



Northern Sonoma County Fire Protection District
and
Cloverdale Fire Protection District
Minutes of the Special Joint Board of Directors' Meeting
Thursday, March 27, 2025 at 6 PM
Cloverdale Fire Station – 451 S. Cloverdale Blvd, Cloverdale, CA 95425

Opening Greeting

- a. Call to Order
- b. Pledge of Allegiance
- c. Roll Call
 1. Cloverdale Fire Protection District Directors Pamela Johnson, Robert Taylor, Jeff Richardson, Melanee Southard, and Carol Pigoni were present. Fire Chief Jason Jenkins and Clerk of the Board Michelle Black were also present.
 2. Northern Sonoma County Fire Protection District Directors Fred Peterson, Larry Heiges, Pat Abercrombie, Scott Newman, and Rob Stewart were present. Fire Chief Marshall Turbeville was also present.
- d. Approval or Amendment of the Agenda
 1. Cloverdale Fire Protection District: **A motion was made and seconded (Taylor/Southard) to approve the agenda. All ayes.**
 2. Northern Sonoma County Fire Protection District: **A motion was made and seconded (Newman/Abercrombie) to approve the agenda. All ayes.**

Public Comments

- Geoff Peters thanked Cloverdale Fire Chief Jenkins for his great presentation at the town hall meeting regarding the removal of the Scotts Dam.
- Suzie Cummings thanked Cloverdale Fire Chief Jenkins for his assistance with bringing the Fire Wise Community process up to speed.

Consent Calendar

- None

New Business

1. Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) 2025-2030 Updates
 - a. Vision Statement: Director Stewart read the Vision Statement for Northern Sonoma County Fire which was adopted by both boards.
 - b. Presentation by Cloverdale Fire Chief Jenkins and Chief Turbeville on the status of current operations and coordination of Districts' outlooks.

- Chief Turbeville presented a handout of an overview regarding his District from the beginning to present as follows:
 1. Collaborating with other agencies for grants related to vegetation management, firefighter personal protective equipment, and firefighter equipment.
 2. Annexation of Knights Valley Fire Service Area (2019).
 3. Established contract for services with the City of Calistoga.
 4. Designation on the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection's Fire Service Areas (2022).
 5. Annexation of The Geysers, Fitch Mountain, and Sotoyome Fire Service Areas (2022).
 6. Established contract for services with the City of Healdsburg.
 7. Partnering for Communities Organized to Prepare for Emergencies (COPAE) activities, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), general mobile radio service (GMRS), and developing Community Wildfire Protection Plans and Firewise USA Action Plans.
 8. Lexipol based policies adopted (2023).
 9. Hired full-time benefited vegetation management employees.
 10. Alexander Valley Fire Station renovation.
 11. Coordinating with South Lake County Fire Protection District for installation of helicopter dip tanks in The Geysers.
 12. Increased availability of advanced life support (paramedic) response resources (2023).
 13. Strategic Plan and Management Implementation Guide (2024).
 14. Facility Needs Assessment underway which will lead to a Facility Master Plan.
 15. Established minimum staffing at Geyserville Fire Station to be 1 Fire Captain, 1 Fire Engineer, and 1 Firefighter (2025).

Chief Turbeville recommended that the JPA's goal should be "one plan", collaboratively developed with both districts committed to implementing and operating as one agency.

- Cloverdale Fire Chief Jenkins discussed how his fire district was formed. He explained that Cloverdale has always had a long-standing and great history of working with Geyserville for mutual aid purposes and any major incidents. In about 2010 through a meeting with Mike McGuire the discussion centered around receiving funds for the Geysers. McGuire was very supportive of those funds staying local to the agencies that provided the services. The first program was built together as the Battalion 6 Program which is a chief officer duty coverage program with Healdsburg, Geyserville and Cloverdale in 2011 and it is still in place today. After dealing with the devastating fire and all the changes and the dynamic changes in the county, Cloverdale and Geyserville decided to start working together collaboratively and entered into the mission long term to annex additional areas into the north county. In 2020 the two districts entered into a JPA to combine personnel and bring all the labor group under Cloverdale Fire Protection Districts' CalPERS contract and employee benefits into the MOU and then COVID hit resulting in a slow start to our venture. There were so many things happening dynamically in the county and labor was trying to figure out

where they fit in. Labor fractured within the Cloverdale and Geyserville folds and that was a difficult issue. They have been working on getting our labor groups and our boards in better alignment and standardizing our SOPs, daily operational procedures. The two districts are similar but also very different. Cloverdale services a city and a lot of our work involves plan check and development, city council and other organization issues. It is important as they shape the next phase and steps of the JPA to identify service zones and make sure that both agencies' desires, needs and goals are addressed and met. Jenkins met with both labor groups separately and had an honest, candid good conversation with them. The recent hiring of ten new firefighters will be a great opportunity for North County. They need to standardize a lot of things and work on financial issues to make sure it makes sense and get both boards in alignment and on the same page. The goal is to become one whether they do a functional consolidation or full consolidation. They originally set off to model after the JPA that Sonoma Valley did. They have built the best vision of what we are trying to achieve. Cloverdale dove into the vegetation management in this district and for us it was somewhat of a scary thing. They are struggling to just keep bodies in fire trucks and going to calls and then they were diving into this vegetation management empire. Meeting the vegetation management needs of Cloverdale was a lot to take on because of all of our staffing challenges, etc. They have invested heavily into the vegetation management world. Their main focus is service delivery to our community. Geyserville and Cloverdale are doing more than any agency in the state of California for what our funding provides regarding vegetation management.

The District thanked Cloverdale Fire Board President Pigoni for her help with the strategic plan and they are wondering the status of Cloverdale's strategic plan. President Pigoni responded that at that time, they were trying to get our feet on the ground financially and did not have a good, solid foundation to look towards the future. They see a clearer picture now with where they are headed. Jenkins added they were not in a financial situation to pay for a strategic plan at that time. A strategic plan makes sense for Geyserville due to the multiple service zones and a possible new station. Cloverdale only has one service area and they have a brand new fire station. They now have Measure H funds and it might be more of a possibility to pay for a strategic plan, but he does not see that a strategic plan will be effective for Cloverdale.

Director Heiges asked Jenkins to expand on Cloverdale's financial conditions in the past. Jenkins responded when becoming Fire Chief in 2010 they faced financial issues right off the bat and had to ratchet back to make it through. The county began to support some districts (Cloverdale and Geyserville) with \$275,000 for firefighter staffing. Once the Geysers annexation went through three years ago, the County funding of \$275,000 stopped (roughly \$800,000 loss for 3 years). He doesn't believe the Geyserville Board sees this in the same lens that Cloverdale does. If they can't make this right from the daily staffing perspective, how do they ever expect labor to think that this is going to be okay and work right? So that loss of those funds is really very important to his district. The arrangement for the Geysers has absolutely harmed his district to date and puts them in a very bad position. They have a tax assessment that is

probably the lowest in the county and they contemplated revising their tax assessment but it was during the time measure H was being campaigned and passed. Their plan for Geysers funding hasn't panned out yet. Director Newman commented in keeping up with ad hoc JPA reports it doesn't seem like there is a lot of progress being made and still a lot to be worked out. Jenkins responded the issue with funding has been continuously ignored. They should have secured a written contract and arrangements of how this deal was going to be done in the beginning and that was a failure on our part. If they have some revenue to send people to extra training or commit to vegetation management tasks, they're equal. But they are just not equal and it is harming our relationship. There is a tremendous amount of opportunity in the relationship but if they can't have mutual respect to treat each other or have empathy on both sides and understand the service delivery we're trying to accomplish, then we're done.

Cloverdale Fire President Pigoni in follow up to the characteristics in the two districts are in some ways distinctly different. They need to realize those differences (the pace we are moving, responsibilities, priorities) are different. They need to respect these differences. Those are some of the key areas that they get bogged down in with the JPA.

Director Stewart understands the concern regarding funding and asked if \$275,000 would help Cloverdale. Cloverdale Fire Chief Jenkins – yes. That money funds our seasonal program and our volunteer stipend program. Not having that money has made a negative impact on their district. With their last negotiations they probably gave them the lowest raise in the county. The admin side of the house is probably well underpaid for comparable work done.

Cloverdale Fire Director Richardson is new to the board. He sees that there are going to be times that they disagree but that they have to address issues to move forward.

Chief Turbeville noted there is a lot going on in Fitch Mountain and Sotoyome areas. This is not just about money. We need a plan.

Director Peterson stated Chief Turbeville's vision is not based on money. We need a plan in place for a combined Cloverdale, Geyserville, Fitch Mountain, Lower Dry Creek, Sotoyome constituency, then figure out the funding.

Cloverdale Fire Director Southard expressed concern that they have talked about this for years. They need to figure out the end game and move forward.

Resident, Geoff Peters congratulated both boards for having this dialogue and suggests creating a budget and also continue the difficult conversations and address issues so you can move forward.

- c. Status of JPA Ad Hoc Committee (JPA Oversight Committee) on 2025-2030 Joint Powers Agreement discussions and preparation.
 - Cloverdale Fire President Pigoni reported the Ad Hoc committee consists of Rob Stewart, Fred Peterson, Chief Turbeville, Cloverdale Fire Chief Jenkins,

Cloverdale Fire Director Taylor, and Pigoni. The JPA was signed in March/April of 2020 with a 5-year term and is a governance document that defines certain actions such as the scope and level of services, JPA oversight, finance responsibilities, personnel, reporting, term of the agreement, termination clauses, insurance requirements. This document is more of a high level governance related document. During the first few years of the JPA not much happened due to the COVID pandemic. Some of the accomplishments include a shared fire mechanic position, Cloverdale taking on all the personnel responsibilities and transferring all the liabilities that go along with that. NSCFPD reimburses Cloverdale for all the cost of wages and benefits plus a 5% admin fee. The Cloverdale fire chief and admin assistant took on a lot of responsibilities when that happened. Cloverdale assisting with equipment and personnel with the vegetation management program on a small scale. The JPA committee has spent time looking at issues involving staffing and labor aligning, operational issues and differences, etc. We hope to have the draft JPA for review by June.

Director Peterson discussed the history of the last ten years and the Geysers annexation. Director Peterson suggested having noticed public JPA meetings and hire an expert facilitator to assist in the process. Director Peterson also questioned the 5-year term of the JPA agreement. Pigoni stated that the term could be of any length and could be shortened to a two-year period.

Cloverdale Fire Director Taylor inquired about the organizational structure and chain of command.

The group discussed the hiring of battalion chiefs and an assistant chief.

Director Newman agreed with the idea of hiring a facilitator to move things forward and also the idea of Cloverdale doing a strategic plan.

Director Abercrombie questioned whether or not the Ad Hoc Committee should be a standing committee with agendized meetings. He noted the lack of trust between the two districts and that we need professional assistance to become a single organization and that it would be money well spent.

Cloverdale Fire Board President Pigoni added that one suggested revision to the JPA is the addition of an executive level oversight committee with all board members and calls for at least one meeting a year with a second meeting preferred to meet as a joint, public meeting.

Erik Padilla, President of 1401 labor union reported the union group wanted to express that they are committed to providing the highest level of service to the community. The labor group is in good communication and they have expressed that they would like to be a part of the process.

Geoff Peters stressed that he hopes the formation of the executive level committee would meet more than once a year; maybe quarterly. Once issues are sorted out, then meet once a year

Adjournment of the Meeting

- A motion was made and seconded (Taylor/Southard) to regular meeting April 14, 2025 at the Cloverdale Fire Station, 451 S. Cloverdale Blvd, Cloverdale, CA.
- A motion was made and seconded (Newman/Peterson) to adjourn to regular meeting April 17, 2025 at the Geyserville Fire Station, 20975 Geyserville Ave, Geyserville, CA 95441.

Approval of Minutes

Newman/Peterson

Motion Made/Seconded

Anneke Turbeville

Anneke Turbeville - Clerk of the Board