



Board Meeting Minutes
Fire Safe Council of Santa Cruz County

DATE: August 17, 2023

TIME: 10am PDT

LOCATION: Zoom

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1. CALL TO ORDER - Joe Christy

Attendees (* denotes voting BOD member): Joe Christy*, Patty Ciesla*, Chris Bradford* Clara Elliot Firewise lead for Tanglewood Felton, Tony Akin*, Cindy Weigelt*, Tim Welte Central Fire, Jen at Central Fire, Adam Hensleigh*, Matt Johnston, back as Logan has moved onto Sempervirens, Thomas Sutfin, Michael Horn*, Rich Sampson, Tim Shields Santa Cruz Fire, Cyndi Maskolunas Firewise, Carly Blanchard*, Chris Berry, Dave Graff Santa Cruz Fire Deputy Fire Marshall, Lisa

Lurie*, Lynn Sestak*, Robert Gray, Tina Castle, Sanjay Khandelwal*,
Matt Abernathy at RCD quorum present.

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (10 minutes)

3. CONSENT AGENDA - Joe Christy (5 minutes)

- a. Discussion and approval of [previous Minutes](#)

4. TREASURER'S QUESTIONS FOR BOARD - Chris Bradford (10 minutes)

How best to serve as treasurer

Wants to get contractors paid promptly, wants to serve with this approach

Assume I know nothing, please don't assume and communicate.

Are you receiving treasurer@ emails?

Jitasa would like a form for reimbursement

Joe reports bank balance is over \$100k

5. ACTION ITEMS REQUIRING BOARD APPROVAL

- a. [Authorizing resolution](#) regarding *Wildfire Prevention in Santa Cruz County 2022* project, 5GG21209 (5 minutes)
- b. Lisa abstains as a subcontractor
- c. Joe, Lynn, Carly, Sanjay, Robert Gray, Cindy Tony Adam Patty 10 in favor one abstention, motion passes

6. OUTREACH PROGRAM REPORT - Lynn Sestak (10 minutes)

a. Firewise

- i. We now have 51 firewise communities, newest is Boomer Creek off Glen Canyon, got help from Scotts Valley Fire. Fern Ridge Road
- ii. Looking for volunteers to run booth at MRNO
- iii. Tony working to develop firewise comms, needs outreach materials

b. HIZ & Brush Brigades

- i. Got 48 requests did 41 assessments, challenge to cover all requests as several assessors only committed to once a month
- ii. Chief Gray reported on Fire Chiefs wanting more connection with local fire chiefs when doing an assessment for their awareness, will be setting up routine to do those comms to improve partnership
- iii. CruzAware signups encouraged

- iv. Still needs an HIZ coordinator to help manage the program
- v. Brush Brigade school year has started, working to get adult volunteers to continue with lower student availability
- vi. Report from Tina that the CruzAware website was not working recently

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Report on & nominations to the Advisory Committee - Adam Hensleigh (10 minutes)
 - i. Advisory committee met on August 3, , Brett is coming back, Keegan at BLM,
 - ii. Joe reporting on hiring 5 for COE 3 for HFR, Jacob Gonzales said he would repost positions to update them, Adam wants help on interviews, to do 2 rounds
 - iii. Nominations, Adam has two people to recommend, looking for the doers, Clara Elliott is here. Introducing herself, is Firewise lead at Tanglewood in Felton, has enjoyed learning and doing different projects, is working at SLV library. Robert recommends her as a member. Patty moves, Second by Tony Akin, passes unanimously. Chris Bradford, joins in Adam's sense of urgency and would like to serve on the Advisory Committee to work on getting communities more aware and active in wildfire prep. Robert Gray moves, Lynn Seconds, passes unanimously.
- b. Update on Grants &
 - i. Joe presents grants expenditures spreadsheet
 - ii. CFSC missed our \$50k invoice, expecting payment soon
 - iii. CAL FIRE advance/reimbursement in the system, need to complete reporting prior to check issuance
 - iv. New CAL FIRE grant will fund Shaded Fuel Break on Soquel-San Jose Road, waiting for grant agreement for \$999,999
- c. Jitasa onboarding - Joe (10 minutes) has another call on 8/22 last week set up chart of accounts, some more onboarding items we need to go through, will update at next advisory meeting in September,
- d. Formation of interview committees for
 - i. Community Outreach & Education Coordinator/Administrative Assistant (5 minutes)
 - ii. Hazardous Fuel Reduction Project Manager (5 minutes)

- e. Commencing revision of our Strategic Plan - Adam (10 minutes) will be working to review, edit, considering combining with onboarding of 5 new board members, plan to do in person on a weekend. Will work on a doodle poll, mandatory for new BOD members.
- f. Partner with Lisa and RCD on Scrub County wildfire resilience summit, seeking organizations to invite, to address lack of publicity and lack of awareness of each other's programs Joe will inform Emergency Management Council
- g. Sept 15 7pm FSCSCC hosting wildfire speakers panel at Felton Library, Michael H to help with press release, 75 seats available, wants to fill the room
- h. Cindy reports on insurance. This is the perfect storm. We have inflation, increase in materials costs, labor and transportation costs, all impacting how insurance companies want to stay or leave the market. The insurance commissioner regulates rates, and is preventing premium increases, contributing to artificially low premiums which make it less attractive to stay in the market. \$450 per square foot to rebuild in Scrub Co. When you are further from a city center your costs to rebuild are higher. We have not managed our trees. Over 1 in 4 homes insured by State Farm, too much saturation, pulled out of the market. CZU fire costs were \$3B. Insurers need to have minimum amt cash on hand for losses. When insurers pull out they also do non-renewals. Now less competition in the market, premiums are going up for those still in the market. Fair plan can be unaffordable. People need to contact their legislators. Pay your premiums on time, insurance looking for any excuse to drop you.

8. Round Robin (3 minutes each)

- a. Lynn: There was an interesting presentation on Goat Grazing,
- b. Nancy Yellen suggests a good neighbor gold star award to neighbors who are doing good work in their community
- c. Wants a list of recommended weed abatement contractors (can add disclaimer) as a future need
- d. Adam: wants to bring in speakers for our meetings
- e. Scholarships for landscapers to get a certificate
- f. Tony: Central fire wants to get a brush brigade going, Lynn will connect them with Sherri.
- g. Joe, USFS social scientist says on average people forget about wildfire after 6 months.

- h. Matt Johnston has had to issue violations for use of goats due to impacts on Sandhill habitat and Tiger/Long-toed Salamander populations. Tony asks about how to get fuel breaks in. In Willow Canyon there will be a big project to remove eucalyptus. Talk to Terris Kasteen at Fish and Wildlife to get connected to the project.
- i. Matt Abernathy: RCD got a grant for Euk removal in Larkin Valley, wants to connect with Tony
- j. Tina Castle wants to see more activity in fuel breaks in SLV. Rich Sampson reports on Graham Hill SFB, Kings Creek Truck Trail, several small ones above Boulder Creek, working on one for Scotts Valley West to tie into Graham Hill. There's so much to do, would love to have more bandwidth to do more projects. Bob Gray thinks that this FSC is fulfilling role mentioned in grand Jury. Rich...., Patty, Lisa: it takes many landowners and neighbors coming together, we need to spread the word about shared responsibility and support each other, need to underscore the value of volunteer effort. Adam wants to do more like militias to organize community members. Joe commends group on spectacularly successful meeting today with so many attendees

9. Topics for next board meeting - (5 minutes)

10. ADJOURN 11.37 by Joe

The next Board meeting will be on Thursday, September 21 10:00 AM
