



South Santa Clara County Fire District

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Marcus Hernandez, Fire Chief

MINUTES OF THE SOUTH SANTA CLARA COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGUAR MEETING OF April 9, 2025

1. Opening

1.1. CALL TO ORDER – Vice Chairperson Jay Johnson

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the South Santa Clara County Fire Protection District was held on Wednesday, April 9, 2025, at the Masten Fire Station located at 10810 No Name Uno, Gilroy, CA 95021. Vice Chairperson Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was present via in-person pursuant to Government Code 54953(e).

1.2. ROLL CALL – Acting Clerk Nick Giampaoli

- a. Commissioners Present: Commissioner Johnson, Commissioner Lewis, Commissioner Monaco, Commissioner Keesling, Commissioner Acker, Commissioner Ludewig
- b. Fire District Staff: Chief Hess, Chief Giampaoli, Chief Hernandez, Chief Burgard, Consultant Athey, Volunteer Winter
- c. Absent: Chairperson Lopez

1.3. DECLARATION OF POSTING OF AGENDA Per Government Code 54954.2 – Acting Clerk Nick Giampaoli

1.4. Introductions

2. Public Participation

None

3. Agenda Amendments and Changes

Commissioner Acker requested Item 4(c).a. be removed from consent.

4. Approve Consent Agenda

4(a) Minutes Approval

Possible Action:

- a. Approve the February 8, 2025, Regular Meeting minutes.
- b. Approve the March 12, 2025, Regular Meeting minutes.

4(b) Expenditures Approval

Possible Action:

- a. Approve Expenditures from March 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025.

4(c) Staff Reports Approval

Possible Action:

- a. Approve Incident Statistical Report.
- b. Approve Grant Writer Report.
- c. Approve Mitigation Fees Report.
- d. Approve Staffing Report.

Motion: Approve the consent agenda with the exception of Item 4(c).a.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Acker
SECONDER:	Lewis
AYES:	Johnson, Lewis, Monaco, Keesling, Acker, Ludewig
NOES:	None
ABSENT:	Lopez

4(c) Incident Statistical Report

Commissioner Acker expressed concern that Engine 67 is responding to Morgan Hill calls five times more than within the District, calling it “way out of hand.” Chief Hess confirmed the imbalance and urged the board to review unit hour utilization, noting City calls are typically shorter. He added that past data showed a roughly 50/50 split when factoring in time spent.

Motion: Approve the Incident Statistical Report.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Acker
SECONDER:	Keesling
AYES:	Johnson, Lewis, Monaco, Keesling, Acker, Ludewig
NOES:	None
ABSENT:	Lopez

Regular Agenda Items for Discussion

5. Old Business Info/Action

5.1. South Santa Clara County Fire District Dissolution – Information/Action

Discuss the dissolution of the South Santa Clara County Fire District.

Possible action:

- a. Develop correspondence to be sent to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors providing feedback regarding District dissolution.
- b. Develop correspondence to be sent to the Santa Clara County Local Agency Formation Commission providing feedback regarding District dissolution.

Commissioner Keesling stated that there is no longer a need to take any action as LAFCO has already acted on this matter. Commissioner Johnson expressed openness to community input and stated they would be receptive to comments.

5.2. Division Chief Vehicle – Information

Receive a report and provide direction to staff regarding the purchase of the division chief vehicle, given the upcoming District dissolution.

Chief Hess reminded the board of its prior direction to purchase a vehicle but, given the dissolution, asked if CAL FIRE should still proceed. Chief Giampaoli confirmed the vehicle is on order but can be canceled. Commissioner Johnson noted the County Executive requires approval for all purchases and advised deferring non-essential ones. He requested the item be added back to the agenda for action.

5.3. Inventory of District Equipment – Information

Chief Hess explained that the inventory process is complex and will take time. He met with Chief Kerdkaew (CCFD) and recommended assigning a CCFD employee to work with a CAL FIRE staff member to move things forward, which Chief Kerdkaew supported. He also decided to prioritize essential items, like operational tools. Commissioner Johnson asked if this included equipment

purchased through grants and given to Company 70, to which Chief Hess confirmed it would.

5.4. Fire District Consolidation Ad Hoc Committee – Information

Receive a report from the Fire District Consolidation Ad Hoc Committee

Commissioner Acker announced the first ad hoc committee meeting will be held on the third Thursday of the month. Chief Glass (CCFD) confirmed South County AB letters were sent to participants, though Gilroy has yet to name a representative. Per the District 1 Supervisor, the meetings will be private and are not subject to the Brown Act. Six meetings are scheduled. Commissioner Monaco voiced concern over the rushed timeline and lack of public input, with Acker agreeing more coordination was needed. Chief Glass explained the schedule was set by the District 1 Supervisor due to time constraints, and that the committee is advisory, reporting to the Fire Chief and County Executive. Commissioner Keesling criticized the process as rushed and flawed from the start. Commissioner Johnson noted the timing felt similar to last-minute agenda items. Volunteer Brandon asked to attend, and Monaco offered his seat. Chief Hess will attend the first meeting, followed by Chief Giampaoli.

6. New Business

6.1. Partner With Snug to Promote Their Daily Check App as a Community Outreach Safety Program – Information/Action

Possible action:

- a. Review Snug program, the partnership agreement and marketing materials, and approve posting on our website.

Commissioner Johnson shared remarks on the recent passing of Gene Hackman and his wife, which led him to explore the Snug program. He contacted the company and noted a discount is available from a resale standpoint. He explained how the application functions and mentioned a proposed partnership agreement received from the company. He suggested the service could be added to the District's website and promoted as a free community safety resource to build goodwill. If individuals choose to subscribe, a 40% discount would be offered. Commissioner Monaco expressed support, referencing an event with a friend. Commissioner Acker asked if any jurisdictions are currently using the service. Johnson confirmed that a sheriff's department is, though he couldn't recall which one. Acker requested a list of agencies using the service and its impact on public services. He also cautioned that even promoting the free version on the website may appear as an endorsement of the paid model. Commissioner Keesling agreed, recommending a cautious approach and suggesting it could be posted for public comment first. Chief Hess asked how emergency contact is made through the

system. Johnson clarified that the system notifies personal contacts, not emergency services. Acker raised concerns that the paid version may contact 911 directly, potentially generating excessive emergency calls. He reiterated the need to consult with jurisdictions currently endorsing the service. Johnson agreed to follow up with the vendor for more information on current users.

7. Volunteer Firefighter Report – Brandon Winters

Nothing to report.

8. Battalion Chief Report – Chief Giampaoli

- Chief Giampaoli introduced Chief Burgard, who will be covering for former Chief Main.
- He provided an overview of Chief Burgard's background.
- Chief Burgard then reported that there were no significant calls to note and mentioned that the department's inventory is expected to be completed by May.

9. Chief's Report – Chief Hess

- Chief Hess reported a productive meeting with Chief Kerdkaew (CCFD) to discuss the transition, with both parties aligning on two main goals: 1) no loss in service to the community, and 2) soft landing and dignity for the employees that are getting displaced.
- He confirmed the Amador proposal from the County Executive's Office has been finalized, sent up the chain of command, and will be presented to Cooperative Fire.
- He also met with Company 70 and Volunteer Winter to discuss concerns about the transition and Company 70 's integration into CCFD.
- He will attend the first transition meeting, after which Chief Giampaoli will take over. No decisions will be made at this meeting. Additionally, Chief Hess has a meeting with the County Executive on April 21st and emphasized the need for more frequent meetings.
- After meeting with Chief Kerdkaew, key points of contact have been established.
- He will continue reaching out to Supervisor Arenas, though without success so far.
- A 165-acre controlled burn will soon take place at Calero, linked to training efforts.
- A strategic decision was made to retain the helicopter at Alma Helitack for the next 10-15 years, transitioning from a phased approach with a fully funded BCP for a complete helitack base. An engine from Alma is being temporarily moved to Almaden to support increased helicopter staffing, including night flying capabilities.
- A hand crew readiness exercise is upcoming. Staffing has transitioned from 72-hour to 66-hour shifts, with several stations now on traditional staffing (Schedule B).
- Early discussions with Contra Costa County regarding a fire center are underway.
- Finally, Chief Hess will be interviewing Unit Chief candidates alongside Region Staff and the City Manager.

10. Events

None.

11. Request for Future Agenda Items

Division Chief Vehicle – Action

12. Commissioners' Comments

- Acker – Spoke about recent pancake breakfast and thanked CO70 for attendance.

13. Next Meeting is May 14, 2025

14. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:54 pm.

ATTEST 
Jay Johnson, Vice Chairperson


Nick Giampaoli, Acting Clerk of the Board