



Board Meeting Minutes
Fire Safe Council of Santa Cruz County
DATE: September, 21 2023

More meeting documents in the [2023-09-21 Board Meeting](#) folder

- 1. CALL TO ORDER** - Joe Christy (* denotes board member):
10:02 called to order. Attendees (* denotes board member): Joe Christy*, Patty Ciesla*, Christopher Bradford*, Tony Akin*, Lynn Sestak*, Lisa Lurie*, Brett Agler*, Sanjay Khandelwal*, Thomas Sutfin, Pam Peck from Monterey, Clara Elliot, David Graff SCFD DFM, Chris Berry, Betsy Stiefelmaier

- 2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

- 3. CONSENT AGENDA** - Joe Christy
 - a. Discussion and approval of [previous Minutes](#)
Moved by Joe, second by Tony, quorum of members voting, motion carried to approve the minutes.

- 4. TREASURER'S Report** - Nothing to report
Jitasa progressing, Chris to be added to signature file, reimbursements still outstanding.

- 5. ACTION ITEMS REQUIRING BOARD APPROVAL**
 - a. [HR Academia Proposal for outsourcing HR & Payroll for 2 new hires](#)
Discussion: Chris Bradford suggests using ADP for payroll instead of the relatively high fee of HRA, Patty advises using a solution that includes tax returns, Lynn notes time is of the essence, Tony recommends we hurry up. Chris then suggests we start with HRA and consider ADP or other internet solution in the future to reduce costs.
Joe moves we accept Chris's recommendation to get us up and going using the HRA proposal, then explore outsourcing payroll with ADP

later. Tony seconds, passes unanimously. Joe will speak with Ashley at HRA today to get the contract in place.

6. OUTREACH PROGRAM REPORTS - Lynn Sestak presents her slides which are available in the meeting folder link above.

- a. Firewise report – up to 52 recognized Firewise communities with 4400 households with Country Estates in Bonny Doon the most recent coming on board. Lynn has a list of many potential new firewise communities. Thanks for Tony's help. Pou Hana will be coming Lynn's way.

Activity: A bunch of new presentations given, helped LizAnne with another webinar on shelter in place seminar, an evacuation workshop, Felton Library speaker event. October shelter in place seminar for Zayante planned with Chief Maxwell speaking. Organized SouthBay Firewise leader event at Skypark, it's a meet and greet for Firewise leaders to get to know each other. Paid \$83 fee to reserve the site, Board agrees to the charge and future reimbursement.

Tony will be meeting with Genasys who bought Zonehaven. Tony will record zoom. Joe remarks that he is on the County Emergency Management Council which is advised of the integration of Zonehaven and Cruzaware, suggests OR3 should be involved with Tony's meeting. Joe notes one of the benefits of Genasys was that OR3 is able to adjust zones, for example Dominican Hospital moved to a zone not subject to flooding. Joe and Adam will be meeting with Dave Reid next Friday. Lynn notes any changed zones need to be communicated to residents.

- b. HIZ report: 2023 had 63 HIZ requests, completed 53, 10 scheduled. Losing assessors through the year, need to do training to bolster the team. We need new hire to help with HIZ and help with training again. Tom Freidrich recently got his CWMS certificate. Got a request from a reporter to do an assessment, planning to do his mothers house in October. Fire Chiefs want to know when an assessment is being done. Joe remarks that in Bonny Doon there's been an attitude that fire risk is down due to cool damp weather.

- c. Brush Busters: Note new name for the program (from former Brush Brigade). Since March 2023, 12 homes served, 42 cubic yards of fuel removed. Goal is 2 homes served per month. We want to encourage other communities to get involved. RCD's Laurel Bard, is helping refer homes to Sherry for service. We are mostly serving seniors who don't have the ability or means to do the work themselves.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Nominations for Secretary: No nominations. Patty is in attendance and will do today's minutes.
- b. New directions for Community Outreach & Education - Chris Bradford
 - i. Speaker Series: Adam's work on the speaker series has been phenomenal. Noted "I learned a lot". Lots of people weren't able to come or didn't learn of the event. Our communication efforts are in need of adjustment so we can reach people where they are. I learned stuff about hardening my home so I think we really need to push on outreach. Recording events and posting on our website, so people can get the info after the event even if they couldn't attend. Iphone on a tripod would be enough. Also need to engage with our social media, interface with facebook and Nextdoor. Lynn presented via zoom, notes it's hard when the presenter can't see the audience. We did have two new events' videos posted to our website recently. We have a youtube page, we can link to that. Clara looked at our social media and found we have very poor engagement. Only 2700 subscribers, twitter/X no account found, Pinterest not posted in the last year. We have a lot of work to do. One candidate in interviews said we really need to get on Instagram, "old people" outreach is not enough. Sanjay, asks why does social media need to be expanded? It needs to be a regular thing, not a one and done, it will need constant updating. Get clarity on what we are trying to do, who is our audience? We should create a plan and then execute on that plan. Chris believes we have to be active on social media, nobody reads newsletters anymore, we can only improve. Agrees we need to develop a strategy, but include all types of communications, not just social media, could include bulletin boards for example. Joe suggests we

form a subcommittee, nominating Michael Horn in absentia to chair such committee.

- ii. Adding Firewise liaisons from Fire Districts to Advisors: Chris Bradford said in talking with Adam, promoting his great idea of having liaisons from Fire Districts with Firewise Communities. Prefer to let Adam explain at next meeting when he can attend. Lynn does not want to share private information from Firewise, wants more info on purpose and who is to be involved.
- iii. Supporting Community Resources Centers: With the grant the county is pursuing right now, it looks like there will be a lot of stakeholders. Locations TBD, evacuation centers ideally centrally located for communities around the county. Boulder Creek Library being considered, 3 places south county, 3 north county.

c. Reports from interview committees for

- i. Community Outreach & Education Coordinator/Administrative Assistant:

Interviews were conducted by Lisa, Lynn, and Bob. Top candidate has been identified for an offer. Questions: Who is making the offer, what amount will be offered within the salary range, who is to get references, and do the ref check? Chris recommends one of the interviewers should follow up to get references. After checking refs, offer the position, with a salary proposal, offer to be tendered by one of the interviewers. Lisa will discuss with Bob. Chris agreed to be the point of contact for direct reporting. Will follow up with HR Academia to get the ball rolling and answer questions about benefits.

- ii. Hazardous Fuel Reduction Project Manager: Joe reports we have many well qualified candidates, Keegan is heading out of town but Brett is in town. Will attempt to coordinate schedules. Question regarding duties, what are they, who will guide them? Patty recommends reviewing the grants that fund the position, lots of specifics about what the HFR program elements are and the budget for staff time.

8. Round Robin

Some comments integrated into the sections above. Chris Berry would like to know what is going on with PG&E violations if there is any info available.

9. Topics for next board meeting

Joe noted there are a number of things at the end of the last meeting minutes, Good neighbor awards, 13 things there on that list, would be good to see if some of those ideas can be implemented.

10. ADJOURN

Adjourned at 11:11am

The next Board meeting will be on Thursday, October 19 10:00 AM
