

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

Held at Fire District Headquarters, 595 San Ysidro Road, February 17, 2009. The meeting was called to order by President Jensen at 8:33 am. Present were Director Jensen, Director Venable, and Director Newquist. Others present at the meeting: D. Andreas, T. Edwards, J. Ebright E. Hvolbøll, K. Johnson, E. Klemowicz, J. Langhorne, C. Lim, T. McElwee, G. Ventura, C. Vincent, and K. Wallace.

1. There was no public comment.
2. On a motion made by Director Newquist, seconded by Director Jensen, the minutes of the January 21, 2008 Adjourned Meeting were unanimously approved.
3. After a brief explanation of payments made to Paragon Builders, the warrants and claims for the month of January 2009 were unanimously approved on a motion made by Director Newquist and seconded by Director Jensen.
4. Chief Wallace advised that the community has indicated that they would like to have sirens installed to provide additional advance notification for emergency situations. This was widely proclaimed during the Tea Fire Forum. There will be land use issues, and noise concerns that may make this difficult to pursue. Chief Wallace advised that sirens are now electronic and require less audible testing than some of the older models. His research indicates that sirens cost approximately \$15,000 each and he was told that we may need as many as 28 sirens to cover the entire District.

The Board supported the Chief's further research of a siren system. Director Venable stated that the public needs to understand that although the Fire District will research and support the program, the public should be the driving force in pursuing this as a notification system.

The Board took no action.

5. Chief Wallace advised that the District was presented a draft Actuarial Valuation Study of funding options for Post Retirement Health Benefits in April of last year. The District has until the end of this budget year to accept the report, but it will need to be updated with current data.

Chief Wallace reminded the Board that GASB45 requires government agencies to report annual post employment benefit costs and their unfunded liabilities for past service costs. It does not require prefunding, but that is an option to guarantee continued coverage. The report must be accepted by June 2009.

The current costs are approximately \$335,000 per year. To prefund post employment benefits would cost the District approximately \$898,000 annually (the full amount amortized over thirty years).

Director Newquist suggested that the District consider building an investment portfolio to be set aside for future costs.

Director Venable stated that using PERS to manage post retirement prefunding takes the responsibility off the District; creating our own portfolio would put all investment maintenance and risk on the District.

Chief Wallace advised that if a universal health care program is developed, we could be super funded if we prefunded the program.

Chief Wallace advised that he will provide alternative budgets that would include several funding options when the preliminary budget is presented to the Board in May.

Director Newquist requested that the Board have a workshop on this subject to discuss financial implications of prefunding and the overall GASB45 requirements. Chief Wallace stated that he would request Brad Au from Aon Consulting to return for the April Board meeting to review the GASB45 process and their Actuarial Valuation Study for the District.

The Board took no action.

6. At the last meeting, Director Newquist asked the Fire Chief to report on the possibility of creating a Firefighter/IT position for the District. Chief Wallace advised that the District has utilized the services of Don Cobb for as long as we have had a computer network. Mr. Cobb is available 24/7 and has two back up contacts who can respond in his absence. The District also has a third provider available if Mr. Cobb or his back ups are not available.

He advised the Board that in addition to Mr. Cobb, Geri Ventura troubleshoots requests for computer service prior to contacting him and maintains the District's computer workstations, including specking and budgeting for replacement equipment. Ms. Ventura and Mr. Cobb work closely to solve computer issues, however, Mr. Cobb has additional specialized server training and experience to deal with more complex issues. Mr. Cobb also handles all issues relating to our Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system.

Chief Wallace advised that the District has paid Informa Corporation (Don Cobb) approximately \$33,000 over the past year. Some of the fees were reimbursed through FEMA for services performed during the Tea Fire, when he spent most of the night helping with mapping for the plans section. There were

also many hours invoiced for researching interoperability with Santa Barbara County and installing the CAD system.

Chief Wallace reported that the salaries for IT specialists start at \$80,000 per year and go up from there. That, along with District benefits would cost well over \$120,000 per year. In addition to the extra costs, a firefighter works ten 24 hour shifts per a month; computer problems could have to wait for almost a week or longer before being addressed by a firefighter.

Our current IT maintenance program includes Ms Ventura being available 40 hours per week, during regular business hours and Mr. Cobb's availability is 24/7. He advised that he felt this arrangement is a more cost effective and productive for taking care of District computers.

Director Newquist suggested that the Board reconsider this in the future if IT service requests are increased due to developing technologies.

The Board took no action.

7. Mr. Hvolbøll advised that AMEC completed a study based on potential properties to consider for a third station based on criteria established by the Board. For the study AMEC reviewed potential properties, and determined that 2 properties were most appropriate to pursue, 4 other properties could be considered, and 8 properties that didn't warrant further pursuit. However, one property that were originally listed in the group of eight not warranting further pursuit has since moved up in consideration because they became potential willing sellers.

He advised that an appraiser and engineer will be looking at the Jackson Ranch properties and the Archdiocese property later this week.

Director Venable stated that the McGraw property (previously known as the Cleese property) on East Valley is now for sale. Mr. Hvolbøll advised that the McGraw property should be included in the appraisal process since they are now a willing seller. He will direct the appraisers to include the McGraw property when they survey the other properties.

Mr. Ebright asked if there was any agreement between Montecito Fire and the Archdiocese regarding removal of graves. Chief Wallace stated that there was not.

The Board took no action, but noted that properties E,F,G,I,J,M,and K in the AMEC Study are considered low priorities, and they do not intend to take further action on these properties.

8. At the last meeting, Director Newquist asked the Montecito Firemen's Association to make a presentation to the Board on their new organization. Todd Edwards, Association President, reviewed their revised organizational structure which includes a 5 member board, 3 negotiators, and a Human Resource Advocate. There was also the addition of "section leaders" for, BBQ's, Logistics, Special Events, Formal Events (honor guard), and Historian.

He explained that the main job of the Association is to act as a bargaining agent for employees, but they are also a charitable organization, donating to causes such as the Alisa Burn Foundation, the Wildland 52 Club and recently Tea Fire Victims. They also provide three spaghetti dinners per year as auction items to local schools.

He added that the Association also organizes and participates in several annual events including the 4th of July Pancake Breakfast and parade, Beautification Day, and the District Christmas Party.

The Board took no action.

9. Chief Wallace advised that Tea Fire Community Forum was well attended. At the forum, he reviewed the ICS structure and the general timeline of events the night of the fire. Chief McElwee discussed strategies that were used throughout the event.

The Sheriff's Department reviewed the Reverse 911 process, and then the forum was opened to questions from the audience. It was clear that emotions were high, and some questions were repeated many times.

The organizers of the event, the Montecito Association, submitted additional questions to the District to respond to in writing after the forum. Those questions and answers were provided in the Board packet, and posted on the District website.

Chief Wallace advised that the Mountain Drive Community Association had a volunteer fire company, and indicated that they felt abandoned by the District during the event. The Fire District has extended an offer to support them in finding training opportunities in the future and helping to facilitate the acquisition of replacement equipment.

Chief Wallace stated that the District Attorney may be releasing the names of the persons accused of starting the Tea Fire later this week.

The Board took no action.

11. Fire Chief's Report

Chief Wallace reported on several issues including: a structure fire at 860 Picacho; progress on the state budget; his attendance at the FDAC Board meeting on Friday; and the FDAC Annual conference April 16-18.

The Board did not discuss or take action on items in the Fire Chief's Report.

12. For future agenda items, Director Newquist asked to add Ethics training for the Board at the April general meeting.

Director Jensen adjourned the meeting at 9:35 am.