



SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE

5560 Overland Avenue | Suite 400, San Diego | CA 92123-1204

www.sdcountyfire.org

SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Monday, November 4, 2024 | 1:00 p.m. | San Diego County Fire Office, Balboa Room

AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER
 - A. Pledge of Allegiance
 - B. Roll Call
 - C. Declaration of Quorum
 - D. Introductions

- II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: Members of the public may address the Board on any subject matter within its assigned purview and not on the agenda. Please notify County staff prior to the meeting.

- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM AUGUST 12, 2024 **(VOTE)**

- IV. MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT
 - A. Fire Chief's Update
 - B. Director's Update

- V. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. Board Letter Updates
 - B. San Pasqual Fire Station Capital Project—Pending Board of Supervisors Action
 - C. Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) Consultant Study—Pending Board of Supervisors Action
 - D. Fire Protection Districts Funding Update—Information Only
 - E. Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS) Initiative—Information Only
 - F. Calendar Year 2025 Meeting Schedule

- VI. NEXT MEETING
 - A. Monday, TBD, at 1:00 pm at the San Diego County Fire Office – 5560 Overland Ave, Suite 400, Balboa Room, San Diego CA 92123 (County Operations Center).

- VII. ADJOURNMENT

Written materials distributed to the Fire Advisory Board in connection with this agenda will be made available to the public less than 72 hours before the meeting at the Office of San Diego County Fire.

ASSISTANCE FOR THE DISABLED

If you are planning on attending this meeting and need special accommodations, please contact County Fire staff at least 24 hours before the meeting. Individuals requiring sign language interpreters should contact the Americans with Disabilities Coordinator at (858) 505-6521, in advance of the meeting.

For meeting information, please contact:

San Diego County Fire

TEL: (619) 455-1819

Nicole.DelToro@sdcounty.ca.gov



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Monday, August 12, 2024 | 1:00 P.M.

MINUTES

Members

Jason Shanley	District 1 – Seat 1 (absent)
Bret Sealey	District 5 – Seat 2
Clifford Kellogg	District 5 – Seat 3, Vice Chair (absent)
VACANT	District 2 – Seat 4
VACANT	District 2 – Seat 5
Randy Lyle	District 2 – Seat 6
Ben Tullock	District 2 – Seat 7

County Staff

Tony Mecham	CALFIRE/Chief
Jeff Collins	County Fire/Director
Marc Regier	County Fire/Assistant Director
Ryan Silva	CALFIRE/Deputy Chief Community Risk Reduction
David Sibbet	County Fire/Fire Services Coordinator
Bob Spanbauer	County Fire/Chief Admin Services
Nicole del Toro	County Fire/EMS Admin Secretary/Recorder



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- I. CALL TO ORDER at 1:00 pm.
 - A. The group recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
 - B. Roll call was taken.
 - C. A quorum was declared present with three (3) members in attendance.
 - D. There were no introductions.

- II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION
There was no public communication.

- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF MAY 6, 2024 (VOTE)

ON MOTION of Member Sealey, seconded by Member Lyle, the Advisory Board approved the Minutes of May 6, 2024 with the correction to add 1 abstain to the vote, to reflect Member Sealey's abstention. Member Tulloch abstained due to not being in attendance at the May meeting.

AYES: 2 NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 2 ABSTAIN: 1

- IV. CHIEFS REPORT

- A. Fire Chiefs Report

1. Fire Chief Tony Mecham provided information and updates on the following:
 - Ambulance Service Area
 - Fleet
 - Will continue to invest in long term capital - fleet and facilities
 - Carlsbad and Joint technical rescue team

Director Jeff Collins provided the following information and updates:

- Facilities
 - Jacumba Fire Station is currently being built.
 - Borrego Springs Fire Station living conditions are being improved.
 - Ramona Fire Station is getting an expansion.
 - Training Tower Project will be fully funded next year.

- V. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Approving the Advisory Board Sunset Review Report for 2024

Board of Supervisors Policy A-74, "Citizens Participation in County Boards, Commissions, and Committees," requires a sunset of advisory committees. The Board Policy requires the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors to conduct a sunset review for all Advisory Board on a regular basis. All identified County Advisory Boards are supposed to respond to a baseline assessment and provide responses to the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors by October 11, 2024.

ON MOTION of Member Lyle, seconded by Member Sealey, the Advisory Board voted to approve the draft responses and authorize County Fire staff to send feedback on behalf of the Fire Advisory Board.



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AYES: 3 NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 2

- B. Adopting the Ramona Municipal Water District Equivalent Dwelling Unit Code for the San Diego County Fire Protection – Pending Board of Directors Action

On August 1, 2022, the Ramona Municipal Water District (RMWD) divested fire protection and emergency medical services and the community of Ramona was annexed into the San Diego County Fire Protection District. The Local Agency Formation Committee (LAFCO) authorized all existing special benefit taxes, including the Equivalent Dwelling Unit (EDU) benefit fee, to be transferred to the San Diego County Fire Protection District to make the transition cost-neutral to the County of San Diego. The EDU is a voter-approved special tax of \$188.52 per EDU and funds may only be used for fire protection and emergency medical services within Ramona. For owners receiving a property tax bill, the tax is included on that statement. Non-profits and government agencies receive a “hand bill” by a County of San Diego contractor.

The EDU ordinance authorizing the San Diego County Fire Protection District to collect the tax is within the RMWD building code. To incorporate the EDU code language into the San Diego County Fire Protection District, the Board of Directors will need to adopt an ordinance and add the RMWD code to the San Diego County Administrative Code.

ON MOTION of Member Lyle, seconded by Member Sealey, the Advisory Board voted to support the adoption of the EDU Ordinance into San Diego County Administrative Code.

AYES: 3 NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 2

- C. Mandated Fire Inspection Reporting for Fiscal Year 2023-24 – Pending Board of Directors Action

The State code requires the San Diego Fire Protection District to perform annual inspections on all buildings used as a school, apartment complex, group care facility, residential care facility, commercial space, office complex, jails, law enforcement station, lodging unit, and day care facility. County Fire, on behalf of the San Diego County Fire Protection District, completed 100% of the 258 State-mandated inspections in the San Diego County and Deer Springs Fire Protection Districts in Fiscal Year 2023-24. In addition, staff conducted 1,183 non-mandated business inspections in the same time period.

ON MOTION of Member Lyle, seconded by Member Sealey, the Advisory Board voted to receive and accept this report and vote in support of the findings.

AYES: 3 NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 2

- D. Ramona High School Fire Science Center Technical Education Programs – Information Only

San Diego County Fire and CAL FIRE are partnering with Ramona High School to launch a fire science career technical education program for the 2024-25 school year. The program is open to seniors and includes both semesters and summer session. Students will receive instruction and hands on training from CAL FIRE/County Fire staff.



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- E. Battery energy Storage Systems (BESS) projects in the San Diego County Fire Protection District – Information Only

In May 2024, the San Diego County Fire Protection District responded to a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) fire in the East Otay Mesa area. The prolonged response, along with several proposed BESS projects, has led to questions about safety and best practices. County Fire staff is reviewing several actions to protect people and properties.

- VI. NEXT MEETING

The next Fire Advisory Board meeting will be held on Monday, November 4, 2024, at 1:00pm at the San Diego County Fire Office (County Operations Center) – 5560 Overland Ave, Suite 400, Balboa Rm, San Diego 92123.

- VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Advisory Board adjourned at 1:45 pm.

NOTE: These Minutes set forth all action taken by the Advisory Board on the matters stated, but not necessarily the chronological sequence in which the matters were taken up.

For meeting information, please contact:

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Board Letter Updates

Receive an update on the County Fire's Board Letters and the Advisory Board Statement section.

Recommendation: No action needed.

San Pasqual Fire Station Capital Project—Pending Board of Supervisors Action

San Pasqual Fire Station 84 is owned by County Fire but staffed through San Diego Fire & Rescue. The City of San Diego is increasing staffing at San Pasqual from 2 firefighters per day to 4 per day. San Diego County Fire Protection District (SDCFPD) residents in this area receive fire protection and emergency medical services from San Diego Fire-Rescue personnel. To accommodate the increased staffing, a larger modular home with 4 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms will be installed, allowing for all 4 firefighters to reside in the same living quarters. The total estimated cost of the project is \$865,000 and construction is expected to begin this fiscal year. County Fire and San Diego Fire & Rescue are working together to discuss a potential cost sharing agreement. County Fire will seek approval from the Board of Supervisors to establish the capital project and authorize the Department of General Services to complete the project.

Recommendation: Support County Fire's request to establish a capital project for the San Pasqual Fire station and authorize County staff to complete design, acquisition, and installation of a modular trailer.

Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) Consultant Study—Pending Board of Supervisors Action

San Diego County Fire staff, on behalf of the San Diego County Fire Protection District (SDCFPD), is responsible for administering the Consolidated Fire Code for proposed projects in the SDCFPD and Deer Springs Fire Protection District. After the May 2024 Gateway Fire in East Otay Mesa, the Board of Supervisors provided funding for County Fire to hire a nationally recognized consultant to review the Cause of Origin for the Gateway Fire and propose best practices for mitigating risk related to future Battery Energy Storage projects in the unincorporated area. On October 29, 2024, County Fire and unincorporated fire protection district fire marshals received the draft report. County Fire is working with partner agencies and plans to seek public input on the consultant's recommendations.

In addition, on September 11, 2025 (5), the Board directed the County Fire Chief, through the Chief Administrative Officer, to analyze residential buffer distances based on plume modeling and develop a plan for new BESS facilities and report back to the Board by December 11, 2024.

Recommendation: Receive an update on the consultant report for best practices on fire code safety best practices, provide the Advisory Board's feedback, and proposed public engagement strategy for the report.

Fire Protection Districts Funding Update—Information Only

On July 17, 2024 (2), the Board of Supervisors directed the Chief Administrative Officer to review the level of resources, funding, and sustainability of fire protection in the communities of Valley Center, Deer Springs, Pauma Valley, and other parts of the San Diego County Fire Protection District and return to the Board within 90 days to provide options, including a property tax adjustment, for the Valley Center and Deer Springs Fire Protection Districts. On October 8, 2024 (8), County Fire staff returned to the Board and

presented several options to increase funding and resources in alignment with the Board's prior direction to include increasing the property tax allocations for Deer Springs and Valley Center Fire Protection Districts to 6% of the 1 %, a new two-person medic squad along the U.S.-Mexico international border, enhancing the two-person medic squad in East Otay Mesa to a three-person fire engine, and adding a new three-person fire engine in Pauma Valley.

Recommendation: Receive an update from County Fire staff on the Board of Supervisors policy direction and County staff's next steps to increase fire protection resources by July 1, 2025.

Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS) Initiative—Information Only

The Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS) is an independent, non-profit, scientific research and communications organization supported by insurance companies. To address increasing wildfire risk to insurance companies and rising costs to consumers, IBHS created the Welfare Prepared Home program. In this two-tier system, homeowners can evaluate their home's wildfire safety and then make improvements that reduces risk. Residents meeting the minimum standards will receive a certificate that they can provide to their homeowners insurance to seek premium relief or improve their chances of exiting the FAIR program. One of the biggest gaps in the Wildfire Prepared Home program is the ability of rural residents to secure an appointment from an inspector who can educate on the program requirements and issued a certificate that the homeowner meets the program requirements.

On October 22, 2024 (FP01), the San Diego County Fire Protection District (SDCFPD) Board of Directors authorized County Fire staff, on behalf of the SDCFPD, to pilot the Wildfire Prepared program in the District. County Fire will utilize an existing Fire Prevention Specialist to become trained in the Wildfire Prepared Home program and close the gap on education and certification.

Recommendation: Receive an update on the IBHS program, the San Diego County Fire Protection District Board of Directors' action, and County Fire's next steps for implementing the pilot program.

Calendar Year 2025 Meeting Schedule

To continue providing input for San Diego County Fire Protection District future Board of Directors actions, and County Fire's actions on behalf of fire protection and emergency medical services in our region, a 2025 Fire Advisory Board meeting schedule is needed. County staff has provided four (4) options:

Monday, March 3, 2025

Monday, May 12, 2025

Monday, September 8, 2025

Monday, November 17, 2025

Recommendation: Receive feedback and approval for a 2025 Fire Advisory Board meeting schedule.