



Novato Fire District Board of Directors  
Regular Board Meeting Minutes  
March 6, 2024

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1 The meeting was called to order by President Silverman at 10:00 a.m.

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3 **ROLL CALL**

4 Present: President Silverman, Directors Bill Davis, Mike Hadfield, Bruce Goines, and Shane  
5 Francisco

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7 **STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT**

8 Fire Chief Bill Tyler, Deputy Chief Dicochea, ASM/Board Clerk Jennifer Crayne, B/C Jeff  
9 Whittet, Fire Prevention Specialist Lauren Galli, Finance Director Joe Valenti, VMS Lizzy Neil,  
10 Vegetation Management Program Manager Sarah Labberton, Administrative Assistant Kelley  
11 Penney, WMS Kyle Nicholes, EMS Billing Analyst Shannon Wager, and IT Manager Azar  
12 Mashintchian.

13

14 **OTHERS PRESENT**

15 District Counsel Riley Hurd, Bruce Bartel

16

17 **OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION**

18 None.

19

20 **AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS**

21 None.

22

23 **ASSOCIATION PRESIDENTS' REPORT**

24 NSAS President Lauren Galli thanked Chief Tyler, Gretchen, and Management for their work on  
25 the work-from-home policy. She will be presenting the policy to the NSAS group later today.  
26 They are waiting for the new accountant to start. She will be attending the Strategic Planning  
27 Meeting next week.

28

29 **DIRECTOR MATTERS**

30 Director Goines thanked Lauren Galli and the crews for hosting Guide Dogs for the Blind at  
31 Station 65 (Hamilton area). There were 30 dogs and trainers at the fire station for about 1 ½  
32 hours. Firefighter/Paramedic Mark Larroque assisted the trainers as they took the dogs through  
33 the station. Director Goines noted it was a positive and enjoyable experience for all.

34

35 **CHIEF'S REPORT**

36 **Calendar Items:**

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- 2/24 - Guide Dogs for the Blind visit at station 65
- 2/27- City of Novato council meeting where Juanita was recognized for volunteerism to Bahia but especially to NFD.
- 3/1- Read Across America. Scott Freedman read to 3rd-grade students at Olive Elementary with his mom, who was a teacher there.



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- 42 • 3/1- Stop the Bleed Class at Station 62
- 43 • 3/5- MWPA GNSFB restarted. Two crews working in Presidents Area, at the end of Garner
- 44 • 3/6- March BOD Meeting
- 45 • 3/11- Tech Committee Selects new Records Management System RMS
- 46 • 3/12-13- Strategic Planning Session #2 Best Western in Ignacio
- 47 • 3/15- MWPA Draft Workplans Due
- 48 • 3/19- New NFD Website launch
- 49 • 3/27- NFD OPS meeting

50 **Administrative Items:**

- 51 • Initiated Policy development on a new holiday hours policy. Ensures consistent  
52 application of hours off for all holidays based on the schedule being worked. This will  
53 apply to all day shift employees with administrative assignments.
- 54 • Strategic Planning Sessions phase two will be on March 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. The initial strategic  
55 plan draft has been circulated across the organization with a request for feedback. Phase  
56 two working sessions will focus on “lines of effort” to reach the end state. Phase two  
57 workgroup will be smaller than phase one workgroup. Please let me know ASAP if you  
58 would like to attend.
- 59 • The Finance Committee has met and utilizing the audited financials, reviewed the  
60 recommendations for assigned and unassigned reserve fund balances and raining day  
61 account balances. These changes are the basis for our budget for next year. We will bring  
62 these recommendations to the full board in March.
- 63 • Finance Division: Vacation balance audit status – Joe will share with the Fire Chief the  
64 list of names and timelines communicated to the Finance Committee (33 active hired  
65 before 2008 and 10 retired after 6/2020). Joe completed 5 already but the goal would be  
66 to have all 77 completed before June for the cashouts. Joe met with NPFA President  
67 Larroque yesterday and walked him through the process and he understands and agrees  
68 with the logic.
  - 69 ▪ Discuss the plan for splitting them up into groups and who will review by when
  - 70 ▪ Prioritize employees who promoted or converted between Shift and Days
  - 71 ▪ Discuss the process for reviewing and obtaining agreement from employees to  
72 make adjustments and on what date(s). These will become the certified balances  
73 that we can roll back should any issues or questions arise prior to system balance  
74 conversions.
- 75 • Personnel Ordinance & MOU-related committees: D/C Dicochea and I met with legal  
76 counsel to create a proposal to send to both the NPFA & NFCOA related to contractual  
77 obligations for workgroups to update the personnel ordinance. We also discussed the  
78 creation of a Management/NFCOA workgroup on the existing practices section of the  
79 MOU as it relates to policy and practices. It is anticipated that both labor and general



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- 80 counsel will help take us through a workgroup process. The kick-off of this process will  
81 be next month.
- 82 • Grant writing for NFD: We have signed a service agreement with Blackrock 3 and retired  
83 FC Tom Welch to start looking at available grants for NFD. Tom met with NFD Division  
84 heads this week to go over divisional and organizational needs and has created a draft list  
85 for our review and prioritization. We submitted an assistance to firefighters' grant (AFG)  
86 for new SCBAs in the \$600K range.
  - 87 • NeoGov Employee Evaluation Program Upgrade: We reviewed a new employee  
88 evaluation program. We have been looking at various options to upgrade our programs  
89 and the NeoGov system looks promising. Going to OPS at the end of the month.
  - 90 • Website refresh project is well underway with training of staff. The anticipated launch is  
91 on March 19th.
  - 92 • B/C Scott Freedman (26 years of service) and Training Captain Adam Black (24 years of  
93 service) have announced their retirements in March. There will be a combined NFD  
94 lunch on Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup> at noon at Station 61 upstairs. Please RSVP to Jenn if you  
95 would like to attend.
  - 96 • With these retirements, Barrett Smith will go to C Shift B/C & Captain Taul was  
97 promoted to B/C of Training.
  - 98 • Training Captain and Deputy Fire Marshal Interviews are complete. Capt. Mario  
99 Bernardini has been selected as the new Training Captain. Justin Conner was selected to  
100 be our Capt./Deputy Fire Marshal.
  - 101 • Novato's 1923 Model T: Retired Kentfield Fire Chief Paul D Smith is now leading the  
102 Marin Fire History Group and completed a great video interview performed by NFD Eng  
103 Geoff Larkin. Paul stated, *"from my perspective, the interviews and shoot went very well,  
104 you are both very articulate and really presented a good history and mechanical  
105 overview of the T. I'm sure our Marin Fire History viewers will enjoy it too. Geoff did a  
106 great job and really has another career as a video host if he ever wants to stop being an  
107 engineer!"* Also included were retired board of director Steve McCubbin, and retired  
108 Larkspur fire chief Bill Lellis. It was interesting seeing Geoff drive the Model T. They are  
109 starting to edit the video and hope to air the piece late in the spring. They will send a  
110 copy of the finished piece to the District and/or the Novato Historical Society. D/C John  
111 Dicochea and B/C Erich Mesenburg also contributed to the effort.
- 112 **OPS: D/C Dicochea:**
- 113 • Deputy Chief Dicochea joined the Board of Directors at the North Marin Community  
114 Services District this evening. They are very excited to have access to his time and talents  
115 supporting their programs, for which John is passionate.
  - 116 • D/C Dicochea is working with Mario Bernardini and Colleen Walraven on the SAVE  
117 program- a program that provides gift cards for victims of fires and disasters.



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118 **Training: B/C Barrett Smith**

- 119 • Novato is hosting regional truck training in April.
- 120 • Multi Company Drill Structure Fire training with immediate ladder rescue. We also tested
- 121 out a new "PIT" Ladder-Parapet ladder for R&D committee.
- 122 • Acting Captain Test is coming up for Jeff Pannell.
- 123 • New TC Mario Bernardini's First Day of Shadowing with Captain Adam Black was
- 124 yesterday.

125 **EMS: B/C Dan Peters:**

- 126 • Chief Peters & D/C Dicochea attended the virtual chemical emergency (hazmat) MCI at
- 127 NCH with agencies from the Bay Area also attending. The scenario was a chemical
- 128 hazmat exposure of 35 pediatrics.
- 129 • Continue NarcBox USER ID/PIN assignments, EMS Academy planning.

130 **Prevention FM Lynne Osgood: On vacation this week**

- 131 • Justin Conner is at a fire prevention conference this week.
- 132 • Met with VMS Manager to review ATC meeting, MWPA 24/25 Project Plan and budget
- 133 • Admin Demonstration Garden has been installed- at 90% with a few more plants
- 134 scheduled for later in March.
- 135 • I was notified that 100% of all single-family dwellings have received at least one
- 136 roadside assessment from our WMS.

137 **B/C Organizational Resources: B/C Jeff Whittet**

138 Fleet, Facilities, Communications

- 139 • Continued Working on a small fleet Enterprise proposal to be presented to the board
- 140 in April.
- 141 • No cost Electric Heat Pumps conversion project under review. Wildan Heat Pumps at
- 142 61, 63, 65.
- 143 • M61 out of service at Ford for cylinder repair.
- 144 • Coordinated Pre-Construction team visit to Ohio Factory for ambulance remount. 3
- 145 members of the committee including Fire Mechanic will attend the meeting to ensure
- 146 all our needs are met for the two remounts in the queue.
- 147 • Admin Gym project near completion. All machines and equipment are in service, the
- 148 rowing machine still to be installed
- 149 • Work plans for Admin Office backyard construction plan due in April.

151 **CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS**

152 These items can be acted on in one consolidated motion or may be removed from the Consent  
153 Calendar and separately considered at the request of any person.

- 154 1. Regular Meeting Minutes 2.7.24
- 155 2. Special Meeting Minutes 2.27.24



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156 3. Travel Authorization and Advance approval for Directors to attend the Fire Districts  
157 Association of California annual conference in Monterey, April 23-26, 2024  
158

159 4. Ambulance Fee Debt Write-Off Due to Hardship

160 The following accounts have submitted a written request for write-off consideration from  
161 the Board of Directors. The requests are claiming financial hardship.

162	▶ F23016503	\$1,250.80
163	▶ F23027216	\$1,174.04
164	▶ F23033488	\$3,388.46
165		

166 There was no public comment.

167  
168 M/s Hadfield/Davis to approve the Consent Calendar.

169 Motion carried: 5-0-0

170

171 **NEW BUSINESS**

172 1. Re-allocation of Assigned and Unassigned Fund Balances

173 Board approval is requested to approve the Finance Committee's recommendation to reallocate  
174 assigned and unassigned fund balances.

175 Finance Director Joe Valenti presented a spreadsheet with all the audited fund balances on  
176 6/30/23. He noted that this is the first step in the budget process.

- 177 • Assigned Fund Balance \$18.1M
- 178 • Unassigned Fund Balance \$16.5M
- 179 • Unassigned/Committed \$8.5M
- 180 • Total Fund Balance \$40.1M
- 181 • Total Fund Balance Months of Budget \$35M or 11.91 months of coverage

182 FD Valenti explained that the District could cover 11.91 months of expenses with assigned and  
183 unassigned funds (excluding Rainy Day and MWPA).

184 FD Valenti discussed each of the line items and the impact on the fund balance. Some of these  
185 items include:

- 186 • SCBA- need to replace 67 in 2028
- 187 • EMS Capital Equipment- power loaders, gurneys, motorized stair chairs, and narc boxes
- 188 • Apparatus- replacement over the next 5 years
- 189 • Unemployment Insurance
- 190 • Workers Compensation
- 191 • Retirement Unfunded Liability
- 192 • Retiree Health Benefits
- 193 • Training Captain Pilot Program
- 194 • Infrastructure- HVAC, EV Charging Stations, Roof Mounted Solar
- 195 • PP-GEMT-IGT



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196 • Fire-based Dispatch- new dispatch center is due to open 7/1/24  
197 FD Valenti concluded his report by stating that the Assigned Fund Balances total \$26,670,846,  
198 moving \$8,563,059 from unassigned.

199  
200 Director Hadfield asked questions about the timeline and costs associated with the new dispatch  
201 center. He asked how much is set aside for contingencies and last-minute change orders. Chief  
202 Tyler noted that contingencies have been built in. President Silverman asked when the board  
203 needs to decide whether to finance the loan with the county or pay in a lump sum. Chief Tyler  
204 responded that the BOD has until May to make a recommendation. The county is offering loans  
205 at a low-interest rate of 2-2.5% for 15 years. Director Hadfield recommended increasing the  
206 funds for fire-based dispatch by 2% so the District is prepared if the decision is made to finance  
207 the loan.

208  
209 There was no public comment.

210  
211 M/s Francisco/Hadfield to approve the Finance Committee's recommendation to reallocate  
212 assigned and unassigned fund balances, including the addition of 2.5% interest expense for fire-  
213 based dispatch.

214 Motion carried: 5-0-0

215 2. Rainy Day Fund- Committed Fund Balance

216 Board approval is requested to accept the Finance Committee's recommendation to leave the  
217 Rainy-Day Fund Balance at its current level of \$5,071,552.

218 FD Valenti explained the policy and model for establishing the Rainy-Day Fund. The Finance  
219 Committee met on 2/20/24 to consider whether to increase the Fund or leave it unchanged. FD  
220 Valenti calculated the recommended balance of the Rainy-Day Fund using audited financial  
221 statements for the fiscal year ending 6/30/23 to be \$5,071,560. Since the current balance is  
222 \$5,071,560, there is no need for adjustments.

223  
224 There was no public comment.

225  
226 M/s Hadfield/Davis to accept the Finance Committee's recommendation to leave the Rainy-Day  
227 Fund Balance at its current level of \$5,071,552.

228 Motion carried: 5-0-0

229 3. Resolution 2024-02 Designation of Applicant's Agent Resolution – Cal OES Form 130.

230 Board to consider adoption of Resolution 2024-02 designating the Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, and  
231 Finance Director as the District's designated agents.

232 Chief Tyler explained that the Cal OES Form 130 must be filed every three years to be eligible to  
233 receive funding. The resolution designates the Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief, and the Finance  
234 Director as authorized agents.





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235 There was no public comment.

236 M/s Hadfield /Davis to adopt Resolution 2024-02 designating the Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, and  
237 Finance Director as the District’s designated agents.

238 **Roll Call Vote:**

239 Ayes: Davis, Goines, Francisco, Hadfield, Silverman

240 Noes: None.

241 Absent: None.

242 Motion Carried: 5-0-0

243

244 4. Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Pre-Funding Contribution 2023/24

245 a. Board approval is requested to accept Staff’s recommendation to fund the OPEB  
246 contribution for 2023/24 in the amount of \$1,186,754 and establish the OPEB Funding  
247 Policy to be 100% of the Actuarially Determined Contribution.

248 FD Valenti explained that the District’s OPEB Funding Policy of 100% of the Actuarially  
249 Determined Contribution is based on the OPEB Actuarial Valuation for the fiscal year ending  
250 June 30, 2023. The pre-funding contribution of \$1,186,754 would be made to CalPERS. Since  
251 the 2023/2024 estimate was \$1M, a budget adjustment of \$186,754 is required to fund 100% of  
252 the ADC.

253

254 There was no public comment.

255

256 M/s Davis/Goines to accept Staff’s recommendation to fund the OPEB contribution for 2023/24  
257 in the amount of \$1,186,754 and establish the OPEB Funding Policy to be 100% of the  
258 Actuarially Determined Contribution.

259 Motion carried: 5-0-0

260

261 b. Increase the Health Insurance budget account 9308-1513 by \$186,754 by transferring this  
262 amount from the Unassigned Fund balance.

263 FD Valenti noted that the \$186,754 needs to be transferred from the Unassigned Fund Balance  
264 by motion.

265

266 There was no public comment.

267 M/s Hadfield/Silverman to increase the health insurance budget account 9308-1513 by \$186,754  
268 by transferring this amount from the Unassigned Fund balance.

269 Motion carried: 5-0-0

270

271 5. Agreed Upon Procedures Engagement Letter – Ambulance Billings Calendar Year 2023

272 Board approval is requested to accept Staff’s recommendation to perform the audit with a 3%  
273 sample size.



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274 Chief Tyler discussed the objective of the agreed-upon procedures engagement is to determine  
275 the clerical accuracy of the ambulance billing claims and to determine if the internal controls are  
276 sufficient. The 3% sample size equals 143 calls out of a total of 4,783. He noted that the Board  
277 can adjust that sample size up if they see a need to, however, it will increase the cost.

278 There was no public comment.

279 M/s Goines/Francisco to accept Staff's recommendation to perform the audit with a 3% sample  
280 size for ambulance billings.

281 Motion carried: 5-0-0

282 6. Agreed Upon Procedures Engagement Letter – Credit Card and Other Disbursements -  
283 Calendar Year 2023

284 Board approval is requested to accept Staff's recommendation to perform the audit with a 3%  
285 sample size.

286 Chief Tyler commented that this audit examines credit card payments and other disbursements.  
287 The 3% sample size equates to 117 transactions of a total of 3,885.

288 There was no public comment.

289 M/s Davis/Hadfield to accept Staff's recommendation to perform the audit with a 3% sample  
290 size for credit cards and other disbursements.

291 Motion carried: 5-0-0

292 **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

293 Directors may report on committee activities and meetings.

- 294 1. **MERA** (Directors Silverman and Hadfield)- President Silverman reported all the  
295 construction work is completed, Motorola is installing equipment, Nokia finishing up  
296 microwaves, beginning to train the trainers for radio use, working on fire department  
297 alerting system, starting installations at the new dispatch center, over 3,000 radios are  
298 coming in, and MERA voted to approve San Quinten's request to have restricted hand-  
299 held radios. They hope to be in-service sometime in late summer.
- 300 2. **Finance Committee** (Directors Davis and Goines)- The Finance Committee will meet on  
301 4/16.
- 302 3. **Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority Board** (Director Goines)- Director Goines  
303 reported; MWPA is in the 4<sup>th</sup> year, the contracts are expiring for the two consultants who  
304 have handled most of the CEQA work- there is an RFP out, MWPA is hiring two more  
305 senior wildfire mitigation specialists- a salary study was conducted, and \$400K budgeted  
306 for initial fuel reduction work on the 10 acre border between San Anselmo and San  
307 Rafael.
- 308 4. **Facilities Committee** (Silverman and Hadfield)- The Facilities Committee will meet on  
309 4/4/24.

310

311





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312 **FINANCIAL REPORTS**

313 Informational items for review. No action needed.

314 1. Financial Reports, January 2024:

315 a. Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance Financial Report

316 b. Revenues and Expenditures Detail Financial Report

317 c. Vendor Summary Financial Report

318 d. MWPA Revenues and Expenditures

319 2. District Monthly Contracts Information

320

321 **INFORMATION**

322 Items of a general nature that the staff wishes to bring to the attention of the Board.

323 1. Customer Surveys January 2024

324 2. MERA Update: February 2024

325 3. Upcoming meetings/events: Strategic Planning Meeting 3/12-3/13

326 • Regular Board Meeting 4/3/24

327 • Facilities Committee Special Meeting 4/4/24

328 • Retirement Luncheon Captain Black and B/C Freedman 4/8/24

329 • FDAC Annual Conference 4/23-26 Monterey, Ca.

330 4. Written Communications- ASM Crayne read a letter from Jess Magallanes, Fire Chief of  
331 the City of South San Francisco, thanking NFD crews for their outstanding professionalism and  
332 assistance to one of their off-duty paramedic firefighters who was in a vehicle accident on  
333 February 20<sup>th</sup>.

334 Director Francisco noted that he will be absent from 3/28-4/7, so he will be absent for the 4/3  
335 BOD meeting. Director Davis will be out of the country for one week. President Silverman will  
336 also be out of town for one week.

337

338 **ADJOURNMENT**

339 There being no further business to conduct, President Silverman adjourned the meeting at 11:27  
340 am.

341

342 Respectfully Submitted,

343

344 A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Crayne".

345

346 Jennifer Crayne, Clerk of the Board

347

348