



BOARD MINUTES December 13, 2019

**SCOTT VALLEY FIRE
PROTECTION DISTRICT**
A California Special District
Siskiyou County, California

Location: Fire Hall, 317 Maple St.
Greenview, CA. 96034
530 468-2170 messages only
<http://www.scottvalleyfire.com>

Chief Ben Austin
530-598-4950
Assistant Chief Scott Frick
530 643-1413
Assistant Chief Paul Buchter
530 598-7249
Administrator Nancy Salucci
541 210-4618 joy@mind.net

Board of Commissioners:
Larry Alexander, Chair
Jay Akerman, Vice Chair
Kathleen Williams
Kevin Hullquist
James C. Roseman

Summarized **MINUTES** from a regular Board of Commissioners meeting of Scott Valley Fire Protection District, Greenview, California. The meeting was held on Friday December 13, 2019 and was opened at 4:00 by Chair Larry Alexander. Present were Vice Chair Jay Akerman and Board members Kevin Hullquist and James C. Roseman. Chief Benny Austin, Assistant Chiefs Scott Frick and Paul Buchter, and Administrative Officer Nancy Salucci.

PUBLIC COMMENTS None

Chief Ben Austin

New firefighter applications, deletions from roster None

Highlights of recent firefighting activities Nothing to report

Vehicle maintenance Nothing to report

Training/Safety/Injury and Illness Prevention Program monthly report

The recent meetings covered "buddy breathing" (sharing breathing apparatus) and Rapid Intervention Team protocols.

Scott Valley Fire and Rescue Alliance Report

Chief Austin reminded the Executive Committee to confer with County Council regarding consolidation and report back to Alliance members. They will also seek advice on the ramifications of firefighters' dual membership in SVFPD and Etna FD as it pertains to workers' comp and potential liabilities. Chair Alexander and Administrative Officer will contact County Council and report their findings.

Personnel: Chief and Assistant Chiefs salaries discussion and up-date for 2020

Chief Austin noted that John Shepard has now been officially appointed as the Fort Jones FD Chief. He is being paid through a SAFER grant. Chief Austin said that Etna FD Chief Kramer was being paid \$1500 monthly. Commissioner Roseman read a memo from the California Salary Survey data base that indicated the Etna FD Chief was paid \$25,000 annually. A committee consisting of Chair Alexander, Commissioners Roseman and Akerman, and Administrative

Officer Salucci was formed to make recommendations regarding salary increases to SVFPD Chiefs. All agreed conceptually that increases were needed, with the amounts to be determined.

Continuing/New business

- Chief Austin reported that the recently acquired Ford F150 has a blown engine and he will try to sell the vehicle at auction. We have invested \$400 into the vehicle which has a value of nearly \$10,000 providing it has a decent engine. Assistant Chief Buchter will research our options.
- Chief Austin mentioned two new California Assembly Bills re house inspections for fire set-backs. Salucci was asked to investigate this with CSDA.
- Chief Austin thanked the board for his retirement party.
- Chief Austin said "Churchill Insurance is cancelling homeowners' insurance, even in Yreka." Commissioner Hullquist reported that his homeowners policy in Scott Valley recently increased 65% and that some homeowners in Napa were paying \$5,000 premiums.

Assistant Chief Scott Frick

New/Continuing business Regarding purchasing chain-link fencing for the Greenview Station and adjoining property, Assistant Chief Frick obtained one bid for \$9,600 from Inline Fencing. Although Frick sought multiple bids over a two-month period, only Inline Fencing responded. The bid includes heavy gage material, two gates, a 3 foot easement wrap around the adjacent pump house, and would completely fence the property. Chief Austin suggested we look at using black wire rather than silver. Although this would cost an additional \$900, the Board agreed it was a wise choice. Chair Alexander said he has used Inline Fencing and that "they do great work at a good price." As to why the Greenview Station needs to be fenced, members expressed their

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	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Full Strength (goal)	25	25	25	25	25	
Active firefighters on roster	18	19	19	19	19	
Inactive firefighters	1	1	1	1	1	
Firefighters removed from roster	0	0	0	0	0	
New applications received	0	0	0	0	0	
Applications pending	1	1	2	2	2	
Applications distributed	0	0	0	0	0	
Attended 1st Tuesday drill	15	5	8	12	10	
Attended 2 nd Tuesday drill	12	12	6	4		
Station staffing:						
Greenview	3	3	3	3	3	
French Creek	7	7	7	7	7	
Callahan	2	2	2	2	2	
Moffett Creek	4	4	4	4	4	
Scott River	2	2	2	2	2	
Masterson-Unstaffed, no vehicles						

BOARD REPORTS

Larry Alexander, Chair (Public Information Officer, Grant Procurement, Fire Safe Council Liaison)

Approval of minutes Motion to approve the minutes for the November 2019 meeting, Roseman/2nd Hullquist. All ayes. Passed.

2020 California Climate Investment Fire Prevention Grant Program application for hazardous fuels reduction in Partridge Pines, Kidder Creek, Belgian, Borba Lane

The grant application was submitted. Award notifications will be sent by CalFire in March, 2020. If awarded, work will be conducted October 2020 through March 2022.

Executive committee report for Scott Valley Fire and Rescue Alliance Nothing has changed from last month's report.

Oral communication; correspondence; continuing/new business Chief Austin's Retirement Party was a huge success as evidenced by the attendance of guests and honors bestowed upon the retiring Chief. The *Siskiyou Daily News* November 20 article and November 23 Facebook posting describe the event.

According to a resolution from the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors

presented to Austin on Saturday, he began his long and distinguished firefighting career in 1975 when he served on a U.S. Forest Service engine crew in Happy Camp.

The REC in Fort Jones was packed Saturday evening with friends, family and colleagues of Scott Valley Fire Protection District Chief Benny Austin, who is retiring at the end of 2019 after 44 years of service to Siskiyou County. Scott and Tammy Frick of Olivera's Catering coordinated and catered a celebratory dinner in Austin's honor.

The evening was filled with humorous and heartwarming stories and send-offs for the SVFPD Chief. Local dignitaries and fire personnel presented him with multiple awards and gifts recognizing his immense selflessness and dedication to the people and landscapes of Siskiyou County.

According to a resolution from the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors presented to Austin on Saturday, he began his long and distinguished firefighting career in 1975 when he served on a U.S.

Forest Service engine crew in Happy Camp. In 1978, he worked on a Scott Bar engine and helped build the barracks that are still in use there today.

Six years later, in 1984, Austin began volunteering with the Scott Valley Fire Protection District and became a valuable addition to the Greenview and Moffett Creek stations, the resolution details. He assisted on several incidents with the SVFPD and furthered his involvement in the department along with doing continuing education.

Austin returned to the USFS in the 1990s where he worked at the Oak Knoll station while still serving as a volunteer, trainer and board member with SVFPD.

In 2003, he became chief of the SVFPD. Austin's colleagues speak highly of him, and describe him as an excellent leader who put the safety and needs of the firefighters, department, volunteers, and the community they serve as his first priority.

Many of Austin's fellow firefighters and friends readily expressed their thoughts about him during the retirement dinner Saturday as a microphone was passed around to anyone inclined to share memories about his career and the qualities that set him apart.

SVFPD volunteer Steve Pestana recalled the harrowing but humorous memory of his first time meeting Austin before Pestana began volunteering for the department himself. It was a December night a few years ago, he said, when his generator room caught fire. Firefighters from the SVFPD responded to the incident and told Pestana that the chief would be arriving to take a report. Pestana related to Saturday evening's crowd that he was especially nervous to see the chief because he'd have to tell Austin that he'd been storing gasoline next to his generator, which he knew was a safety hazard and fire risk.

When he saw Austin's vehicle coming up his driveway, Pestana recalled, "I was surprised to see Santa." (Austin's resemblance to Santa Claus thanks to his white bushy beard and hair is a running joke with many who know him, as was evidenced repeatedly during his retirement dinner.) Pestana said that Austin was kind to him despite the circumstances, adding, "He didn't even chew me out for my stupidity."

South Yreka Fire Protection District Chief Bernie Paul was in attendance, representing the Siskiyou County Fire Chiefs Association. He noted that Austin was "always on the front lines" of fires in the county and readily provided his expertise and help.

Fred Kraus, a firefighter with the SVFPD, said that Austin has been a great chief. He explained, "Benny treated us like volunteers always and I think that's important."

The SVFPD Battalion Chief described Austin's seeming omnipresence. "Like many others, I thought he was Santa Claus and maybe flying because I'd see him in Yreka and then [in Fort Jones] on a fire," he said, adding that Austin also always seemed to be in a different truck as he was constantly rotating between fire, work and other personal vehicles.

SVFPD Administrative Officer Nancy Salucci directed attention and praise to Austin's family, especially his wife Kathy. "Benny couldn't have done all this without Kathy and her support," she pointed out, adding, "The kids went through a lot of years of, 'Where's dad?'" Austin was surrounded by his family, including his young grandson, and the group was all smiles throughout the evening.

When Austin got up to speak at the end of the evening, he was soft-spoken and humble. He said that he expects great things for the SVFPD's future.

The Board expressed their appreciation to Scott Frick for catering the successful event and approved payment.

Jay Akerman (Fiscal Oversight/Insurance) Vice Chair

Continuing/New business

Vice Chair Akerman has not heard from Firefighter Tupman re transferring management of the Facebook page to her.

Vice Chair Akerman and Commissioner Roseman would like information on the large SAFER grant obtained by Fort Jones FD sever years ago. Administrative Officer Salucci said it would be very helpful to have a copy of the grant since we are now looking for funding of chiefs' salaries. Salucci will inquire if we can access a copy.

Kathy Williams (Sunshine Committee) Excused Absence

Kevin Hullquist (New training facility coordinator)

New Training Center See report (above) from Assistant Chief Scott Frick

New/Continuing business Nothing new to report

James C. Roseman (Personnel liaison)

Badges for fire personnel Citing a memo Commissioner Roseman sent to all board members on December 9, 2019, Roseman stated that our Policy and Procedure Manual states we can use badges and that they are a sign of public trust in public servants, i.e. fire personnel. The board agreed and instructed Operations to purchase badges. Assistant Chief Buchter said our personnel do not have official uniforms and that they want them. Vice Chair Akerman stated his support for this and Assistant Chief Frick says it "shows a level of professionalism." It was agreed that Buchter would also look into purchasing uniforms.

New/Continuing business Commissioner Roseman and Assistant Chief Frick will discuss and create a ceremony for swearing-in the new chiefs.

Motion to Adjourn Roseman/ 2nd Hullquist. All ayes, passed.

Date

Chair

Administrative Officer