



# SCOTTS VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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## MINUTES OF THE SCOTTS VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPECIAL MEETING OF April 13, 2022

### 1. Call to Order

A Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Scotts Valley Fire Protection District (SVFPD) was held on Wednesday, April 13, 2022, at the City of Scotts Valley Council Chambers. President Patterson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

#### 1.1 Pledge of Allegiance

President Patterson called for the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence to follow.

#### 1.2 Roll Call

- |    |                      |   |
|----|----------------------|---|
| A. | Directors Present:   | Directors Campbell, Harmon ( <i>Via Teleconference</i> ), Parker, Patterson and Pisciotta                   |
| B. | Directors Absent:    | None  |
| C. | Fire District Staff: | Chief Whittle, Battalion Chiefs McNeil, LoFranco and Stubendorff and Administrative Services Manager Walton |

### 2. Public Comment (GC §54954.3)

None

### 3. Agenda Amendments (GC §54954.2) – Discussion/Action

None

### 4. Discussion Items

#### 4.1 SCO-BRN Reorganization

Chief Whittle stated that on October 1, 2021, the SVFPD ended the management agreement with the Branciforte Fire Protection District (BFPD). Shortly thereafter, the Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County (LAFCO) published the Countywide Fire Study and Sphere Review Report. Since the report was published, the BFPD has not been able to secure a permanent Fire Chief. The BFPD had an interim Fire Chief for six months and recently appointed Nate Lackey as the second interim Fire Chief. The SVFPD and BFPD formed an Ad Hoc committee and have met twice to discuss the possibility of an annexation of the BFPD. As of last night, the BFPD changed their Ad Hoc Committee to two Board Members, which previously consisted of a Board Member and a Community Member. The BFPD has taken steps to initiate the reorganization process and has done everything LAFCO has asked including approving the reorganization agreement, which the SVFPD Board will approve tonight. In addition, LAFCO has signed an agreement with Fire Reorganization Consulting, Don Jarvis, to assist with this process. Chief Whittle introduced LAFCO Executive Officer Mr. Joe Serrano.

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Mr. Serrano thanked the SVFPD Board, the BFPD Board and Chiefs for spearheading this effort in a detailed and transparent manner. This effort stemmed from the LAFCO Countywide Fire Report but even before that, the two Districts had been working together. Even though the management contract ended, that did not end the discussion between the two Districts and LAFCO became involved to help facilitate what is best for the BFPD community. The BFPD has made a lot of progress by unanimously adopting a resolution to initiate the reorganization process, adopting the pre-reorganization agreement, which allows LAFCO to provide additional administrative assistance and submitted an application to officially start the LAFCO process all within the last month. This really shows the effort that both Districts are putting in to move this process forward. There is still a lot of work to do and this process will take about a year to complete. Last night the BFPD added an additional Board Member to the Ad Hoc Committee for consistency of members for both Districts. The BFPD also approved a request for proposal to solicit bids to hire an outside consultant to determine the benefit assessment fee to fund the fire station. The number one goal for the BFPD is to keep the Fire Station open but the question is, how is that going to be funded. There has been a lot of speculation on cost so once the actual cost is determined, it will be up to the committee to determine how to move forward. In the meantime, LAFCO will continue to facilitate the Ad Hoc meetings so we can have a transparent discussion.

President Patterson stated that there is a lot of misinformation out there as he read an article in paper that said this was merger or consolidation and that is not correct. Additionally the article said that the BFPD residents would have an opportunity to vote on this matter. President Patterson asked Mr. Serrano for clarification.

Mr. Serrano stated that there is a lot of different terminology used but for LAFCO this is a reorganization, which means that the BFPD will be dissolved and the service area annexed to the SVFPD. There are two voting process for this reorganization. Once the benefit assessment fee has been determined, it will go to the November election and the BFPD Residents will vote whether or not to pass the benefit assessment fee to fund keeping the Fire Station open. Part of the LAFCO process for any boundary change is that the effected residents have an opportunity to petition opposition by submitting a petition that they do not support the reorganization for whatever reason. If LAFCO receives 25% or less opposition, the reorganization moves forward. If more than 25% opposition is received, this triggers a special election. If more than 50% of residents vote to oppose the reorganization, it is terminated. LAFCO encourages discussion before we get to that point and we educate the residents on the benefits of the reorganization. At the next Ad Hoc Meeting, we will be formulating our community workshop efforts, which will be a series of workshops to educate the community on the benefits of the reorganization, address any misconceptions and issues so that when we get to the protest period, the residents will have all the information and there will not be opposition.

Aptos Resident Ms. Becky Steinbruner spoke and stated that she was interested in the LAFCO process and had worked with Chief Jarvis on the Aptos and Central Fire consolidation. Ms. Steinbruner stated that she has attended many LAFCO meetings and has friends that live in the BFPD. As a member of the community and a rural dweller, I see that this process has the ability to incorporate something wonderful for our county, which is the Good Fire Hub and Volunteer Hand Crew. Ms. Steinbruner emailed the SVFPD Board Members and attached a proposal for a pilot program. The question is, will the SVFPD implement this program. This program would also give the BFPD access to 14 well qualified volunteers. These volunteers are professional firefighters and people working for State Parks doing vegetation management professionally. The volunteers want to help with this project and move our county forward to model what has and is working so well in North Sonoma County.

President Patterson thanked Ms. Steinbruner for the information and stated that this was something for the BFPD to consider and not for the SVFPD at this time.

**5. Action Items**

- 5.1 Approve Pre-Reorganization Agreement By and Among Branciforte Fire Protection District, and Scotts Valley Fire Protection District, and Local Agency Formation Commission**  
**Dated March 14, 2022**

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**On motion of Director Campbell seconded by Director Parker to *Approve Pre-Reorganization Agreement By and Among Branciforte Fire Protection District, and Scotts Valley Fire Protection District, and Local Agency Formation Commission Dated March 14, 2022* was approved by the following vote:**

**AYES:** Campbell, Harmon, Parker, Patterson and Pisciotta  
**NOES:** None  
**ABSENT:** None  
**ABSTAIN:** None

**5.2 Adopt Resolution 2022-4: Resolution Requesting Temporary Transfer of Funds**

Chief Whittle stated that this is the annual resolution to request a transfer of funds from the County of Santa Cruz for the period of time before the property taxes are received.

**On motion of Director Pisciotta seconded by Director Campbell to *Adopt Resolution 2022-4: Requesting Temporary Transfer of Funds* was approved by the following vote:**

**AYES:** Campbell, Harmon, Parker, Patterson and Pisciotta  
**NOES:** None  
**ABSENT:** None  
**ABSTAIN:** None

**6. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:18 p.m.

ATTEST

  
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Russ Patterson  
Board President

  
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Ron Whittle  
Board Secretary