



February 12th, 2025

Chair Julia Marsili called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. at the West Point Fire Station, 195 Spink Rd West Point, Ca 95255.

PRESENT: Chair Julia Marsili, Vice Chair Steve Schoenthaler, Director John Hesketh, Director Tim Adams, Director Dorrie Klith, Chief Michael Downs, Assistant Chief Terry Miller, Chaplain Bruce Forrest, and Clerk Bronwynne Wolf.

ABSENT: none

Public Comment:

- a. None to report.

Announcements from West Point Fire Protection District Partners:

- a. **Partner reports** – Chaplain Bruce Forrest responded to one call for service. He commended the fire personnel who assisted with fuel reduction at West Point Elementary School. Bruce shared that he had the honor of riding along in one of West Point Fire’s engines to attend the memorial service for fallen Central Calaveras firefighter, TJ Wennhold.

Consent Agenda—

1. The following items were motioned for approval by Director Hesketh, seconded by Vice Chair Schoenthaler and passed with 5 votes.
 - a. Approve regular meeting minutes from January 8th, 2024
 - b. Acknowledge receipt and review of financial statements for January 2024
 - c. Approve monthly expenses for January 2024

New Business:

- a. **Approve Policy & Manual Addendum: Downs, Action**

Chief Downs presented the recommended updates to the Policy & Procedures Manual; including but not limited to updating the firefighters’ actual hours and days worked for payroll processing. All updates are available for review in the February board packet.

Director Marsili motioned to approve the policy and manual addendum, as written, seconded by Director Klith and passed with 5 votes.



a. Verification of Relevant Direct Charges for Parcel: Wolf, Action

The directors reviewed an email from the Calaveras County Tax Auditor requesting confirmation of whether West Point Fire taxes 64800 and 64810 for years 2022, 2023, and 2024 apply for parcel 008-022-080-000. The constituent's taxes for 2022 and 2023 were now in default status because they were unaware of the tax being applied and the low value of the property exempted them from the usual taxes. Only West Point Fire's taxes were being applied.

As this has been a recurring issue for West Point Fire, Clerk Wolf has taken over the responsibility of updating the tax roll for future years, with the help of Assistant Chief Miller to ensure that constituents whose parcels qualify for an exemption from these two taxes are removed from the tax roll that is submitted each year to the tax auditor.

Vice Chair Schoenthaler motioned to have the tax auditor perform a tax roll correction and remove the fees for parcel 008-022-080-000, seconded by Director Hesketh and passed with 5 votes.

Reports, Director, and Staff Comments:

Fire Chief Report/Announcements:

Chief Downs began by honoring the memory of firefighter TJ Wendell, who tragically passed away while the crew was deployed on strike team. Recognizing the emotional toll this event had on everyone, the Chief made the decision to bring the strike team home early. The memorial service held for TJ was notable, with approximately 400 attendees, including many firefighters, showcasing the strong support from the community.

In terms of staffing, the Chief reported that one firefighter has accepted a position with Angels City. The Chief plans to meet with Chief Miller and Mitchell soon to discuss strategies for managing the staffing change, including the possibility of promoting from within.

Chief Downs has initiated discussions with the Bank of Stockton regarding a loan, with plans to present the details at the next board meeting. Additionally, the department has received the second installment of Measure A funds, amounting to \$40,000, which will aid in future initiatives.

The Chief also shared updates on collaboration with the cogen plant, discussing the potential for securing funding for an additional firefighter position. This position is essential for managing the increased workload associated with the plant's operations. The Chief emphasized the importance of maintaining a clear stance on the plant's development, particularly concerning its impact on fire district resources.

Progress is being made on establishing a fire prevention and inspection program, along with a fee schedule. However, due to legal requirements, finalization of these details will occur at the next board meeting.

Regarding training, the Chief expressed enthusiasm for ramping up efforts in the upcoming fiscal



year. Plans are in place for an advanced EMT class, which is vital for improving emergency care within the community. Recent incidents have highlighted unacceptable ambulance response times, underscoring the urgency of enhancing training and resources.

The Chief also intends to engage with Mountain Counties to address the prolonged ambulance response times, emphasizing the need to expedite the implementation of the advanced EMT class and improve overall emergency response capabilities.

Next Steps:

- Finalize loan details for the upcoming board meeting.
- Continue discussions with the cogen plant regarding staffing needs.
- Prepare to adopt the fire prevention program at the next meeting.
- Follow up with Mountain Counties to enhance EMT training and ambulance response times.

The Chief concluded by expressing appreciation for the dedication and support from the team, highlighting the privilege of serving the community together.

Board Member Announcements:

Vice Chair Schoenthaler submitted his resignation letter as a director of West Point Fire. He has been a dedicated member of the board for the past 31 years. We extend our sincere gratitude to Steve for his steadfast commitment and exceptional service!

Adjournment: meeting was adjourned at 6:33 P.M.