to Supervisor Gioia regarding the West County auto arson

fires and he will see that this is also copied to the Commissioners. Commissioner Fields thanked District staff for the timely flow of information on major incidents occurring in the District. Commissioner Chappel concurred and also extended his thanks.

Incident Summary Reports – Reviewed/discussed February and March 2010 reports.

Additional comments:

- Commissioner Haynes noted that turnout times are not good; too many are in excess of 1-1/2 minutes. Chief Ross will check into this matter.
- Commissioner Fields commented on the large amount of Station 70 responses and would like to know the long-term effects of fatigue/sleep deprivation on the crew members. He also inquired whether the District is seeing any fatigue issues associated with the 48/96 work schedule. Chief Ross commented that we have not seen anything of note. The District is monitoring this and performance indicators are being studied.
- February - Commissioner Cunningham gave special mention to Stations 6, 9, 81 and 86 for meeting or exceeding their turn-out time goal for the month.
- March - Commissioner Cunningham gave special mention to Stations 6, 9, 81 and 86 for meeting or exceeding their turn-out time goal for the month.
- Aid Received column - Commissioner Egan inquired if these figures reflect automatic aid agreement with Richmond and Pinole and if the figures stated are only for their equipment responding into our jurisdiction. He asked if there is a separate statistic for Con Fire responding into their jurisdictions. Chief Ross will verify this information and report can be revised if needed to separately reflect number of calls for automatic aid received by the District.

Suppression Leave Summary - Reviewed/discussed January and February 2010 reports. Discussion centered on the need for a firefighter recruit academy and possible hiring methods. Chief Ross noted that this issue will be reassessed after the Board of Supervisors meeting on May 11 (FY 10/11 budget adoption). Commissioner Egan also commended A Shift members for the fewest overtime hires during these months.

Community & Media Relations – Reviewed/discussed February/March 2010 report.

Additional comments:

- The Commissioners applauded Fire Education Coordinator Jojoy Smith's accomplishments and contributions during her tenure with the District.
- Juvenile Firesetter Program – Commissioner Cunningham inquired as to how many juveniles are referred to mental health professionals. Chief Ross will check to see if this statistic is available.
- Commissioner Cunningham commended the outreach efforts to middle school students on careers in the fire service.

Correspondence – None

Commissioner Fields made a motion to accept the file reports as written, seconded by Commissioner Cunningham. All in favor, motion carried.

## **FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT** – Reviewed/discussed report of April 7, 2010.

- Michelle Drive Incident Recommendation Committee –Commissioner Cunningham cautioned the Commissioners that the Michele Drive incident (7/21/07) is in litigation and Commissioners should refrain from questioning/answering on issues relative to this incident. He noted that AC Grace is spending a great deal of time complying with attorney requests. Chief Ross commented that any questions relative to this incident can be emailed to Chief Grace.
- Battalion Chief Promotional Interviews occurred April 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. A brief orientation will follow these promotions.
- Commissioner Chappel inquired as to whether Chief Ross had an answer to his question raised at the previous meeting as to whether or not the District charges for annual school inspections. Chief Ross did not but will check into this and send a response to the Commissioner.
- Budget – As part of the Workforce Reduction Plan, elimination of seven (7) permanent positions will be considered at upcoming Board of Supervisors budget meetings. Chief Ross also noted that the Apparatus Manager position has been consolidated with the duties of the District's Logistics Manager. A joint District/Local 1230 committee will be meeting to finalize plans for permanent or temporary station closures/rolling brown-outs of some stations which are anticipated to begin July 1<sup>st</sup>. Different scenarios will be considered with anticipation of a final plan receiving Board of Supervisors approval in May. FY 11/12 is projected to be worse than FY 10/11 and the District must take measures in order to remain fiscally solvent. General discussion on this issue followed by those present.
- Station 16 (Lafayette) Relocation – Chief Ross received word that our grant application for stimulus funds to relocate this station and also Station 86 (Pittsburg) was denied. General discussion on this issue followed.
- Commissioner Fields raised the issue of ongoing work being done gratis by the District for the East Contra Costa Fire District. Chief Ross noted that cost recovery plans for these services will be pursued as we can no longer provide these services at no charge.
- Fire Trail Program – Commissioner Granados inquired as to the status of this program. Chief Ross commented that we have a plan to continue doing the maintenance of the fire trails and the work will be done by Fire District operators. Outside contractors will not be used.
- Cost Recovery Program / Certain Services to Out-of District Patients – The District is pursuing a request-for-proposal to contract with a company that engages in cost recovery programs. The District is legally able to charge for certain services, including roadway automobile accidents, via out-of-District patient's insurance carriers. Commissioner Fields is morally opposed to charging anyone for medical services and feels that other avenues should be pursued to generate revenue. General discussion on this issue followed. Chief Ross reiterated that we are looking at a program that would only charge out-of-District residents' insurance companies for rescue services and would require the approval of the Board of Supervisors.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- Weed Abatement Charges: APN: 187-011-019 – Sunny Hills Aquatic Club, Walnut Creek

After review of Fire Prevention Captain Broschard's written findings detailing his investigation into charges on above parcel, Commissioner Haynes made a motion to uphold the findings of staff and charges shall remain with no reduction/change. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Granados. All in favor, motion carried.

- Draft Bylaws – Discussion/Amendments/Vote of Adoption:
  - Commissioner Delcollo called for the following change to Page 5, Article IV, Item #11: Change "Ensure" to "*Insure*".
  - Commissioner Cunningham called for the following change to Page 6, Article VIII, Item #2, amend sentence to read: Any member of the Commission who has a financial or personal conflict with any matter pending before the Commission will recuse himself/herself, "*refrain from any discussion prior to vacating his/her seat*", and shall not be allowed to vote on said item.
  - Commissioner Chappel (Alternate, District IV) suggested the following change to Page 4, Article III, Item #4, second sentence: Strike "*participate or*" from the sentence. General discussion followed this suggestion.

Commissioner Granados made a motion to send a copy of the Draft Bylaws to the County Counsel for review with the suggested change(s) to Article IV, Item #11 and Article VIII, Item #2. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Delcollo. All in favor, motion carried.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

Declaration of Surplus Property - Report of February 12, 2010 consists of one light vehicle – 2000 Ford Explorer. Commissioner Haynes made a motion to approve the surplus equipment list as provided, seconded by Commissioner Fields. All in favor, motion passed.

## **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

### Commissioner Cunningham:

- In view of monies paid to the County for services, would like to know if County Counsel could provide staff assistance to Assistant Chief Grace relative to complying with attorney requests on the Michele Drive legal case.
- Commented on a recent automobile accident near Lowe's on Highway 4, vehicle went off the side of the roadway. Crew from Engine 9 located the vehicle quickly, set up the scene for extrication, and guided Engine 6 to location. Good work done by all.
- Canal Water Rescue, Walnut Creek – The repositioning of engine companies at access points along the creek was excellent strategy. Kudos to Engineer-Paramedic Dave Manzeck for his heroic efforts and also to all agencies involved.

- Fire Chief Selection Process – Is serving on the review committee that processed applications and the candidates have been reduced to seven (from 14) as of this date. Oral interviews are scheduled for March 10<sup>th</sup>. He understands that the top five will be accepted for a final interview by the Board of Supervisors.

Commissioner Granados: Introduced Richard Chapman who is a retired Fire Captain of Con Fire and the brother of late Commissioner Robert Chapman.

Commissioner Fields:

- Commented on tornado warning that occurred recently. He contacted our Communications Center to see if a notification had gone out to our engine companies. He was told by Dispatch that it had not issued any information on the tornado warning to companies as it was being mentioned on local television/radio stations. Was greatly concerned as this is a life safety issue and felt that a warning should have gone out to engine companies. He did mention that a later warning did go out but not initially. Chief Ross will address this issue.

Commissioner Haynes:

- Noted the high-profile incidents that have occurred in the District over the last 60-90 days. The District has more than proven its capability and all are to be commended for their excellent work.
- Revisiting Issue of Yellow Clearance Lighting on Certain Fire Apparatus (5 engines) – Wanted to know whether anything further has been done on this issue, i.e., his previous complaint that oncoming responding apparatus during evening hours show only an overwhelming color of yellow. It is his contention that the red lights are washed out by the yellow lights and create a safety hazard to the public. *[Note: Former Fire Chief Keith Richter had Apparatus Manager Rau meet with Federal Lighting and as a result LED clearance lights on one KME unit that were problematic were replaced. Plan was to replace clearance lights on all apparatus matching that configuration. Dec. 2008 Mtg. Minutes].* Commissioner Cunningham feels that the District is in violation of California law. Commissioners Haynes, Cunningham and Fields will check into this issue and provide a status report at the next Commission meeting.

Commissioner Egan:

- Large number of recent retirements will leave a large void within the department and test our mettle. Feels that we are up to the challenge and wants the District personnel to know that they have the support of the Fire Commissioners.
- Piedmont Lumber Fire – Was gratifying to see the excellent teamwork and coordination exhibited among many agencies at this major incident. Does feel that the District's website is lacking as far as providing current information on this and other major events and that the District needs to look at improving the website to bring it up to par with neighboring agencies sites. It is an excellent resource for those looking to learn more about what we do and about the fire service as a career.
- Station 4 (Walnut Creek) – Is concerned about the weeds and feels that something must be done to improve the condition of the property.

- Contra Costa Canal Water Rescue – Wants to commend Engineer-Paramedic Dave Manzeck for his role in saving one of the victims at this incident.
- Questioned MOFD's Ladder 41 response to some of our recent major incidents in lieu of Ladder 31 from SRVFPD. Chief Ross noted that this response policy issue is under review with the Chief of the SRVFPD.

Commissioner Chappel (Alternate): Is very proud of the work being done by District employees and encourages them to stay prepared.

**NEXT MEETING DATE AND TIME:** Commissioner Delcollo made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Fields, to:

Next Regular Meeting: Monday, June 14, 2010, 7:00 p.m.

All in favor, motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

  
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Vicki Wisner, Recording Secretary