
**BIG BEAR FIRE AUTHORITY
MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF
December 12, 2023**

A Regular Meeting of the Big Bear Fire Authority was called to order by Board Chair Mote at 5:01 p.m., Tuesday, December 12, 2023, at 41090 Big Bear Boulevard, Big Bear Lake, California.

Board Members Present: Board Chair Bynette Mote
 Vice Chair Bob Rowe
 Director Michael Eagleson
 Director Rick Herrick
 Director Randall Putz
 Director John Russo
 Director Kendi Segovia
 Director Larry Walsh
 Director Al Ziegler

Board Members Absent: Director Perri Melnick

Others Present: Jeff Willis, Fire Chief
 Mike Maltby, Assistant Chief/Fire Marshal
 Kristin Mandolini, Director of Business Services
 Chardelle Smith, Board Secretary
 Nicholaus Norvell, Assistant Authority Counsel

OPEN SESSION

CALL TO ORDER

Moment of Silence: Observed

Pledge of Allegiance: Led by Director Rowe

ROLL CALL

Please Note: The Chair may, at his or her discretion, take items out of order at the meeting to facilitate the business of the Board and/or for the convenience of the public.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

The Fire Authority's Administrative Office will be closed:

- Monday, December 25, 2023, in observance of Christmas and will reopen on Tuesday, December 26, 2023, at 8:00 a.m.
- Monday, January 1, 2024, in observance of New Year's Day and will reopen on Tuesday, January 2, 2024, at 8:00 a.m.
- Monday, January 15, 2024, in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and will reopen on Tuesday, January 16, 2024, at 8:00 a.m.

PRESENTATIONS

- Hazard Abatement Update
Speaker: Jeff Willis, Fire Chief

Willis presented a PowerPoint with current information regarding Hazard Abatement.

DIRECTORS' GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS – Comments shall pertain to items not on the posted agenda and are limited to three minutes per Authority Member.

Director Walsh questioned the status of the community sirens. He stated Board members are receiving emails and phone calls regarding the sirens.

Chief Willis responded.

Director Ziegler commented on how well the staff members have handled the hazard abatement program.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT – *Members of the public who wish to comment on topics not included on the agenda or comment on agenda items are invited to provide comments in either of the methods described above.*

Patrice Duncan, Sugarloaf: mentioned she recently met with Laura Dyberg, the Director of the Mountain Rim Fire Safe Council, regarding Big Bear losing their Firewise Community title a few years ago. She stated Laura provided the steps to become a Firewise Community that she intends to pursue for the Sugarloaf Community.

CHIEF'S REPORT

None

FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

Ms. Mandolini presented the finance report as of October 31, 2023

FIRE AUTHORITY CONSENT CALENDAR

Director Walsh pulled FA5, FA6, and FA7 for further discussion

- FA1. Approval of Demands – Check Issue Date 07/01/23 through 10/31/23 in the amount of \$4,005,652.39.**
- FA2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from the October 10, 2023, Special Meeting of the Big Bear Fire Authority**

FA3. Approval of Meeting Minutes from the October 10, 2023, Regular Meeting of the Big Bear Fire Authority

FA4. Approval of Meeting Minutes from the October 30, 2023, Special Meeting of the Big Bear Fire Authority

Action: Motion by Director Herrick, seconded by Director Putz, to approve the Consent Calendar as follows:

AYES: Eagleson, Herrick, Putz, Rowe, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Ziegler,
Mote
NOES: None
ABSENT: Melnick
ABSTAIN: None

ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT CALENDAR

FA5. Receive and File Big Bear Fire Department Monthly Activity Report for August, September, and October 2023.

It was stated there were possible errors in the August report for locations of strike teams and the chipping program social media post was questioned from the September report.

Action: Motion by Director Walsh, seconded by Director Ziegler, to approve item FA5:

AYES: Eagleson, Herrick, Putz, Rowe, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Ziegler,
Mote
NOES: None
ABSENT: Melnick
ABSTAIN: None

FA6. Acknowledge Receipt of Annual Inspection Report for Certain Educational and Residential Structures

Board consideration to adopt Resolution No. BBFA2023-006 acknowledging receipt of inspection report and designating October of each year as the assigned time for the Board of Directors to receive the annual report for the prior year.

It was asked if daycares were also part of the school inspections.

Action: Motion by Director Walsh, seconded by Director Eagleson, to approve item FA6:

AYES: Eagleson, Herrick, Putz, Rowe, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Ziegler,
Mote
NOES: None

ABSENT: Melnick
ABSTAIN: None

FA7. Resolution Amending the Conflict of Interest Code Pursuant to the Political Reform Act of 1974

Board consideration of adopting Resolution No. BBFA2023-007 amending the Conflict of Interest Code pursuant to Political Reform Act of 1974.

It was asked if legal counsel assisted with the verbiage of the documents.

Action: Motion by Director Walsh, seconded by Director Herrick, to approve item FA7:

AYES: Eagleson, Herrick, Putz, Rowe, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Ziegler,
Mote
NOES: None
ABSENT: Melnick
ABSTAIN: None

PUBLIC HEARING

FA8. Adoption of the Cost Recovery Fees and Charges

Board consideration of conducting a Public Hearing and waiving the second reading to adopt Ordinance No. BBFA2023-002.

ORDINANCE NO. BBFA2023-002

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
BIG BEAR FIRE AUTHORITY, A CALIFORNIA JOINT
POWERS AUTHORITY, COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO,
STATE OF CALIFORNIA, ESTABLISHING COST RECOVERY
FEES AND CHARGES

Speaker: Jeff Willis, Fire Chief

Chief Willis stated this item was discussed through the administrative committee and this is the second time the full board has reviewed the document. He stated staff contracted with AP Triton to update the cost recovery fees. Willis mentioned this cost recovery ordinance will phase in over a three-year period.

Action: At the hour of 5:31 p.m., Board Chair Mote opened the public hearing. There being no public comment, Board Chair Mote closed the public hearing at the hour of 5:31 p.m.

Action: Motion by Director Walsh seconded by Director Herrick, waive second reading and adopt Ordinance No. BBFA2023-002 entitled:

ORDINANCE NO. BBFA2023-002

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE BIG BEAR FIRE AUTHORITY, A CALIFORNIA JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY, COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, ESTABLISHING COST RECOVERY FEES AND CHARGES

Board Chair Mote read the Ordinance title into the record.

Said Motion was approved by the following vote:

AYES: Eagleson, Herrick, Putz, Rowe, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Ziegler,
Mote
NOES: None
ABSENT: Melnick
ABSTAIN: None

NEW BUSINESS

BIG BEAR FIRE AUTHORITY DISCUSSION ITEMS

FA9. Backfill of Vacancies at Overtime Rate of Time and a Half

Board consideration to discuss and provide further direction to staff regarding cost of overtime.

Speaker: Chief Willis

Chief Willis mentioned this item was requested from a director to bring forward to the full Board. He stated a firefighter works 53 hours a week. The current staffing configurations is three 3-person engines staffed every day, along with three 2-person ambulances staffed. During busy seasons, adjustments may be made to add more personnel.

Willis stated when a suppression employee takes time off, whether that be vacation, sick, injury leave etc., our current practice is to automatically backfill to maintain 3-0 staffing. Willis said it was asked if we could reduce overtime. He suggested the Board continue discussion, possibly with administrative committee, and bring resolution to this discussion.

Discussion ensued regarding backfill of vacancies and how the process works.

Board Chair Mote asked if there were any public comments:

Andrew Crane: stated this has been a talk at the union level for some time now. He mentioned he has taken classes on this recently and has learned that its less expensive to fill a vacant position with a current employee vs filling that position full time with a new employee that will require salary and benefits as well. He mentions if we were to be fully staffed, the overtime rate would be low, but the salary and benefits would be increased.

Chris Segovia: mentioned he was a firefighter for LA city for 36 years and during political season, overtime was always brought up. Once political season was over, overtime was allowed without questions. He stated we are running these guys into the ground and if we were to cut back any further, we would be cutting into the insurance policy we wrote for the community.

Mitch Hollenbaugh: mentioned with the amount of staffing the department has now, one structure fire or three medical aids takes all staffed employees. He mentioned reducing staffing is out of the questions.

Action: Motion by Director Herrick, seconded by Director Walsh, to have the administrative committee discuss this item further and bring back to the full board.

Said Motion was approved by the following vote:

AYES: Eagleson, Herrick, Putz, Rowe, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Ziegler,
Mote
NOES: None
ABSENT: Melnick
ABSTAIN: None

FA10. Request For Proposal for Contract Fire and Emergency Medical Services

Board consideration to discuss and provide further direction to staff regarding Request for Proposal.

Speaker: Chief Willis

Director Segovia mentioned her thought on this discussion item has changed since the recent City Council meeting.

Willis mentioned there is a dollar amount to operate within. With the concept of the Fire Authority, it was set to be a cost saving measure through consolidation of Big Bear City Fire Department and Big Bear Lake Fire Protection District, which has successfully been done for a number of years. He stated a request for proposal (RFP) is always available to the Board. Willis mentioned the first thing we do to continue providing emergency services is managing expenses, which we have done

a lot recently with discussions between the union and staff. He stated an RFP is always an option with either Cal Fire via contract or with San Bernardino County Fire Protection District via annexation or contract.

Discussion ensued regarding the process of an RFP and contracting with other agencies.

Board Chair Mote asked if there were any public comments:

Andrew Crane: mentioned an RFP is great if the organization is failing, which ours is not. He questioned what the definition of success for this organization looks like. He mentioned our strategic master plan is seven years old which provided our vision for the future. He stated we are at a critical point in our organization to review our vision, mission, and goals that will provide a set plan for the future of our department.

Patrice Duncan: mentioned discussions have been held regarding allocations of resources within the department. She expressed the current discussions regarding an RFP is ignoring the issue at hand. She mentioned the Fire Chiefs contract has 18 months remaining and the Board should take the next 18 months to recruit and train a new Fire Chief.

Jon Bidwell: mentioned surrounding fire departments are also hurting financially as well as retaining full time employees. He mentioned current issues with San Bernardino County as well as CONFIRE, CalFire, Forest Service, and more. He stated Big Bear is more stable than other surrounding agencies and adding us to other agencies would only be adding us to their problems. He states he hopes we move ourselves into our own future, not someone else's.

Discussion ensued between Board members and Staff regarding request for proposals and where our department is at now as well as the departments future.

A motion was made by Director Herrick, Seconded by Director Segovia, to table the RFP discussion for six months. This was later withdrawn.

After further discussion regarding a possible RFP, it was determined it would be better use of time to update the Authority's values, mission, and vision statement with all department staff.

Action: Motion by Director Eagleson, seconded by Director Walsh, to have the admin committee, along with all department employees, update the Authority's values, mission and vision statement, and bring back to the full Board in six months for further discussion.

Said Motion was approved by the following vote:

AYES: Eagleson, Herrick, Putz, Rowe, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Ziegler,
Mote
NOES: None
ABSENT: Melnick
ABSTAIN: None

FA11. Auction of Surplus PPE and Miscellaneous Items

Board consideration of authorizing the Fire Chief to discharge PPE and miscellaneous items as surplus equipment and authorize the Fire Chief to sell at auction to the highest bidder. Proceeds from the sale will be deposited to the Authority's General fund.

Speaker: Chief Willis

Willis stated the list of electronic items are at least 15 years old and the list of PPE is at least 20 years old. At this time, these items are no value to the department and can no longer be put into service.

Action: Motion by Director Putz, seconded by Director Herrick, to approve Chief to discharge the electronic items as surplus equipment and to sell at auction to the highest bidder where proceeds from the sale will be deposited to the Authority's General fund, as well as approval to send the discharged PPE to Fire Inc. for possible vendor credit for future purchases:

Said Motion was approved by the following vote:

AYES: Eagleson, Herrick, Putz, Rowe, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Ziegler,
Mote
NOES: None
ABSENT: Melnick
ABSTAIN: None

FA12. 2024 Meeting Calendar

Board consideration of approving the proposed 2024 Regular Board Meeting Calendar with two Budget Workshops on April 17 and May 22, 2024, and adding Administrative Committee meetings in between Regular Board meeting.

Speaker: Jeff Willis, Fire Chief

Willis stated this discussion item was given to the admin committee, who met on November 11, 2023. There, discussion was held regarding the duration from one meeting to the next as well as review of the current committees.

Discussion ensued regarding minutes from the admin committee meetings to be sent to all Board members for information purposes prior to the next regular board meeting. It was requested to bring the current committee's status to the next regular board meeting.

Action: Motion by Director Walsh, seconded by Director Eagleson, to approve the 2024 Board meeting calendar with two Budget Workshops on April 17 and May 22, 2024, add admin committee meetings in between Regular Board meeting, and update the admin committee title to the Financial Committee:

Said Motion was approved by the following vote:

AYES: Eagleson, Herrick, Putz, Rowe, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Ziegler,
Mote
NOES: None
ABSENT: Melnick
ABSTAIN: None

FA13. Fire Authority Board Reorganization – Selection of the Chair and Vice Chair for 2024

Board nominations and selection of Chair and Vice Chair, who will serve for a period of one year.

Speaker: Bynette Mote, Board Chair

Board Chair Mote called for nominations for Board Chair to serve for a period of one year.

Director Segovia nominated Director Walsh to serve as Board Chair; seconded by Director Eagleson.

Director Walsh was elected to serve as Board Chair by the following vote:

AYES: Eagleson, Herrick, Putz, Rowe, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Ziegler,
Mote
NOES: None
ABSENT: Melnick
ABSTAIN: None

Board Chair Walsh called for nominations for Vice-Chair to serve for a period of one year.

Director Eagleson nominated Director Segovia to serve as Vice-Chair; seconded by Director Mote.

Director Segovia was elected to serve as Vice-Chair by the following vote:

AYES: Eagleson, Herrick, Putz, Rowe, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Ziegler,
Mote
NOES: None
ABSENT: Melnick
ABSTAIN: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A Fire Authority Administrative Committee meeting was held on:

- November 11, 2023
 - In attendance was Vice Chair Rowe, Director Herrick, Director Segovia, and Director Walsh

DIRECTORS' CLOSING COMMENTS

Board Chair Walsh commented in the last board packet, there were 60 pages of checks. In those checks were a few reimbursements checks close to \$1,000 for fuel for a strike team going to Oregon. He questioned if we have a report showing mutual aid is in fact a money-making project.

Ms. Mandolini responded.

Director Mote requested the public employee performance evaluation be held at the February 2024 meeting. She wished everyone happy holidays and happy new year.

Director Herrick mentioned it is a busy time for the community and for the Fire Authority. He expressed his gratitude for all their work.

Director Putz thanked everyone.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Fire Authority at this session, Board Chair Walsh adjourned the meeting at 6:52 p.m.



Chardelle Smith
Board Secretary

APPROVED AT THE MEETING OF FEBRUARY 13, 2024