

# MONTECITO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

## Minutes for the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors

Held at Montecito Fire Protection District, 595 San Ysidro Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93108 on June 23, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

Director van Duinwyk called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

**Present:** Director van Duinwyk, Director Lee, Director Easton, Director Dougherty. Chief Neels and District Counsel Mark Manion were also present.

- 1. Public comment: Any person may address the Board at this time on any non-agenda matter that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Montecito Fire Protection District. (30 minutes total time allotted for this discussion.)**

Fire Chief Kovach of the Carpinteria-Summerland Fire Protection District presented a plaque and resolution adopted by the Carpinteria-Summerland Fire Protection District's Board of Directors honoring South Coast Dispatch for their service and partnership since 2010.

- 2. Recognition of new promotions: Captain Daniel Arnold and Engineer Dustin Barthel. (Strategic Plan Goal 6)**

Fire Chief Neels introduced the promotions of Captain Daniel Arnold and Engineer Dustin Barthel and welcomed friends and family in attendance.

- 3. Approve the second reading by title only and adopt Ordinance No. 2025-01 of the Montecito Fire Protection District designating Fire Hazard Severity Zones within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Montecito Fire Protection District. (Strategic Plan Goal 2)**

Fire Chief Neels presented a staff report regarding the adoption of Ordinance No. 2025-01, highlighting the proposed Fire Hazard Severity Zone map.

Motion to approve the second reading by title only of Ordinance No. 2025-01 of the Montecito Fire Protection District designating LRA Fire Hazard Severity Zones within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Montecito Fire Protection District, made by Director van Duinwyk, seconded by Director Lee. Director Easton read the full title of Ordinance No. 2025-01. There were no public comments. The roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes: S. Dougherty, M. Lee, P. van Duinwyk, S. Easton

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: J. Pennino

Motion was made to direct the Fire Chief to file a Notice of Exemption pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act with the Santa Barbara County Clerk by Director van Duinwyk, seconded by Director Lee and unanimously passed.

- 4. That the Board of Directors authorize the Fire Chief to enter into an agreement with Riviera Construction Group, in the amount of \$118,615.65, plus a contingency not to exceed 15% of the awarded amount, to be used at the Fire Chief's discretion for unforeseen project expenses for the Relocation and Installation of the Existing Generator at Station 91. (Strategic Plan Goal 5)**

Fire Chief Neels presented a staff report on the Station 91 generator relocation and installation project, recommending an agreement with Riviera Construction Group based on their comprehensive and lowest-cost bid.

Motion to approve the Fire Chief to enter into an agreement with Riviera Construction Group, in the amount of \$118,615.65, plus a contingency not to exceed 15% of the

awarded amount. Made by Director Easton, seconded by Director Lee, and unanimously passed.

**5. Consider recommendation to approve Resolution 2025-04, Adoption of the Preliminary Budget for FY 2025-26. (Strategic Plan Goal 8)**

Finance and Administrative Manager Nahas provided a staff report regarding Resolution 2025-04, Adoption of the Preliminary Budget for FY 2025-26. She noted that \$25,000 will be added to the fire mitigation budget for maintenance of fire roads.

Motion to approve Resolution 2025-04, Adoption of the Preliminary Budget for FY 2025-26 made by Director Dougherty, seconded by Director Easton. The roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes: S. Dougherty, M. Lee, P. van Duinwyk, S. Easton

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: J. Pennino

**6. Election for 2025 CSDA Board of Directors. (Strategic Plan Goal 1)**

Fire Chief Neels provided a staff report regarding the CSDA Board of Directors Election for 2025. He read a statement of endorsement from Director Pennino for candidate Marymee. The Board discussed the qualifications and experience of candidate Duffield and Marymee.

Motion to direct the Fire Chief to vote for Scott Duffield made by Director Easton, seconded by Director Lee and unanimously passed.

**7. Approval of Minutes of the May 27, 2025 Regular Meeting.**

Motion to approve the minutes of the May 27, 2025 Regular meeting as amended made by Director Lee, seconded by Director Easton, and unanimously passed.

**8. Fire Chief's report**

Fire Chief Neels introduced members of the Fire Prevention staff to provide an update on mitigation and community engagement efforts. Wildland Fire Specialist Nic Elmquist presented an overview of Montecito Fire Department's risk mitigation work, highlighting the Neighborhood Chipping Program, Defensible Space Surveys, and Home Hardening Assistance Program. He noted that while Montecito Fire Department contributes funding, the majority of the mitigation work is carried out by the residents themselves.

Public Information Officer Atchison gave a presentation on Fire Prevention and Community Engagement. She outlined the key responsibilities of her role, including interagency communication, public outreach strategies, and the Department's communications calendar. An article highlighting the Home Hardening Assistance Program will be featured in the upcoming edition of the *Montecito Journal*.

Director Dougherty encouraged further community engagement and recommended that the Department consider developing an evacuation go-bag for residents.

Fire Marshal Briner presented regarding the outsourcing of sprinkler plan review. The Montecito Fire Department Engineer Inspector performs the inspections and manages the applications. Montecito Fire Department outsources the plan review with an annual budget of \$20,000-\$25,000. The process is cost-effective and proficient, with a turnaround of approximately 10 days.

Fire Marshal Briner also reviewed on the District's Zero-Based Sprinkler Ordinance, which requires fire sprinkler systems in all new buildings. Although ADUs are generally exempt

under SB 1069, approximately 70% of newly constructed ADUs in the District have included sprinklers, through exceptions related to fire protection requirements.

Fire Chief Neels provided a legislative update regarding Assembly Bill 888. This bill aims to support home hardening efforts statewide.

**9. Board of Director's report.**

There were no items to report at this meeting.

**10. Suggestions from Directors for items other than regular agenda items to be included for the July 28, 2025 Regular Board meeting.**


There were no items suggested by the Board to include at the next Board meeting.


The Board adjourned to closed session at 3:37 p.m.

**11. CLOSED SESSION: PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION (Government Code section 54957) Title: Fire Chief**

The Board reported out of closed session at 4:15 p.m. with no reportable action.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:16 p.m.

  
President van Duinwyk

  
Secretary Easton