



SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE

5560 Overland Avenue | Suite 400, San Diego | CA 92123-1239

www.sdcountyfire.org

SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT FIRE ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Monday, September 8, 2025 | 1:00 P.M.

MINUTES

Members

Jason Shanley	District 1 – Seat 1 (absent)
VACANT	District 2 – Seat 2
Debra Foster	District 2 – Seat 3
Randy Lyle	District 2 – Seat 4
Ben Tullock	District 2 – Seat 5, Chair
John Clark	District 3 – Seat 6 (absent)
Jesse Robles	District 4 – Seat 7
Bret Sealey	District 5 – Seat 8
Clifford Kellog	District 5 – Seat 9 Vice Chair

Guest

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
Jenny Le	County Fire/Admin Secretary



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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 seven (6) members in attendance, (2) absent.
 - D. Jenny Le, Administrative Secretary for County Fire, was introduced.

- II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION
There was no public communication.

- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF MAY 12, 2025 (VOTE)

ON MOTION of Member Lyle, seconded by Member Kellogg, the Advisory Board approved the minutes of May 12, 2025. Motion carried.

AYES: 6 NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 2 ABSTAIN: 0

- IV. CHIEFS REPORT

- A. Fire Chief's Update – Tony Mecham
 - Updates were provided for the following:
 - Staffing
 - Apparatus
 - Facilities
 - Budget
 - Hard copies of the 2024 Standards of Cover were handed out
- B. Director's Update – Jeff Collins
 - Updates were provided for the following:
 - Budget
 - Apparatus
 - Staffing
 - Facilities

- V. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Mandated Fire Inspection Reporting for Fiscal Year 2024-25 – Pending Board of Directors Action

The State code requires the San Diego County 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 286 State-mandated inspections in the San Diego County and Deer Springs Fire Protection Districts in Fiscal Year 2024-25. In addition, staff conducted 1,222 non-mandated business inspections in the same time period.

ON MOTION of Member Kellogg, seconded by Member Lyle, the Advisory Board voted to support the findings.

AYES: 6 NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 2 ABSTAIN: 0



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B. County Fire's Proposed Helicopter Acquisition and Operational Plan – Pending Board of Supervisors Action

In January 2025, the Board of Supervisors directed the Chief Administrative Officer to identify funds to purchase a night-flying helicopter for San Diego County Fire (County Fire) to staff and conduct night-time water drops on wildland fires in our region. CAL FIRE, County Fire's operational partner for fire protection and emergency medical services, has fully transitioned to the Sikorsky S70 Firehawk and maintains 16 of these in their fleet for aerial firefighting. The Sikorsky S70 Firehawk has been determined by County Fire staff to be the most effective helicopter platform for attacking wildland fires.

CAL FIRE, at the State-level, has determined a need to increase aerial resources in San Diego County for wildland fire protection. The State has proposed that if the County purchases a Sikorsky S70 Firehawk, then CAL FIRE will cover all staffing, fuel, and maintenance costs. San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) recently purchased a Sikorsky S70 Firehawk but no longer has a need for it and has offered to sell it to the County for their actual costs of \$32,275,000. In addition, \$6 million is needed to retrofit the helicopter to meet CAL FIRE's operational standards.

As part of the Fiscal Year 2025-27 Adopted Operational Plan, \$14 million was included to purchase a night-flying helicopter. In addition, SDG&E would contribute ongoing funding of \$3.3 million to County Fire's aerial firefighting program, subject to California Public Utilities Commission approval in future years. If the Board approves County Fire's proposed plan, the new firefighting helicopter would be available by summer 2026.

Lastly, County Fire has an existing agreement with SDG&E to provide aerial resources that County Fire/CAL FIRE can direct to emerging wildland fire threats. The Board of Supervisors is being asked to extend that agreement for additional years.

ON MOTION of Member Kellogg, seconded by Member Foster, the Advisory Board voted to support County Fire Staff's recommendations to: 1) Approve a single source contract to purchase SDG&E's Sikorsky S70 Firehawk helicopter for \$32,275,000; 2) Authorize a single source contract with United Rotorcraft to outfit the Sikorsky S70 Firehawk to meet CAL FIRE's standards for \$6 million; 3) Authorize County Fire to accept revenue of up to \$5 million annually from the State of California; United States Government, and SDG&E to support the helicopter program; 4) Extend the current agreement with SDG&E for regional aerial resources through July 31, 2032.

AYES: 6 NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 2 ABSTAIN: 0

C. New Building Lease for County Fire's EMS Bureau – Information

County Fire, in partnership with CAL FIRE, provides around-the-clock fire protection and emergency medical services at 21 fire stations throughout the San Diego County Fire Protection District (SDCFPD). In addition, County Fire and AMR staff 16 frontline ambulances in the SDCFPD's Ground Ambulance Service Area that also includes the Deer Springs, Alpine, Valley Center, and a portion of the San Miguel Fire Protection Districts. In total over 425 paramedics provide advanced life support (ALS) care on behalf of the County. The rapid growth in paramedic-level care has exceeded County Fire's current space for training and equipment storage. The Department of General Services will be going before the Board of Supervisors to request approval for a lease on behalf of County Fire.



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A report was received from County Fire staff.

- D. County of San Diego Efforts to Address Fire Apparatus Antitrust and Monopolistic Practices – Information

In April, the Board of Supervisors directed the Chief Administrative Officer and County Counsel to explore legal and advocacy options related to fire apparatus antitrust and monopolistic practices. County Fire, consistent with other fire agencies in California and the nation, have been experiencing significant cost increases and production delays of new vehicles. In August, County staff returned to the Board to provide an update and seek Board direction for next steps.

A report was received from County Fire staff.

VI. NEXT MEETING

The next Fire Advisory Board meeting will be held on Monday, November 17, 2025, at 1:00 pm at the San Diego County Fire Office (County Operations Center) – 5560 Overland Ave, Ste 400, Balboa Rm, San Diego 92123.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Advisory Board adjourned at 2:20 pm.

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

For meeting information, please contact:

San Diego County Fire

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