

1 **February 23, 2021**

2 **REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF**
3 **THE NORTH COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

4 President Van Doorn called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

5 **THE INVOCATION GIVEN BY Chaplain Helman.**

6 **ALL RECITED THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.**

7 **ROLL CALL:**

8 **Present:** Directors Acosta, Egkan, Kennedy, Munson and Van Doorn.

9 **Absent:** None.

10 **Staff Present:** Fire Chief/CEO Abbott, Attorney James and Board Secretary Stephen-
11 Porter. In the audience were: D/Cs Mahr and McReynolds, B/Cs Mann and Macmillan, F/M
12 Fieri, FIM Juul and members of the public, media and Association.

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14 **PUBLIC ACTIVITIES AGENDA**

15 1. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** President Van Doorn addressed the audience and inquired
16 whether there were any public comments regarding items not on the Agenda. There being
17 no comments, the Public Comment Section was closed.

18 2. **THIRD AND FOURTH QUARTER 2020 AWARDS FOR BOARD RECOGNITION PROGRAM — CHIEF**
19 **ABBOTT AND B/S STEPHEN-PORTER:** Chief Abbott presented the Valley and Creek Fires
20 employees for recognition: B/Cs MacMillan and B/C Mann; Captains Berry, Fieri and
21 Captain Harrington, Engineers Bracci, Harlin, Moore; FF/PMs Anderson, Krenz, Lewis, Lian,
22 Rivera and Spencer. Chief Abbott informed the Board that Loren would be sending out
23 inquiries to these individuals for selection of either a Cross pen or Hydroflask. Director Egkan
24 asked for those individuals in the Satisfaction Report who cleaned up the water and blood to
25 be noted at the next recognition. The Board thanked all individuals for their continuing
26 excellence services to the communities North County Fire Protection District serves.

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ACTION AGENDA

CONSENT ITEMS:

3. REVIEW AND ACCEPT REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES FOR JANUARY 2020
4. REVIEW AND ACCEPT SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 8, 2020
5. REVIEW AND ACCEPT FINANCIAL REPORT FOR JANUARY 2020
6. REVIEW AND ACCEPT POLICIES & PROCEDURES
7. REVIEW AND ACCEPT ANNUAL FIRE PREVENTION REPORT
8. REVIEW AND ACCEPT FOURTH QUARTER 2020 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY
9. MONTHLY OPERATIONS ACTIVITY REPORT – JANUARY 2021

President Van Doorn inquired whether there were any questions on Consent Items 3-9. There being no discussion, President Van Doorn asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. On a motion by Director Munson, seconded by Director Egkan the motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS:

10. REVIEW AND ACCEPT FINANCIAL AUDIT FOR FY 2019/2020 — FiM JUUL AND CHIEF ABBOTT: FiM Juul introduced the report to the Board noting several conditions that could significantly impact the District's current financial and net position. The District has restructured its ambulance service staffing, reducing total personnel costs to fund the District's Capital Equipment Replacement Plan. During the pandemic the District maintained a neutral cash position. She noted that the District needs to identify funding for future acquisitions as outlined in the District's Facilities Condition Assessment as the designated funds were depleted in the past recession with few opportunities to replenish them except for the fee adjustments in the next fiscal year.

The Auditor summarized the financial highlights including: the decrease in the District's net position of 2.879 million as a result of FY operations; total revenue increase of \$424,344 primarily due to property tax increases; total expenses of District's operations increased 9.2% from last year, primarily due to increases in salaries, benefits, materials and services and the cost of issuance of the pension obligation bond (POB); and the District purchased

59 new capital assets of \$287,048 and issued a pension obligation bond for \$20,305,000. The
60 Auditor noted the District had been able to pay off \$1.5 mil in debt and invest in the District
61 with the issuance of the POB. Overall the District strategy to pay down debt, keep service
62 unchanged and invest in the District was accomplished. Despite the strain of COVID, with
63 the exception of having to shut the doors on Administration with modified hours, the District
64 was basically “business as usual” during this fiscal year. On a motion by Director Egkan,
65 seconded by Director Acosta the motion to accept the Audit as presented passed
66 unanimously.

67 **11. REVIEW AND APPROVE JOB DESCRIPTION AND PLAN FOR FULFILLMENT OF**
68 **ACCOUNTING/PAYROLL TECHNICIAN JOB — D/C REYNOLDS AND CHIEF ABBOTT:** D/C McReynolds

69 Informed the Board that the Payroll/AP Specialist had resigned and upon re-evaluation of
70 the position, the District determined it was necessary to expand the scope of responsibilities
71 for the position. Along with the expanded scope, the minimum qualifications and task
72 responsibilities will increase along with the salary. In addition to approval of the job
73 description, there would need to be an approval of a Non-Safety Side Letter to modify the
74 position and salary in their MOU. The position would be open for immediate recruitment
75 upon approval by the Board. On a motion by Vice President Kennedy, seconded by Director
76 Egkan the motion to approve the modified job description and Side Letter passed
77 unanimously.

78 **12. REVIEW AND CONSIDER NOMINATIONS FOR CSDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS — CHIEF**

79 **ABBOTT:** Chief Abbott presented the opportunity for a Board member to be nominated to the
80 CSDA Board of Directors, Seat A, outlining the requirements for the position. He noted that
81 Director Jo MacKenzie from the Vista Irrigation District is the incumbent and is an active
82 member of CSDA. After brief discussion, there was no interest of Board members in
83 nomination; no further action is required.

84 **13. REVIEW AND CONSIDER APPROVAL OF SOLE SOURCE FOR STATION 3 MODULAR —**

85 **B/C KRUMWIEDE, D/C McREYNOLDS AND CHIEF ABBOTT:** D/C McReynolds presented the
86 request to declare the purchase of a modular building for Station 3 as a sole source, noting
87 after investigation only one company is willing to be involved with provision of a customer

88 modular of this type. D/C McReynolds noted that they expect to spend approximately
89 between \$150-200/square foot or \$350,000-\$400,000 for the structure with \$25,000 for the
90 removal of the existing modular and the remaining work. The funding has already been
91 allocated in the budget for \$400,000. Discussion ensued regarding the effect on turnout
92 times of the current structure, sewer issues in Rainbow, grey water systems and comparison
93 of conventional structures. On a motion by Vice President Kennedy, seconded by Director
94 Egkan the motion to declare the purchase as a sole source, approve the amount of \$425,000
95 and to authorize Chief Abbott to execute a contract for the construction and installation of
96 the modular passed unanimously.

97 14. **CONSIDER REQUEST TO REVIEW INVOCATION PROCESS — B/S STEPHEN-PORTER AND**

98 **DIRECTOR EGKAN:** After a brief introduction by B/S Stephen-Porter, Director Egkan
99 addressed the Board regarding concerns of including the Invocation on the Agenda, noting
100 it is not in Board policy. He explained he concerns about separation of church and state,
101 that the secular nature may make some individuals uncomfortable and not want to attend
102 the meeting and that community members should be able to share equally in their
103 government. Director Egkan stated he would favor a Moment of Silence (MOS) instead of
104 an Invocation. Director Munson noted that the 9th District Court had authorized the use of
105 prayer and some groups use a rotation of clergy to offer it. No local government groups
106 were recognized as having an invocation. Director Munson would be willing to serve on an
107 ad hoc committee to investigate and make recommendations. President van Doorn
108 expressed concerns regarding impinging on other's freedom of speech and concerns about
109 the safety of teams outside the District. He agreed with the consensus to go with a Moment
110 of Silence and to have further discussions to decide whether to have policy statement or
111 continuation of either a MOS or Invocation. On a motion by Director Egkan, seconded by
112 Director Acosta the motion that until next month, the District will use a Moment of Silence in
113 place of the Invocation until the Board decides whether to modify policy or to take further
114 formal action; in March, further discussion/action is to be had to determine whether to make
115 the Invocation/Moment of Silence a permanent feature or take further action with regards to
116 this issue. The motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

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118 15. **STRATEGIC DIRECTION DISCUSSION — CHIEF ABBOTT:** Chief Abbott brought forward
119 the discussion on the Strategic Direction for further consideration and comment, noting six
120 areas to be addressed: [1] Financial Planning/Maintenance of Reserve Funds; [2] Facilities;
121 [3] Succession Planning; [4] Integration with North Zone Agencies; [5] Long-Term Fiscal
122 Advocacy and [6] Community Risk Reduction. [1] There were no recommended changes to
123 Item 1. [2] Chief Abbott noted the steps being undertaken to address issues in Item 2,
124 including approval this meeting of the sole source for Station 3. A question was raised about
125 beginning to develop Station 4 at this time with D/C McReynolds noting that Staff cannot
126 take on more projects at this time due to other commitments. As soon as some time frees
127 up, they will begin addressing some of the other facility issues. [3] Chief Abbott updated the
128 Board on his retirement slotted for July 31st. Discussion ensued regarding the process for
129 the new Fire Chief recruitment. It was the consensus of the Board for the whole Board to
130 meet on March 9th at 5:00 p.m. to discuss the process, with the Chief to give an overview of
131 the position responsibilities. [4] Chief Abbott discussed how the possible integration with
132 the North Zone agencies could go forward, including those in progress at this time. No
133 changes were recommended. [5] Chief Abbott noted this area is one that will require active
134 involvement by the new Fire Chief as the District has done its best to capture the most easily
135 accessible funding. An active advocacy will be required into the future. No
136 recommendations were made. [6] Chief Abbott noted the District will be aligning its plan
137 with other agencies within the County with the goal of decreasing liability for the District. No
138 recommendations were suggested.

STANDING DISCUSSION ITEMS:

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140 **LEGAL COUNSEL REPORT:** Counsel James presented his report “*COVID-19 and the*
141 *Workplace: Can Employers Make Vaccinations Mandatory?*” Brief discussion ensued
142 regarding the steps the District should consider when determining whether COVID-19
143 vaccinations should be mandatory or strongly encouraged. This is informational only, no
144 action required.

145 ● **WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:** Written communications were noted without

146 discussion. Informational only, no action required.

147 ● **BOARD RECOGNITION PROGRAM** (See Item #2).

148 ● **NEWS ARTICLES**: This is informational only, no action required.

149 ● **COMMENTS**:

150 ● **STAFF REPORTS/UPDATES**:

151 ● **STEPHEN ABBOTT, FIRE CHIEF/CEO**: Chief Abbott informed the Board the District had
152 submitted a grant for a Type 6. He has received a call from LAFCO regarding the Municipal
153 Service Review (MSR), which he expects to be completed by May or June. He believes the
154 District is in good shape for the review. He reminded the Board the emphasis from LAFCO
155 is creating efficiencies in government. The District, with D/C Mahr acting as coordinator, has
156 been heavily supporting the COVID immunization and collaboration effort in the County with
157 the sharing many personnel to be vaccinators. Chief Abbott informed the Board that
158 Rainbow now has three of the six hand crews at the camp, all of which are paid crews. The
159 District will have another retirement of Captain Rick Rees in the near future. Informational
160 only, no further action required.

161 ● **CHIEF OFFICERS AND OTHER STAFF: D/C MAHR**: D/C Mahr informed the Board that he
162 has been performing a final review for this FY budget, which is looking very good. He noted
163 Operations has been able to close the gap in many areas, including everyone having a
164 second set of turnouts. D/C Mahr noted that tiered dispatching has been approved for a six-
165 month trial beginning in July. He opined that the BLS overlay is crucial to the success of the
166 program. D/C Mahr stated he was proud to be part of the Operation Collaboration, in which
167 he had never seen so many agencies working together to manage a County program. D/C
168 Mahr lauded the Ops team hiring, orienting and mentoring the Single Role employees,
169 stating they were doing a phenomenal job. **D/C McREYNOLDS**: D/C McReynolds informed
170 the Board there would be nine internal candidates for the next Engineer's exam and that the
171 District had put on an Engineer's academy. They will have a Captain's academy after the
172 Engineer's testing. **FM FIERI**: FM Fieri directed the Board to the number of developments
173 in the District. He also informed the Board there is a retired annuitant that is working to
174 cover for an employee currently on medical leave.

- 175 ● **BOARD:** No comments.
- 176 ● **BARGAINING GROUPS:** No comments.
- 177 ● **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Ms. Maldonado-Stamos thanked the District and MSO Murphy for
178 getting information out to the community regarding vaccinations via the Zoom meeting,
179 noting since individuals may not be able to get out and therefore, may feel isolated, are
180 thankful to know someone is caring about them.

181

182 **CLOSED SESSION**

183 Chief Abbott noted there was no need for Closed Session for this meeting and requested
184 the matter be tabled.

185 **ADJOURNMENT**

186 A motion was made at 6:18 p.m. by on a motion by Vice President Kennedy, seconded by
187 Director Munson the motion to adjourn the meeting and reconvene on March 9, 2021, at
188 5:00 p.m., carried unanimously.

189 Respectfully submitted,

190 

191 Loren A. Stephen-Porter

192 Loren Stephen-Porter

193 Board Secretary

194

195 Minutes approved at the Board of Director's Meeting on: March 23, 2021

