



Novato Fire District Board of Directors
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
August 7, 2024

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

2

3 **ROLL CALL**

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

5 Absent: Shane Francisco

6

7 **STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT**

8 Fire Chief Bill Tyler, Deputy Chief Dicochea, ASM/Board Clerk Jennifer Crayne, Finance

9 Director Joe Valenti, Fire Marshal Lynne Osgood, B/C Dan Peters, Accountant EriLou Santos,

10 Admin Assistant Kelley Penney, Contracts and Purchasing Administrator Colleen Walraven, and

11 IT Manager Azar Mashintchian.

12

13 **OTHERS PRESENT**

14 District Counsel Riley Hurd, Novato resident Bruce Bartel

15

16 **OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION**

17 None.

18

19 **AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS**

20 None.

21

22 **ASSOCIATION PRESIDENTS' REPORT**

23 None.

24

25 **DIRECTOR MATTERS**

26 Director Davis commented that on a drive to the airport, he noticed that the number of units
27 permanently parked on Binford Road had decreased significantly from 109 units to 45 units. He
28 commended the county for the exceptional work and ongoing management they have been doing
29 to improve the situation.

30

31 Director Goines reported that he presented on the MWPA to the Sons of Retirement, Branch 134.
32 There were approximately 120 attendees. He thanked Chief Tyler and FM Osgood for meeting
33 with him prior to the meeting to provide background on MWPA work that is currently being
34 done. He noted that about 80% of attendees raised their hands when asked if they had received
35 home inspections. Director Goines was pleased as this indicates that we are clearly making a
36 difference in the community.

37

38 President Silverman thanked Chief Tyler for keeping him informed on the Park Fire burning near
39 his family cabin.

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43 **CHIEF'S REPORT**

44 **Calendar Items:**

- 45 • National Night Out, Tuesday, Aug 6th was a big success - Law/Fire community meet and
46 greet.
- 47 • Maze & Associates 2023/24-year end Audit begins in a few weeks
- 48 • End of Summer Pub Ed Event at Hills Church, 1900 block of Novato Blvd
- 49 • Labor Day, Monday Sept 2nd - Admin Office is closed

50

51 **Administrative Items:**

- 52 • The final draft of our 2024-2027 Strategic Plan is being circulated and reviewed by the
53 entire organization. The plan will be brought back to the BOD at the September Meeting
54 for final acceptance. We are also reviewing the progress tracking options. We have
55 already initiated various aspects of the plan and some pre-work is being completed in
56 anticipation of its September launch.
- 57 • Marin Economic Forum & Economist Robert Eyster: NFD Finance Director Joe Valenti,
58 D/C John Dicochea & I joined a Zoom presentation on the current economic projections
59 of our state and county local economies at the July 22nd MEF Economic Briefing. We
60 shared some verbal information from that presentation to the Novato Fire Finance
61 Committee, who requested that staff look into obtaining additional information from
62 Economist, Dr. Robert Eyster on projections such as home valuation trends and possible
63 future property tax impacts from home insurance non-renewals, and other trends. I
64 reached out to Dr. Eyster who directed me to contact the Marin Economic Forum to
65 develop a possible scope and cost for the information we are requesting, as Dr. Eyster has
66 an exclusive service agreement with MEF on all economic projection data within Marin.
- 67 • New NFD Payroll System Kick off - Finance Division is embarking on a mission to
68 migrate to a new payroll and timekeeping system that can reduce manual entries and
69 create a more efficient, reliable and error free payroll and accrual balance tracking
70 mechanisms. This includes executed contracts with UKG Ready and HCM Unlocked
71 people and products.
- 72 • I met with B/C Dan Peters and FF/PM Nicole Scott to discuss the status of our NFD
73 Behavioral Health internal resources and programs and the county-wide BH team. We are
74 looking to renew a contract for services with a fire culturally competent clinician to
75 provide presentations to crews and be available to assist in debriefings and diffusing as
76 well as help if we have a critical incident at NFD.
- 77 • UP Wildfire Risk Reduction and Asset Protection (WRAP): I gave a presentation with
78 Mark Brown and Jason Brookes from Fire Aside on the data capture from our WMS
79 assessments and other projects, and how that data can be used in aggregate or by parcel,



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- 80 with the owners' permission, to help show the insurance companies what we are doing to
81 remove hazards and lower the risk to our communities in Marin.
- 82 • NFD held FF/PM Interviews on Monday and Tuesday of this week. We interviewed 10
83 candidates to fill two to four positions at our next academy anticipated to begin in
84 November.
 - 85 • NFD held Fire Inspector interviews. We originally received 49 applications and
86 interviewed 12 candidates. Of those, we invited 5 back for a fire chief's interview.
 - 87 • MWPA - Work will begin now that the bird nesting season has ended:
88 **Work completed last month:**
 - 89 ▪ *Mowing continued in Bahia along Laguna Vista Drive, Hanford*
 - 90 ▪ *Mowing and acacia resprout removal along DeLong Avenue, Hanford*
 - 91 ▪ *Mowing near Reservoir Hill Vista Trail off Hamilton Parkway, Forster & Kroeger*
 - 92 ▪ *Eucalyptus resprouts removal along the curb on Sunset Parkway, Forster & Kroeger*
 - 93 ▪ *Yellow star thistle removal between Hamilton Parkway & Chapel Hill Road,*
94 *Conservation Corps North Bay*
 - 95 **Work completed this last week:**
 - 96 ▪ *Mowing between the Hamilton Smart Train station & Chapel Hill Road, Forster &*
97 *Kroeger*
 - 98 ▪ *Mowing between Chapel Hill Road & Palm Drive, Hanford*
 - 99 ▪ *Goat grazing in Marin Valley open space, Star Creek*
 - 100 ▪ *Mowing along Olive Avenue, Forster & Kroeger*
 - 101 ▪ *Weed removal along Vintage Way, Forster & Kroeger*
 - 102 **Work in progress:**
 - 103 ▪ *Woody debris removal on a private parcel in Verissimo Hills, Forster & Kroeger*
 - 104 ▪ *Woody debris removal on private parcels on Cabro Ridge, Conservation Corps North Bay*
 - 105 ▪ *Woody debris removal in Bahia open space, Hanford*
 - 106 ▪ *Woody debris removal on a private parcel in Indian Valley*
 - 107 ▪ *Woody debris removal on a private parcel in Country Club*
 - 108
 - 109 • 100th Anniversary planning meeting was conducted by a small admin group to begin to
110 brainstorm ideas to celebrate and identify working groups to take on various aspects of
111 this important milestone in our district's history. Thanks to Jenn for getting this kicked
112 off.
 - 113 • Personnel Ordinance Update: Letters were sent to all three labor groups requesting to
114 meet to discuss deconflicting sections of the existing personnel ordinance processes and
115 provisions as identified in their current MOUs section 7.1. Due to schedule conflicts and
116 vacations, we may need to push the meeting out to September. More to follow.
 - 117



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118 **OPS: D/C Dicochea:**

- 119 • Chief Smith remains OOC at the Park Fire. Park Fire: 4th largest in Ca history, 4
120 Counties: Butte, Plumas, Shasta, Tehama--414,042 Acres, 34% contained
- 121 • 6588 Personnel, 40 helicopters, 525 Engines, 192 Dozers, 153 Water Tenders, 134 crews
- 122 • The Park Fire continues to burn actively in some areas. The overnight humidity recovery
123 was very poor. The fire is well-established in the Mill and Antelope Creek drainages
124 where it will continue to build heat and be resistant to control.
- 125 • New evacuations were ordered in Tehama County in Zones TEH-718, TEH-722, TEH-
126 724.
- 127 • Critically low fuel moistures, steep canyons, long drive times and daily spot fires have
128 caused difficulty in suppressing the fire spread.
- 129 • Temperatures will continue to be hot and dry throughout the day, with primary growth
130 aligning with the topography to the north and east.
- 131 • The fire is expected to continue to challenge crews until more favorable conditions arrive
132 later in the week.
- 133 • Marin County had a fire engine burned/damaged two weeks ago. No injuries reported.
- 134 • MCFD had a dozer burned over and the operator was burned and was airlifted to UC
135 Davis Burn Center
- 136 • NFD has overhead strike team leader support at the incident
- 137 • Lee Gerner Park Fire: Majority of the temporary housing camp was destroyed by fire.
138 Two were identified, arrested, and charged with various crimes including arson. Campers
139 were offered relocation resources. Unclear what the future of the camp will be—the city
140 is evaluating options. Highlights the great cooperation between our fire & Law partners
141 and the work of Thomas Lyons, our fire ranger.
- 142 • FMR Thomas Lyons provided a tour of the Hamilton Marsh area for Assistant City
143 Manager Deakyne and Principal Management Analyst, Economic Development Sullina
144 Smith. They discussed what resources we would need to assist with addressing
145 encampments and fire hazards. Thomas attended the Novato City Internal unhoused
146 meeting and discussed encampment locations and fire hazard concerns with specific
147 encampments. We also discussed enforcement options and camp clean up options.
- 148 • Fire Based Dispatch: Chief Dicochea and I met with Mike Marcucci at the ECC at Los
149 Gamos to discuss dispatching baselines, must cover stations, and response into San
150 Rafael and Marinwood. We hope to reduce impacts to our system but also support closest
151 unit when possible.
- 152 • Chief Dicochea attended a three-day Fire Chiefs Summit in Colorado this week. Meeting
153 with chiefs from all around the country. It was an opportunity to learn what's working for
154 them and what's not; And for John to share the same. It was an opportunity to meet new



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155 colleagues, to make new friends, and get to know the senior people behind the products
156 and services that help make fire departments across the country run optimally.

- 157 • Chief Dicochea lead our monthly OPS meeting with all of the B/Cs.

158

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

- 160 • Paramedic Internship Proposal review: Stipends for paramedic preceptors. Modeled after
161 other fire agencies. Student pays X amount and passes through to the preceptor for the
162 opportunity to complete their field requirements.
- 163 • New updates COVID guidelines sent out to staff and shift personnel.

164

165 **Training: B/C Mike Taul**

- 166 • PG&E Drill Live Action Drill Completed: Challenging am and pm sessions. Many
167 lessons were learned for better cooperation going forward. Put out new safety bulletin for
168 safe distances around power lines. After action discussions with PG&E are scheduled for
169 later this month. Obtained permanent PG&E electrical power pole training props at
170 station 62
- 171 • Trained with all companies on rope rescue

172

173 **Prevention: FM Lynne Osgood**

- 174 • City of Novato Permit Assistance: NFD will be participating in the new Novato Permit
175 Assistance pilot program. Include a roundtable of special districts along with city
176 community development staff to review possible plans submittal to streamline permitting
177 and approval processes, plus a two-day-a-week counter review process.
- 178 • Weekly check-in with Prevention staff & MWPA WMS Supervisor, and VMS Manager.
- 179 • MWPA budget review with VM Manager & Joe Valenti
- 180 • Social media reviews with Grace
- 181 • Meeting with Kiosk
- 182 • Completed 5 plan reviews.
- 183 • 7 Solar Plan Reviews, 1 PV ESS Inspections
- 184 • Fire Investigation Lee Gerner Park
- 185 • New Fire Inspector Training Guide - continued work
- 186 • Training with Thomas Lyons on Fire Investigation
- 187 • 2 Sprinkler finals, 3 Rough and hydro inspections
- 188 • 2 Knox box details
- 189 • 4 Close in hold inspections, 2 Building finals, 2 Occupancy Finals, 2 Solar inspections
- 190 • 23 Home assessments completed (WMA DSI)
- 191 • 193 Roadside assessments completed
- 192 • 123 Grants reviewed, assisted and/or approved
- 193 • Lauren Galli, Fire Prevention Specialist is on maternity leave through the end of August.



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- 194 • Managed GIS datasets for all Novato Zone vegetation projects
- 195 ▪ Finished adding cost data to GNSFB activity table for FY23-24
- 196 ▪ Finished mapping treated polygons for all other Novato Zone projects for
- 197 FY23-24
- 198 ▪ Analyzed implementation cost per acreage for all projects
- 199 • Attended an informal meeting with SMFD and SRFD to walk through SMFD's LRAD
- 200 and Drone programs
- 201 • Met with Joe and Lynne to discuss MWPA budgets and expenses for FY23-24
- 202 • Submitted CAL FIRE quarterly reports for GNSFB grant
- 203 • Conducted a site visit with Lizzy at the Stone Tree Golf Club to walk through the Phillip
- 204 Terrace evacuation route
- 205 • Conducted a site walk at 50 Verissimo prior to work
- 206

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

- 208 • Attended Planning Meeting for specification of 2 UTV's for trail rescues.
- 209 • Took Delivery of 2 additional Pool Vehicles for Administration office personnel.
- 210 • Reached out to Tom Welch to find possible funding mechanisms for UTV purchase.
- 211 • Station 65 PG&E Inspection Completed for Heat Pump Installation
- 212 • Station 65 LED lighting upgrade completed.
- 213 • Station 62 and 65 Solo Washers in Service – Project Complete.
- 214 • RedCloud completed additional work at 65 for Station Alerting.
- 215 • Completed submittal of additional information for Pergola design at Admin Office.
- 216 • All spare B/K portables program update completed.
- 217 • MERA Portable Radio Inventory Completed – All portables accounted for and
- 218 County Inventory Updated.
- 219

220 **IT Manager: Azar Mashintchian**

- 221 • Azar has created a Members Only Intranet. This can only be accessed by current
- 222 employees and requires a username and password that is set up. Members can find things
- 223 like member links, HR forms, Finance Forms, Travel forms and much more. Please
- 224 contact Azar to get set up and follow her instructions to check out the Members Only
- 225 Intranet.
- 226 • Participated in oral board interview for ECC Asst Director Tech Manager
- 227

228 **CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS**

229 These items can be acted on in one consolidated motion or may be removed from the Consent

230 Calendar and separately considered at the request of any person.

- 231 1. 4/4/24 Special Facilities Committee Meeting Minutes
- 232 2. 5/23/24 Special Finance Committee Meeting Minutes



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- 233 3. 7/3/24 Regular Board Meeting Minutes
- 234 4. Bad Debt Write-Off – Uncollectible Novato Ambulance Billing Accounts
- 235 Board approval of staff’s recommendation to write off the designated multi-year
- 236 uncollectible ambulance billing accounts totaling \$83,574.36.
- 237 5. Ambulance Fee Debt Write-Off Due to Hardship
- 238 Board approval is requested to approve a write-off of the designated ambulance billing
- 239 accounts.
- 240 The following accounts have submitted a written request for write-off consideration from
- 241 the Board of Directors. The requests are claiming financial hardship.
- | | | |
|-----|-------------|------------|
| 242 | ▶ F22034215 | \$1,757.04 |
| 243 | ▶ F24001984 | \$ 487.50 |
| 244 | ▶ F24013849 | \$ 487.50 |
- 245 There was no public comment.
- 246 M/s Hadfield/Davis to approve Consent Calendar items 1-5.
- 247 Motion carried: 4-0-1 absent (Francisco)
- 248 **NEW BUSINESS**
- 249 **1. Adoption of the Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2024/2025**
- 250 Board approval is requested to accept the Finance Committee’s recommendation to adopt the
- 251 Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2024/2025.
- 252 Chief Tyler thanked the Finance Committee and Finance Director Valenti for the hard work that
- 253 went into preparing the final budget for fiscal year 2024-25. He noted that during the adoption of
- 254 the preliminary budget, the Finance Committee recommended the addition of graphics to help
- 255 explain and represent the financial information. Those graphics have been included in the final
- 256 draft budget.
- 257 FD Valenti noted that the preliminary budget was adopted in June. He will focus his presentation
- 258 on any revisions incorporated into the final budget since then.
- 259 FD Valenti provided a summary of budgeted revenues and expenditures and % change from FY
- 260 23/24 to FY 24/25.
- 261 Highlights included:
- 262 • Revenues \$41,704,215
 - 263 • Operating Expenditures \$36,746,582
 - 264 • Inter-Governmental Transfers \$1,500,000
 - 265 • Capital Budget Expenditures \$5,985,700
 - 266 • Total Decrease to Assigned Fund Balance \$6,559,700
 - 267 • Increase to Unassigned Fund Balances \$4,031,633



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- 268 • Special Tax 11.29 cents per square foot residential and 16.93 cents per square foot
- 269 commercial
- 270 • % Total Revenue: 85% property tax, 8% charges for service, 7% IGT, 0% other
- 271 • % Total Expenditures: 47% salaries, 34% benefits, 19% services and supplies
- 272 • Station 64 was paid off this month, District is now debt free
- 273 • Kaiser medical premiums increased by 9%
- 274 • IT budget decreased by \$127K. IT Manager Mashintchian carefully reviewed the budget
- 275 and eliminated/reduced costs.
- 276 • 2.3% or \$435K increase in revenues (preliminary vs final budget) after receiving the
- 277 updated final tax revenue estimate from the county

278 There was no public comment.

279 M/s Hadfield/Silverman to accept the Finance Committee’s recommendation to adopt the Annual
280 Budget for Fiscal Year 2024/2025.

281 Motion carried: 4-0-1 absent (Francisco)

282 **2. Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA) JPA Renewal**

283 Board approval is requested to accept Staff’s recommendation to renew the MERA JPA.

284 Chief Tyler explained the MERA JPA was established to plan, finance, implement, manage, own
285 and operate a multi-jurisdictional and county-wide Public Safety and Emergency Radio System
286 with the attendant facilities. The District’s total contribution for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 is
287 \$184,999. This is for both Operating and Capital Replacement. This represents a two percent
288 (2%) increase over Fiscal Year 2023-2024 when the District paid \$181,130. The annual payment
289 is due on August 18, 2024.

290 There was no public comment.

291 M/s Davis/Goines to accept Staff’s recommendation to renew the MERA JPA.

292 Motion carried: 4-0-1 absent (Francisco)

293 **3. Property and Casualty Package Insurance Policy 9/1/24-8/31/25**

294 Board approval is requested to discuss a proposal for the package property and liability insurance
295 policy (“Package Policy”) from the District’s insurance broker, Arthur J. Gallagher Risk
296 Management Services, LLC (“Gallagher”), for the period beginning September 1, 2024 through
297 August 31, 2025.

298 Chief Tyler presented the proposed property and liability insurance package. VFIS has insured
299 the District for the past 6 years. He noted that we will see a 41% increase in premiums over last
300 year. Chief Tyler commented that we had looked into joining other risk pools such as FAIRA,
301 unfortunately, the District’s rate-to-loss ratio is too high to be accepted by that plan. The broker
302 reported that in the next few years, about \$600K in claims should be dropping off which may
303 help the District to join other risk pools.



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304 Contracts/Purchasing Administrator Colleen Walraven commented that each year, we ask the
305 broker not to simply renew the plan with VFIS, but to research what the rest of the market is
306 doing before making a recommendation. She noted that the broker went above and beyond this
307 year given the sharp increase in premiums. She explained that if we make no changes to our
308 coverage, the premium totals \$257K, whereas last year the same coverage was \$169K.

309 Chief Tyler noted that we may want to consider setting aside money in a new reserve account to
310 plan for increases in insurance premiums. This can be added as a future discussion item with the
311 Finance Committee.

312 There was no public comment.

313 M/s Goines/Davis to accept the proposed package for property and liability insurance from
314 District's insurance broker, Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Services, LLC ("Gallagher"),
315 for the period beginning September 1, 2024 through August 31, 2025.

316 Motion carried: 4-0-1 absent (Francisco)

317 **4. Establish a Not-to-Exceed Amount for the Allstar Contract through June 2025**

318 Staff requests Board approval to establish a not-to-exceed amount for the purchase of fire
319 equipment from Allstar Fire Equipment ("Allstar").

320 Chief Tyler commented that the District purchases Lion brand turnout gear, and other fire
321 equipment from Allstar. Allstar is an authorized Lion reseller. The District currently piggybacks
322 onto the NPPGov cooperative pricing agreement between the League of Oregon Cities and Lion
323 Contract # PS20065 terminating on April 13, 2026. The District routinely obtains quotes from
324 Allstar Fire Equipment and their competitor L.N. Curtis for Elhart nozzles, and selects the
325 supplier with the lowest price.

326 There was no public comment.

327 M/s Hadfield/Silverman to establish a not-to-exceed amount for the purchase of fire equipment
328 from Allstar Fire Equipment ("Allstar").

329 Motion carried: 4-0-1 absent (Francisco)

330 **5. Establish a Not-to-Exceed Amount for the Bound Tree Medical Contract through June**
331 **2025**

332 Staff requests approval from the Board to establish a not-to-exceed amount for the contract with
333 Bound Tree Medical, Inc. for the procurement of Advanced Life Support (ALS) and Basic Life
334 Support (BLS) medical supplies for the District.

335 There was no public comment.

336 M/s Hadfield/Goines to approve a not-to-exceed amount for the contract with Bound Tree
337 Medical, Inc. for the procurement of Advanced Life Support (ALS) and Basic Life Support
338 (BLS) medical supplies for the District.



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339 Motion carried: 4-0-1 absent (Francisco)

340 **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

341 Directors may report on committee activities and meetings.

- 342 1. MERA (Directors Silverman and Hadfield)- President Silverman noted that meetings are
343 now every other month, therefore they did not meet.
- 344 2. Finance Committee (Directors Davis and Goines)- Director Davis thanked FD Valenti
345 and his team for their hard work on the budget.
- 346 3. Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority Board (Director Goines)- Director Goines
347 commented that the MWPA board packet was almost 500 pages, but he missed the
348 meeting. The items included:
- 349 • Bolinas area Eucalyptus removal
 - 350 • Sun Valley in San Rafael Eucalyptus removal (6 acres = \$280K)
 - 351 • New MWPA President- Rachael Kurtz
 - 352 • New MWPA VP- Katherine Hilliard
- 353 4. Facilities Committee (Silverman and Hadfield)- next meeting is scheduled for 9/10/24
354

355 **FINANCIAL REPORTS**

356 Informational items for review. No action is needed.

- 357 1. Financial Reports, June 2024:
- 358 a. Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance Financial Report
 - 359 b. Revenues and Expenditures Detail Financial Report
 - 360 c. Vendor Summary Financial Report
 - 361 d. MWPA Revenues and Expenditures
- 362
- 363 2. District Monthly Contracts Information
364

365 **INFORMATION**

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

- 367 1. Customer Surveys May and June 2024 – Deputy Chief Dicochea noted that he followed
368 up with a dissatisfied resident who had provided a negative comment on the customer
369 service survey.
- 370 2. MERA Update: July 2024
- 371 3. Upcoming meetings and events:
- 372 • Labor Day Holiday 9/2/24 – Admin Office Closed
 - 373 • Leadership Novato Kickoff & Fire District Day 9/4/24
 - 374 • Next Regular Board Meeting 9/4/24 @ 10:00 am
 - 375 • Facilities Committee Meeting 9/10/24 @ 9:00 am
- 376 4. MWPA Q4 Work Plan Impact Report



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377 5. Written Communications – none.

378 **ADJOURNMENT**

379 There being no further business to conduct, President Silverman adjourned the meeting at 11:20
380 am.

381

382 Respectfully Submitted,

383 *Jennifer Crayne*

384 Jennifer Crayne

385 ASM/Clerk of the Board

386