

**NORTH CENTRAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2017  
5:30 P.M.  
MINUTES**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

District Board Chair Mr. Ken Abrahamian called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

**Roll Call**

**Board Members Present:** Mrs. Cheryl Belluomini, Mr. Keith Koligian, Mr. Rusty Nonini, Mr. Ken Abrahamian and Mr. Rusty Souza.

Also present were Deputy Chief Ted Semonious, Mr. Ken Price, and Mr. Joe Barcelos.

**2. INVOCATION AND FLAG SALUTE**

The invocation was led by Mr. Barcelos and the flag salute was led by Chief Semonious.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments

**4. CONSENT TO AGENDA**

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Minutes of Regular Board Meeting of January 26, 2017.**

**Motion:** To approve the minutes of January 26, 2017, as submitted.

**Moved by:** Mr. Koligian, second by Mr. Nonini

Mr. Abrahamian:	Mrs. Belluomini:	Mr. Koligian:	Mr. Nonini:	Mr. Souza:	Vote:
Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	5/0

**6. PRESENTATIONS – CORRESPONDENCE – REPORT/FIRE CHIEF**

**A. Fire Chief General Update**

**1) January Incident Report – Information only**

Chief Semonious called the District Board's attention to the January incident report and asked if they had any questions. There were no questions.

**2) General Updates – Information only**

Chief Semonious did not have any new updates to report

**3) Disposition of Water Tenders 21 & 23**

Mr. Barcelos explained to the District Board Chief Donis wanted to seek the District Board's direction on this item. The District has received one of the

new water tenders and the second new tender will be completed soon. Chief Donis is recommending the District sell the oldest of the two water tenders which is Water Tender 23 and keep Water Tender 21 as a reserve water tender.

Mr. Koligian asked Mr. Barcelos what the value of Water Tender 23 is if the District sells it. Mr. Barcelos reported he searched through a periodical received by the District every month listing used apparatus for sale and looked at some websites that sell used fire apparatus to see what a similar water tender is selling for these days. Mr. Barcelos reported he found three tenders of similar age and mileage selling for around \$30,000.

After more discussion about the condition of the District's water tenders being replaced and some of the options in trying to sell a used water tender it was the District Board's consensus to sell Water Tender 23 and place Water Tender 21 in reserve.

## **7. BUSINESS MANAGER REPORT**

### **A. Statement of Economic Interest From 700**

Mr. Barcelos reminded the District Board members that the annual statement of economic interests Form 700 are due in April. He mentioned the e-Disclosure program the County of Fresno has available for filing and submitting the forms.

## **8. FIRE CODE ORDINANCE NO. 2016-01 REVISIONS**

### **A. Action item – Consider and approve proposed revisions to the District's Fire Code Ordinance No. 2016-01**

Chief Semonious explained due to the questions raised at last month's meeting regarding the District's Fire Code Ordinance, I have provided more detail to help the District Board make a decision whether to make revisions to the adopted fire code or leave the amendments as adopted at last month's meeting.

The first section to be addressed has to do with the outside storage and conditional use permits for outside storage. It's not the Fire Department's intent to seek out companies or individuals that are doing things wrong and make them buy permits. The permit isn't really that expensive, it's a \$57 permit. The intent of the permit is to be able to educate people that may be storing combustible materials that would be a detriment to their property if it were to catch on fire. Providing some guidelines to the storage of combustible materials will educate people in the manner that would be easier for the Fire Department to extinguish the fire and would provide a safer environment for firefighters. When proper separation distance between piles of combustible materials is maintained the Fire Department will be able to effectively safe more of their property than if the piles are grouped together.

At the bottom of each section of these three categories I have provided some options as to how you can move forward with each of the amendments. On this particular section, there are code sections that already deal with outside storage in the model code so if you were to remove this section completely, we would just

revert back to the California Fire Code (CFC) on each of these items. For instance, items such as combustible materials and bin storage can all be found listed in the CFC as individual items rather than being grouped together as in this amendment. The Department recognizes the items listed in the amendment are the most common items found in the District so we grouped them together. It allows us to be able to treat facilities in the same manner and not have to go back to the CFC each time we have a different material. The other option would be to keep the amendment the way it is. It makes the application of this section easier to enforce across the board. Obviously, since it is written into the code already, my recommendation is to keep the amendment the way it is. However, it is up to the District Board to make the decision to remove this amendment, revise it or leave it as is.

For the purposes of our discussion this evening I brought with me section 105.6.1.348 which spells out each of the categories the Fire Chief has authorization to require operational permits for. It gets very specific in some aspects; it breaks it down from aerosol products, aviation facilities, carnivals and fairs. But the areas you are most concerned with involve fruit and crop harvesting or ripening.

The other concern I know you have discussed is bin storage, so there is a section on miscellaneous combustible storage and other things which could require an operational permit to store. Some of these things are combustible packing cases, boxes, barrels, similar containers and rubber tires. The actual size of a storage pile listed in the CFC that the District could require a permit is 2,500 cubic feet. So in reality, what the Fire Department presented is something that is not as restrictive as the CFC itself. The CFC does not mandate that we do the operational permit; it just says the Fire Chief has the authority to require operational permits for outside storage piles.

Mr. Abrahamian first verified Chief Semonious just said the recommended amendment is less strict than the CFC because the District Board was told an amendment can be more restrictive but not less restrictive. He asked Chief Semonious if the District is allowed to do this. Chief Semonious replied in this case, this part of the CFC gives the fire official the authorization to issue operational permits but the Fire Chief is not mandated to do this. So in this section the Fire Department is allowing storage of up to 5,000 square feet instead of 2,500 cubic feet which is only 625 square feet. In reality the Department is saying we don't mind you storing large quantities, that is not what this is about, this is about being able to educate property owners if they store combustible materials in a manner that is conducive to better firefighting. If it does catch on fire, the Fire Department can save more property and put less lives in danger by monitoring what the property owner is doing on their property.

Mr. Abrahamian provided this example; let's say a farmer has thousands of bins and they are going to start picking up their raisins and they have a large ranch so the bins are all stored in one area. The bins will only be on their ranch for a couple of days but there will be easily over 5,000 square feet of stacked bins.

The farmer wants to make sure he follows all the rules so he gets an operational permit. Someone from the fire department goes out to the farmer's property to do what? How many feet of separation between each pile does there need to be? Chief Semonious replied it depends on the commodity that they are actually storing. Mr. Abrahamian mentioned the bins will be empty at this point. Chief Semonious stated I don't have the actual amount of feet needed for separation before me but let's say it is 50 feet. You can have a 5,000 square foot pile and then fifty feet away from this, you can have another 5,000 square foot pile. The whole purpose of this is so that all the product is not in one big pile which would be very difficult to fight a fire because we don't have the means to separate the material. Chief Semonious gave an example of a company in the City of Fresno that stored power poles for the entire West Coast. Twice, this company lost their entire inventory because they weren't storing their commodity with separation so the Department could provide better fire protection. They didn't do what the Department asked them to do and one of the things the Department recommended was to provide a water source. So in two separate occasions, a commodity that does not spontaneously combust burned completely. This recommended amendment is just an attempt for us in this particular case to provide the education to the owner of these combustible materials the proper way to store them so we can get in there and protect their property.

Chief Semonious explained one of the District's choices is to remove this section and the Fire Department is ok with that and so we will just revert back to what the CFC says. Or the District can give direction to the Fire Chief to not enforce any of these operational permits. Because it is not a requirement that we enforce the operational permit but is more about informing and educating property owners rather than to find a way to site them. The Fire Department doesn't have the time, people or energy to find every one of these locations and site them. And in the case of a raisin grower that doesn't own his own bins, he is likely going to have the bins for a day or two and then they are gone. That is technically not storage. That's the process of harvesting your crop.

There were no more questions so Chief Semonious moved on to the next item. The intent of the kitchen sprinkler head is when there is a fire that occurs in a residence and it is in the kitchen. The requirement of a sprinkler head in the kitchen is to provide fire protection, a means of extinguishment and provide higher life safety in an area of a house which has a higher frequency of fire. It wasn't the intent of the Fire Department to make the homeowner sprinkler the entire house as they would if it was a brand new house and being permitted today. And the reason we limit it to saying they have to have damage in the kitchen is because we don't want the homeowner to have to do construction in an area of the house that wasn't involved in the fire. That's just adding more construction cost to the homeowner and that was not the intent of this amendment.

Some of the District's options on this are to adopt it as it is which means that if a homeowner has a fire in their house and the fire has damaged the kitchen and the cost of repairs is in excess of \$81,000 and the damage had to incur in the



kitchen, then it would require a single sprinkler head system in the kitchen alone. If you look at any of the NFPA reports and stats on fire sprinklers, the kitchen fire is the most frequent house fire that we have.

Mr. Koligian mentioned his concern is if the County of Fresno raises their fee threshold so that \$1,000 permit cost only covers say \$20,000 worth of damage. Mr. Koligian does not want residents of the District to be required to install a kitchen sprinkler if they only had \$20,000 of damage. He agreed with the threshold of \$81,000 worth of damage but what if that gets changed by the County. Mr. Price added if someone is doing an \$80,000 repair on a kitchen, it's going to be permitted and the insurance company will most likely pay for the damages. I guess the thing I am curious about is why this amendment is even associated with the permit cost, shouldn't it be associated with the total damage of the structure. Chief Semonious replied this has been a topic of discussion internally in the department. The permit fee is set at \$1,000 because the size of kitchens varies and the amenities in a kitchen vary. There is a balance of trying to provide a better fire suppression device and life safety in a building and the cost the consumer has to pay to get there. Mr. Koligian mentioned my question is hypothetical because this is a three year plan. What if the county comes next week and says we are taking this \$1,000 and instead of reflecting \$81,000 of damage to the permit value, now that \$1,000 permit is only going to reflect \$10,000 worth of damage. Mr. Price mentioned what Mr. Koligian is saying is the fee is scaling the cost of the damage, what if that scale changes.

Chief Semonious suggested the District Board accept this amendment as adopted and if the County does change the way they issue permits, the Board is entitled to come back and amend this code section if they would like to. Mr. Koligian asked how the District would be notified if the County makes a change. Chief Semonious replied the Fire Department will know because there is usually an uproar when building fees are increased. Chief Semonious mentioned the Fire Department asked the building officials in the County when the last time they increased their fees and was told the County just re-did their fee schedule recently. In order for the County to change their fee schedule again, they would have to go through another study which would be a big expense to them because somebody has to spend the time to make sure what they are charging is in line with the study. If the County's fee schedule does go up and the Fire Department is made aware of it, we will bring this item right back to the board.

Chief Semonious moved on to the third item regarding S type or S-2 type occupancies as they pertain to the agricultural industry. Every building that is built does have a fire flow requirement and that pertains to the structure type, a non-combustible versus an ordinary wood frame construction, what the building is being used for or what commodities will be stored in the building, and the occupancy load. It is a very complicated formula that goes into figuring out what the fire flow for the building will be. Every building regardless of what its use is has a fire flow associated with it in the CFC today. I think what was happening in the past is the County building administrator was calling these exempt buildings for agricultural purposes and exempting them from everything, which is not in the

CFC. Mr. Abrahamian mentioned he thought the State eliminated the agriculture exemption category with regards to the building code. Chief Semonious replied the State did not eliminate the agriculture exemption because it is not a term within the CFC. The building code classifies agricultural buildings as a group U occupancy. A group U occupancy pertains to agriculture buildings. The caveat is if you build an agriculture building you are going to have to tell the building official what you are using the building for. So if you are storing all of your machinery and agricultural farming equipment in this building it can be exempt from having sprinklers if it meets the requirement listed in the table on the attached page. For example, at the very left on the top column it says "A" and "B" and that refers to whether they are protected or unprotected and the one above that is a type one construction which is a non-combustible construction. An "A" building would be protected which means you put sprinklers in it and so you can build that building as big as you want. And then all the way down to the combustible construction which would include a wood frame building with no sprinkler system in it. You can build an agricultural or group U building that is combustible material up to 12,000 square feet, which means it wouldn't have to have sprinklers in it and it can be single story or even two stories, and the height of the ceiling could be forty feet. So type one construction is non-combustible, a typical metal building, can be up to 60,000 square feet with a roof height up to 160 feet.

Mr. Koligian asked what the water flow requirement on such a building would be. Chief Semonious replied I would have to go through the calculations to figure it out, but it would be a large amount for a building that big. It still would be less costly than putting sprinklers throughout the building because you have the added labor and materials cost for adding the sprinklers but the fire flow would be higher because there are no sprinklers. So there is a trade off in that whole building scenario.

Mr. Abrahamian asked don't you have to have water storage to meet the fire flow requirement? With sprinklers do you have to have water storage too? Chief Semonious replied it depends on how much water you can provide in your well. If your well can generate the required gallons per minute over a period of the required time, I think it is about an hour, than you wouldn't have to have a water storage tank. For fire flow or sprinklers, if your well can provide the rate of fire flow over a period of time, which is built into the code and is a very complicated formula, you would not have to provide a water storage tank. But generally, buildings that are unprotected don't have means to provide the fire flow without providing some means of storing water so you can provide the water over a period of time. So regardless of the building that you build whether it is a group U occupancy which is an agricultural building and they give some very liberal guidelines for the size of the building, you are still going to have to follow a certain fire flow requirement based on the code.

Mr. Koligian asked for example, a person wants to build a 5,000 square foot metal building and sprinklers are not required. What would the fire flow requirement have to be. Chief Semonious replied I don't have that in front of me

right now, it was on last month's memo. Mr. Barcelos retrieved the memo from last month and gave it to Chief Semonious. The Department did some calculations for a 5,000 square foot non-sprinklered metal building being used for agricultural purposes. The fire flow requirement would be 1,000 gallons per minute for 45 minutes plus a safety multiplier of 1.5 that is spelled out directly from the fire code. If the building were built with fire sprinklers, the system would only demand 405 gallons per minute so the gallons per minute go down by more than half. Mr. Abrahamian asked if the building does not have sprinklers and no well nearby to provide the water for fire flow, what size tank would you have to have, 45,000 gallons. Chief Semonious replied yes but it would also require a pump to provide the 1,000 gallons per minute. Mr. Koligian mentioned just to get 1,000 gallons per minute, the well and the system will be over \$50,000, the building won't cost that much. This is a hardship to anyone wanting to build one of these buildings.

Mr. Nonini asked for example, I have a well that produces 1,000 gallons per minute which meets the requirement. How do you structure it so that water can be utilized by the Fire Department? Chief Semonious replied you install a fire department connection so that the fire department can flow the needed water out of it to suppress the fire.

Mr. Abrahamian mentioned I thought if a person wanted to build a metal U type occupancy to store agricultural products and no employees would be working in the building, there is no fire flow requirements. When did this change? Chief Semonious replied I couldn't tell you for sure but it is prior to 2010 I believe. Mr. Abrahamian asked so these fire flow requirements are in the CFC. Chief Semonious replied the fire flow requirements are in the fire code or referenced in other code sections or in a table somewhere. So the point of this is the agricultural buildings are already in the fire code so group U is not included in one of the examples because they fall right in line with the building code already and so you really don't have to make another exception. If we change this particular section, so that S-2 or storage buildings were included in it, they would still have the same fire flow requirement. The Fire Department doesn't want to over burden agriculture, we already know that the federal government and the State of California both provide benefits to farmers to encourage them or not over-burden them in the production of resources for consumers. The group U or agricultural building section already provides a more lenient means of building requirements.

There were no more questions or discussion on this item. It was the District Board consensus to not make any revisions in the Fire Code Ordinance at this time but to meet with Chief Donis or Fire Department staff to get more information on the sections discussed at tonight's meeting.

## **9. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Consideration and Approval of Disbursements List for January 2017.**

There were no questions.

**Motion:** To approve the January 2017, disbursements from the West America general account in the amount of \$285,190.17.

**Moved by:** Mr. Nonini, second by Mr. Koligian.

Mr. Abrahamian: Mrs. Belluomini: Mr. Koligian: Mr. Nonini: Mr. Souza: Vote:  
Aye Aye Aye Aye Aye 5/0

**B. Review and Acceptance of Monthly Financial Reports**

- 1) Fresno County: Cash Balances – All Funds – No Comments
- 2) Budget Report: YTD Expenses Compared to Budget – No Comments
- 3) Revenue and Reimbursement Report – No Comments
- 4) P G & E Report – No Comments

**10. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

There were no comments

**11. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**A) Next Regular Board Meeting: Thursday, March 23, 2017 at 5:30 p.m.**

**12. CLOSED SESSION**

**A) CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION – Significant exposure to litigation pursuant to subdivision (d) of Section 54956.9: One Case**

**Closed Session Report:** No action was taken in closed session so there is nothing to report.

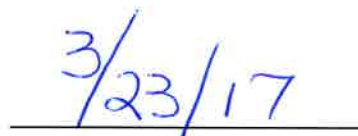
**13. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion:** To adjourn the meeting at 6:54p.m.

**Moved by:** Mr. Nonini, second by Mrs. Belluomini.

Mr. Abrahamian: Mrs. Belluomini: Mr. Koligian: Mr. Nonini: Mr. Souza: Vote:  
Aye Aye Aye Aye Aye 5/0

  
Cheryl Belluomini, Board Secretary  
North Central Fire Protection District

  
Date