

MONTECITO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Minutes for the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors

Held at Montecito Fire Protection District, 595 San Ysidro Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93108 on February 23, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.

Director van Duinwyk called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Present: Director van Duinwyk, Director Lee, Director Easton, Director Dougherty, Director Pennino. Chief Neels and District Counsel Mark Manion were also present.

- 1. Public comment: Any person may address the Board at this time on any non-agenda matter that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Montecito Fire Protection District. (30 minutes total time allotted for this discussion.)**

There were no public comments at this meeting.

- 2. Receive a presentation from Joanne Berry of Fechter & Company regarding the Annual Financial Report for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025. (Strategic Plan Goal 8)**

Joanne Berry of Fechter & Company presented the Annual Financial Report for the Year Ended June 30, 2025. Ms. Berry reported a clean opinion on the financial statements with no findings to report. Director Easton made a motion to approve the Annual Financial Report for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025, seconded by Director Lee, and unanimously passed.

- 3. Consider approval of Cal OES Form 130: Designation of Applicant's Resolution for Non-State Agencies. (Strategic Plan Goal 8)**

Finance and Administrative Manager Nahas presented a staff report regarding the Cal OES Form 130: Designation of Applicant's Agent Resolution for Non-State Agencies. Motion to approve the Cal OES Form 130: Designation of Applicant's Agent Resolution for Non-State Agencies made by Director Dougherty, seconded by Director Easton. The roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes: S. Dougherty, M. Lee, P. van Duinwyk, S. Easton, J. Pennino

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

- 4. Approval of Minutes of the January 26, 2026 Regular Meeting.**

Motion to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2026 Regular meeting made by Director Lee, seconded by Director Pennino, and unanimously passed.

- 5. Approval of Minutes of the February 12, 2026 Special Meeting.**

Motion to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2026 Special meeting made by Director Pennino, seconded by Director Easton, and unanimously passed.

- 6. Approval of Minutes of the February 17, 2026 Special Meeting.**

Motion to approve the minutes of the February 17, 2026 Special meeting made by Director Pennino, seconded by Director Lee, and unanimously passed.

- 7. Fire Chief's report.**

Fire Chief Neels reported on the Firefighter Housing Initiative. The Board gave staff direction to research options regarding housing in Santa Barbara County.

PIO Atchison provided an update on the AM 1610 radio coverage. PIO Atchison is working to relocate the antenna from the Water District's property to the garden area behind Station 91 and expand the coverage area.

Division Chief Hudley presented an update on the VHF project involving Gibraltar and Shepard Mesa sites, expanding radio coverage for both Montecito and Carpinteria Summerland Fire Departments. The project was developed through a partnership with multiple agencies. Chief Neels thanked Chief Hudley for his persistence with the project.

Fire Chief Neels announced the Professional Firefighters Association Local 5563 has been officially recognized by the California Public Employment Relations Board (PERB).

8. Board of Director's report.

Director Dougherty announced his resignation from the Montecito Fire Protection District Board of Directors effective February 28, 2026. Director Dougherty thanked the Board, Chief Neels, and the entire staff. He read a brief statement.

The Board thanked Director Dougherty for his service.

Chief Neels presented Director Dougherty with the "Golden Mic" award for his service to the district, highlighting his leadership in communication.

9. Suggestions from Directors for items other than regular agenda items to be included for the March 23, 2026 Regular Board meeting.

There were none to report.

The Board adjourned to closed session at 3:22 p.m.

10. CLOSED SESSION:

- a. PUBLIC EMPLOYEE APPOINTMENT (Government Code section 54957)
Title: Fire Chief
- b. CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATORS (Government Code section 54957.6)
Agency designated representatives: Director Lee and Director Pennino
Unrepresented employee: Fire Chief
- c. PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION (Government Code section 54957)
Title: Fire Chief

The Board reported out of closed session at 4:10 p.m. with no reportable action.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:10 p.m.


President van Duinwyk


Secretary Lee