



Long Valley Fire Protection District
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**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING
May 19, 2025**

Date: Monday, May 19, 2025

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: 3605 Crowley Lake Drive, Crowley Lake, CA 93546

This Special Meeting was rescheduled from its originally planned date of Wednesday, May 14, 2025, due to lack of quorum.

Members Present: Lorinda Beatty, Ron Day, Dan Gordon, David Melchior

Members Absent: Kim Czeschin

Others Present: Fire Chief Scott McGuire, Division Chief Fred Stump, Equipment Manager and Captain Billy Czeschin, Secretary Kathryn Durgin (via Google Meet), Becky Davis, Hap Hazard, Angela Plaisted, Richard Plaisted

Others Absent: None

1. Call to order, roll call, Pledge of Allegiance, and announcements. Commissioner Beatty called the meeting to order at 7:05pm. Commissioner Day led all in attendance to the Pledge of Allegiance. No announcements were made.
2. Opportunity for the public to address the Board on items of interest to the public that are not agendized and within the jurisdiction of the Board. Division Chief Fred Stump announced that a meeting to form a new local Firewise group will take place tomorrow at 7:00 p.m. at the Long Valley Fire Station, with Commissioner Gordon planning to attend. He provided an overview of the area the group will cover and noted that a commission is being formed to help guide the group's efforts. Fred Stump clarified that Juniper Loop is not included in the coverage area and briefly explained what would be required to establish a separate Firewise group for that area. Becky Davis, leader of the Sunny Slopes Firewise group, gave an update on a grant they received that funded two roll-off dumpsters. She shared how long the dumpsters will remain available and thanked the department for allowing them to be placed on department property. Commissioner Beatty inquired whether Firewise groups could collaborate on grant applications – such as one group securing a roll-off and another acquiring a chipper – to maximize resources. Chief McGuire responded that the decision would depend on the

granting agency but noted that agencies typically encourage joint community efforts.

3. Report and provide direction on the progress of the Sunny Slopes Station 2 project. Commissioner Beatty opened the discussion with staff reports followed by public comment.

Staff Reports: Chief McGuire reported that he has not yet heard anything back regarding the appropriations committee. He shared that during discussions with the county, it was suggested that securing federal funding may require going through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process to evaluate environmental impacts. As a precaution, he and Gerry LeFrancios requested that the county conduct both the NEPA and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) reviews simultaneously. He reported that he does not currently have a timeline on the CEQA and NEPA process as of yet.

Division Chief Fred Stump shared that Gerry LeFrancios had asked the county to identify an archaeologist within the cultural resources community and they determined that a biologist should also assess the site. However, Fred noted that the county has not yet located either to begin the necessary work.

Public Comment: No public comment was made.

4. Approval of the Minutes of the April 2, 2025 Regular Meeting. A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER MELCHIOR, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DAY, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF APRIL 2, 2025 REGULAR MEETING. Motion passed 4-0 with one member absent.
5. Chief's Report.
 - A. Volunteer Report. Chief McGuire reported on department activities since the last regular meeting, noting 18 calls with an average response of 7.22 personnel per call. He provided a brief overview of the types of calls, including traffic collisions, and mentioned that a crew was deployed to assist with the Silver Fire. He shared that several members are currently enrolled in an EMR class, and he has begun preparing for upcoming wildland training sessions for volunteers.
 - B. Report on Current Fire Department Activities, Assignments, and Schedule for potential Board direction. He reported that the department recently hosted Mammoth Fire Department for a social barbeque and sent a crew to June Lake for a training exercise with CalFire and Inyo National Forest. He noted that wildland training will continue throughout June, with CalFire joining some sessions to assist with instruction on the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). Additionally, Chief McGuire announced that the department will be hosting a wildland training event scheduled for June 7 at 9:00 a.m. at Mammoth Airport, with participation from CalFire, Inyo National Forest, Long Valley Fire, Mammoth Fire, and possibly June Lake Fire.
 - C. Long-Range Planning Discussion.

- a) Personnel. Chief McGuire reported that two former members have returned to the department as volunteers, and a new resident from Aspen Springs has also joined, bringing three new volunteers to the roster. He shared that Captain Soibian Spring recently had her last day with the department. He noted that the current volunteer roster now stands at 26 total firefighters.
- b) Airport. Chief McGuire reported that he spent last week conducting airport inspections, during which 129 units were inspected. He shared that 9 units failed and will require reinspection. He gave a brief overview of the reasons for failure, including unmounted fire extinguishers, electrical issues, overfilled units, and limited access.
- c) Geothermal. No news.
- d) Station Maintenance. Chief McGuire reported that the station's phone system has been updated and that he is coordinating with Frontier to address the phone lines. He shared that the fax line and second phone line have been cancelled, explaining that these changes will improve managing messages and better response to calls when no one is present at the station. He also noted that he is working to register the department as an agency with FirstNet through AT&T, which would prioritize first responder communications and significantly reduce costs for cell phones and future iPad use.
- e) Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance. Chief McGuire reported that the new radios arrived at the station today and are being scheduled for installation. He shared that Equipment Manager Billy Czeschin is currently working on updating vehicle tires. Chief noted that because the department's tires typically expire before they wear out, he is discussing ways to manage this issue in a way that maintains fiscal responsibility.
- f) County and Community Updates. Chief McGuire reported that defensible space inspections have been completed in the communities of Crowley Lake, Sunny Slopes, and McGee Creek. He shared that several properties were identified with violations, and those property owners will be receiving letters shortly. He also reported that he attended the Mono County Fire Chiefs Association meeting last week, where he accepted the role of President. Chief reported that he received a fire season update from CalFire and that conditions for the upcoming season appear very grim. He noted that the number of state and federal engines in Inyo and Mono Counties has dropped from 34 to just 9. He provided details on where those engines will be stationed and discussed the challenges related to limited staffing and reduced state and federal resources. Additionally, Chief McGuire reported that Long Valley Fire recently participated in a tour of the Crowley Lake Dam. He explained that the mechanism controlling the water flow is not functioning properly and is currently being repaired. He provided further details about the issue and the process involved in repairing the mechanism.

g) Grants. Chief McGuire reported that the Firewise Communities for which the department serves as fiscal sponsor have received their grant funding.

6. Review and take action on Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) Software. Chief McGuire reported that he and Paul Zastoupil have met with several software providers, including ESO, local agencies, and First Due, to explore options for a new department software system. After reviewing the options, Chief McGuire shared that he found First Due to have a cleaner interface and features more aligned with the department's needs compared to ESO, which he described as having a less user-friendly interface. He provided an overview of the features offered by First Due and expressed his preference to move forward with their software despite the higher cost. He shared the total first-year cost to be approximately \$14,000, which includes a \$9,250 annual subscription, an \$1,800 implementation fee, and a \$2,800 training component that covers all training, compliance, and records management. Chief McGuire also suggested including iPads in the department's first-out engines to run the First Due application. During public comment, Hap Hazard advised the Board to avoid paying the full amount upfront. Based on his experience with the county, he recommended paying 50% initially and the remainder after the system is successfully implemented, citing past issues with software that failed to meet expectations after full payment was made. Following Board discussion, Commissioner Beatty recommended budgeting \$20,000 to allow flexibility for purchasing iPads, though Chief McGuire noted he did not expect it to cost that much. Commissioner Day supported budgeting higher to avoid needing additional approvals later. The Board agreed to move forward with the proposal. A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER BEATTY, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DAY, TO AUTHORIZE AND APPROVE \$20,000 FOR THE FIRE CHIEF TO PURCHASE COMPUTER-AIDED DISPATCH (CAD) SOFTWARE AND NECESSARY IPAD EQUIPMENT TO IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM. Motion passed 4-0 with one member absent.
7. Second Review of Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget. Chief McGuire presented the proposed budget for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, outlining the line items with anticipated changes. He noted that there have been no significant updates since the initial review at the last regular meeting. He shared key adjustments including a \$5,000 increase to line item #100 (Administration Fees) and a reduction in line item #106 (Payroll Taxes), with all other line items remaining unchanged. He noted the total proposed budget of \$467,856.25, and explained the projected income of \$495,959.47, which includes the AB8 report, Excess ERAF, ERAF payout under the county agreement, and anticipated deposits. He noted that this results in a projected carryover of \$28,103.22. Chief McGuire emphasized that this carryover should not be viewed as a surplus, but rather as a retained amount resulting from the Board's ongoing fiscal responsibility. He noted these funds are intended to support the district's capital improvement plan and are not excess or unallocated money. Chief McGuire concluded by stating that, unless the Board requests changes, this will be the final version presented for Public Hearing and Adoption at the next regular meeting.

8. Discussion and action on the transfer of funds to Capital Account.
 - a. Resolution R25-01 Authorizing the Transfer of Funds from the District's Operating Account to the District's Capital Account.

Chief McGuire directed the Board to the budget balance summary and proposed that the department retain only the amount needed for operational expenses over a rolling 12-month period. He recommended that any remaining funds – resulting from responsible budget management – be transferred to the Capital Reserve account to demonstrate the department's commitment to its capital improvement plan. He suggested evaluating these transfers either quarterly or annually. Commissioner Beatty raised a concern, asking whether the department has a capital reserves policy in place. She noted that she believes once funds are moved into the Capital Reserve account, they are restricted for use on capital expenses only, and cautioned that the department should be careful in labeling the fund to avoid limiting future spending flexibility. Secretary Durgin confirmed that the county refers to the account as "Capital Reserve." The Board discussed potential limitations on transferring funds back from the Capital Reserve to the Operating Account if needed. Commissioner Beatty expressed support for the Chief's proposal but recommended consulting with the auditor to clarify the restrictions on moving funds in and out of the Capital Reserve. Secretary Durgin agreed to follow up with the auditor.

During public comment, Hap Hazard shared that this question goes back to when ERAF was established and there were various state budget actions. He noted that capital accounts historically offered protection from state takebacks. He stated that capital funds can be used for other purposes with Board approval but advised that if the Board chooses to rename the Capital Reserve account, they should ensure that the structure and protections remain in place to prevent the state from accessing or reallocating those funds.

Chief McGuire suggested joining a call with the auditor to explain the department's intent and ask for guidance. The Board agreed to carry the item over to the next regular meeting for further discussion.

9. Discussion and possible action on managing district funds. Chief McGuire raised the question of whether it remains beneficial for the department to continue relying on the county as both its bank and bookkeeper, given ongoing challenges such as delayed invoice processing, late fees, and the county's three-week shutdown during the holidays. After speaking with Commissioner Beatty, Chief McGuire shared that while some special districts manage their own bank accounts and others rely on the county, it would be worthwhile for Long Valley Fire to discuss the available options. He noted that exploring the possibility of managing a separate bank account could help address some of the financial challenges the department is currently facing. Discussion was made by the Board.

Fred Stump recommended reaching out to June Lake Fire Department for insight, as they are similar in size and may have relevant experience managing their own funds. Commissioner Beatty supported the idea of not fully withdrawing from the county's financial system but instead possibly pulling only the necessary funds for operating expenses into a separate checking account managed by the district. She proposed keeping Account 320 as a Reserve Account and Account 321 as the Capital Account, both under county control, while creating a new internal Operating Account for routine payments. She shared that this approach may allow the district to retain the benefits of the county's audit services, which she confirmed are available to special districts.

Hap Hazard provided public comment sharing that when he served on the board, the county decided to cover audit costs for all special districts due to the financial burden independent audits would place on smaller agencies. He added that the Long Valley Fire Board should carefully evaluate the administrative costs of moving away from full county financial management and consider the possibility that returning to county management later may not be an option. Fred Stump shared that during his time as a District Board Supervisor, the Board of Supervisors addressed audit cost concerns by tying the frequency of audits to the size of a district's budget. He explained that larger budgets required more frequent audits, while smaller budgets were audited less often, helping to make audit costs more manageable for smaller districts.

Commissioner Beatty clarified that the Board is not proposing a full separation from the county but rather seeking more control over operational payments to avoid penalties and maintain good relationships with vendors. She suggested following up with June Lake Fire and possibly contact Joanne Werthwein or Janet Dutcher at the County Finance Department for further guidance. She emphasized the importance of ensuring timely payments, noting that vendors may stop working with the district if invoices are consistently paid late.

10. Discussion and action on Long Valley Fire District Rates and Fee Schedule. Chief McGuire presented the updated Fee Schedule for Board review, proposing changes to apparatus, personnel, and service fees to align with current Cal OES rates. He expressed his intent to keep the department's rates consistent with Cal OES standards. Regarding inspection fees, Chief McGuire shared that CalFire does charge for certain inspections, though not for defensible space inspections. He raised the question of whether the department should begin charging fees for inspections, noting that they can take a considerable amount of time. Fred Stump commented that defensible space inspections are different from other types of inspections because they are required by state law, with CalFire responsible for their enforcement. Chief McGuire shared that there is now a requirement for a defensible space inspection to be completed prior to the sale of any property. He noted that, due to current workload, the CalFire inspector is experiencing significant delays. He shared that some agencies, with CalFire's approval, have begun performing these inspections for a fee to help property owners avoid long wait times. Chief McGuire suggested that the department charge inspection fees in cases where an inspection is specifically requested or when the department is asked to conduct one — such as when McGee Creek Lodge requested an inspection for compliance guidance and

supporting documentation. Discussion was made by the Board. A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER BEATTY, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER GORDON, TO APPROVE THE 2025-2026 LONG VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT FEE SCHEDULE AS PRESENTED. Motion passed 4-0 with one member absent.

11. Discussion and possible action concerning the dedication of a portion of Highway 395 to former Captain Vidar Anderson. Division Chief Fred Stump reported that he has reached out to Assembly Member Tangipa's office by phone and email regarding the Highway 395 memorial dedication but has not received a response. He shared that he also requested support from State Senator Alvarado-Gil's office, who initially indicated they would assist, but no follow-up has been received to date. Fred stated that, given the current legislative session, it appears this issue is not a priority for either office. He suggested it may be more productive to revisit the effort in September or October. He expressed disappointment over the lack of engagement, noting that the project seems to be a priority only for the department. Fred added that he is willing to make one more attempt within the next month if the Board wishes, but he does not anticipate significant progress from Sacramento at this time. He shared that he thinks the department should wait until October to try again.
12. Discussion and possible action on refurbishment of the Memorial Garden. Division Chief Fred Stump shared that after speaking with Chief McGuire and Commissioner Beatty, he believes that if no major updates to the Memorial Garden are planned at this time, it would be appropriate to move forward with basic repairs and maintenance. He shared that this would include addressing damaged areas, resolving issues with the tree and rocks, and fixing the sprinkler system until a formal redesign is approved. Commissioner Beatty shared that she knows a group of community members who may be interested in helping with plant care and pruning in the Memorial Garden. She asked if the Board would agree for her to reach out to them about getting involved. Discussion was made by the Board and they agreed to have Commissioner Beatty follow up with the community members. A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER DAY, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER BEATTY, TO APPROVE UP TO \$3,000 FOR REPAIRS TO THE MEMORIAL GARDEN TO BRING IT TO AN ACCEPTABLE CONDITION UNTIL A REDESIGN IS APPROVED. Motion passed 4-0 with one member absent.
13. Approval of Fechter Financial Audit Report and Management Representation Letter. A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER DAY, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER GORDON, TO APPROVE THE FECHTER FINANCIAL AUDIT REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024 AND THE MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION LETTER. Motion passed 4-0 with one member absent.
14. Board acknowledgement of stand-in Resolution R24-07 oversight. Secretary Durgin explained that while reviewing the audit, she discovered an error in the numbering of Resolution 24-07. She shared that the purpose of the current resolution is to formally acknowledge and clarify the oversight to ensure accurate and consistent record keeping moving forward. A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER BEATTY, SECONDED

BY COMMISSIONER MELCHIOR, TO APPROVE RESOLUTION R24-07 BOARD ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF NUMBERING OVERSIGHT OF RESOLUTION R24-07 FOR RECORD KEEPING. Motion passed 4-0 with one member absent.

15. Board review/approval of payment warrants since the last meeting. Secretary Durgin noted that the financials that she provided for this meeting do not reflect the warrant from last week as well as a check that was received today from State Compensation Insurance Fund. A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER BEATTY, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER GORDON TO APPROVE PAYMENT WARRANTS SINCE LAST REGULAR BOARD MEETING. Motion passed 4-0 with one member absent.
16. Board Secretary Report. Secretary Durgin reported on her activities since the last regular meeting, including the submission of several required reports. She shared that the Government Compensation Report for the State Controller's Office and the Employee Compensation Report for Transparent California have both been submitted. Additionally, she submitted the quarterly tax reports for the first quarter of 2025 and the Biannual Workers' Compensation Report to State Compensation Insurance Fund (SCIF). She noted there was an issue with the SCIF report where she had been misclassified. After contacting SCIF, she was advised to have the department's insurance broker, Ben Romo, submit a written request to correct the classification. She shared that he has since sent the request, and she is waiting to hear back from him on an update. Secretary Durgin also reported that she plans to be in Crowley from July 23-27 to inventory and organize department records, with the goal of moving toward digitization. She shared that she will be running payroll this week and will send the payroll warrant to Commissioner Gordon for review and approval. Lastly, she noted she has a family trip scheduled for June 5-8 to the Sand Dunes. While she will be available, service may be spotty, and she will follow up when back in a Wi-Fi area.
17. Review correspondence received since the last regular meeting. Secretary Durgin reported that the department received a donation letter from The Road of Life, a non-profit organization, thanking the department for the items donated to Ukraine. She also reported that she received an email notification from Mono County Finance Department regarding a new requirement from the county that is effective immediately. She shared that they now require all new vendors to submit a completed IRS Form W-9 prior to receiving payments. Lastly, she shared that the department received a dividend check today from the Estimated Annual Premium (EAP) dividend with State Compensation Insurance fund in the amount of \$2,583.20.
18. Review and adjust current fiscal year budget line items as necessary and accept. Chief McGuire noted that there have not been any significant changes to the current fiscal year budget.
19. New business and Board member reports. Chief McGuire reported that he will not be at next regularly held Board meeting on June 11, 2025. He suggested rescheduling this meeting to be on Wednesday, June 4, 2025 instead.

20. Call for Agenda items for the next regular meeting. Staff report on the progress of the Sunny Slopes Station 2 project; Discussion and action on refurbishment of the Memorial Garden; Discussion and possible action concerning the dedication of a portion of Highway 395 to former Captain Vidar Anderson; Public Hearing and Adoption of Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget; Discussion and possible action on transfer of funds to Capital Account; Discussion and possible action on managing district funds.

21. Adjournment. A motion was made by Commissioner Melchior, seconded by Commissioner Gordon, to adjourn the meeting and reconvene on the rescheduled meeting date of June 4, 2025 at 7:00pm at the Long Valley Fire Station, 3605 Crowley Lake Drive, Crowley Lake, California. Motion passed 4-0 with one member absent.

Katie Durgin
Secretary to the Board
Long Valley Fire Protection District