



PENRYN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MEETING MINUTES

Chair Hotaling, Vice-Chair Hardesty, Secretary Shields, Directors Heimlich and Verdugo

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING October 20, 2025

1. **Call the meeting to order and Roll Call:** Chair Hotaling called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Directors in attendance: Danielle Hardesty, Diego Heimlich, Cheryl Hotaling, Larry Shields, and Robert Verdugo

Directors absent: N/A

Staff in attendance: Fire Chief Gow, District Manager Armstrong, and Battalion Chief Williamson.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** Chair Hotaling led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **Approval of Agenda:** Director Heimlich moved to approve the agenda. Director Shields seconded the motion that passed unanimously.
4. **Approval of Minutes:** Vice-Chair Hardesty moved to approve the minutes from the September 15, 2025 meeting. Director Verdugo seconded the motion which passed unanimously.
5. **Financial Report & Bill Approval:** Director Verdugo moved to approve the financial report and expenses. Vice-Chair Hardesty seconded the motion that passed unanimously.
6. **Correspondence:** N/A
7. **Public Comment:**

Public Member – Asked Mr. Pahule what the deadline was for filing an appeal and he cited a government code and stated its 10 days, which means Oct. 26th. Asked if the county is preparing letters of denial on the specific findings on the adverse impacts as required by government code. If the decision is not appealed the county will provide necessary documents and provide to the applicant. What is the role of planning and county counsel in the appeal, if the appeal is filed the planning staff will prepare a staff report that includes a summary of requested entitlements, the planning commission's decision, content of the appeal and staffs response to the appeals justification.

Public Member – Have an issue with all of the burning that goes on, been complaining about it to the air quality board. I would like to see it stopped at night.

8. **Informational/Non-Action Items:**

A. **Sierra Nevada Firefighters, Local 3800 (Local 3800):** Captain Gordon reported that they recently held elections, shop stewards will remain the same and Captain Reams was elected as the VP for Placer County, starting January 1st.

B. **Fire Chief Gow's Report:**

1. Continue talks with the City of Auburn about the possibility of combining our command staff to be more efficient. The concept is going in front of the city council this month and then will share at our future meetings.
2. Staff was able to sell the old surplus SCBA's for \$15,000.
Vice-Chair Hardesty asked about putting the money in the general fund encumbered. It was decided to be put on next month's agenda for a decision.
3. ISO rating was completed 3 years ago in Penryn. They came out to complete Placer Hills and Newcastle 2 weeks ago, they ended up adding Penryn to get all agencies on the same schedule. This meeting was completed in 3 hours and anticipating an increased rating, due to reserve engines and staff sharing.
4. Battalion Chief Nelson is planning to retire.

5. Attended funeral services for Captain Charlie Bridges from Dutch Flat and Battalion Chief Gary Kirk from Foresthill. Also attended the retirement party for Patrice Metz from Foresthill.

Battalion Chief Williamson report:

1. No new plans taken in, no finals or hydros.
2. All engines are back in service. Working on a couple projects at the station; driveway, blinds and an RFP for the roof.

Vice-Chair Hardesty pointed out that on the operations/monthly call report there was a typo. It should have read just the month and not Jan-Sept.

Public Comment:

Public Member – Previously discussed solar for the station and SEA, a local company, had indicated they would provide the district with a good deal. It may be good to look at again in the future, especially when redoing the roof.

C. Director Committee Reports

1. **Personnel Committee:** N/A
2. **Administrative Contract & Finance Oversight Committee:** N/A
3. **Ad hoc committee for future cooperation with other fire departments.** Vice-Chair Hardesty reported that they met with South Placer. Committee meeting was held two weeks ago where a presentation on the Placer Hills/Newcastle Reorg was given and South Placer gave information on ambulance services in the Town of Loomis. The next meeting is scheduled for the 28th.

- D. Update on Hope Way Project:** Chair Hotaling reported that they will ask for an update from staff and Directors may wish to share updates as well. After the reports it will be opened for public comment. After public comment is closed the board may wish to share any additional comments but no action will be taken on this item.

Chief Gow reported that the planning commission meeting was his first time attending and it was a learning experience.

Chair Hotaling shared that she found the planning meeting to be interesting. She also shared that she and Chief Gow met with Brian Myers and discussed some of the community concerns; utilization, response time, and ladder trucks. She is bringing a recommendation to the board that the fire district clarify comments made at the planning committee meeting. The district is not concerned with utilization; how busy your station is and how many hours they are on service calls, the target goal is to never be over 10% and Penryn, according to the Municipal Service Review, is only at 1.6%. This is considered very low, which is why utilization is not an issue. Our response time is not contingent upon how many calls per day we have, although having more calls per day could somewhat increase the probability of having concurrent calls. If this occurs, even now, it would go to mutual aid. An Issue that is outside our jurisdictions control but could impact public safety is a ladder truck. We do not have a ladder truck, the closest staffed ladder truck is in Rocklin. The roundabout and traffic control and county wide emergency planning is not within the districts control, that falls to the Office of Emergency Services. We participate in exercises but not our jurisdiction, it would be reasonable for the district to share that they have concerns about it as we have not seen any studies or plans to ensure it doesn't impact public safety.

Chief Gow shared that the likelihood of needing a ladder truck quickly is small but predictable. Vice-Chair Hardesty reported that about 2 months ago at the Fire Alliance meeting they had a presentation and they are doing a survey about roads. It was determined that the survey has now been closed.

Public Comment:

Public Member – Heard what is said about the response times and impact on the district. Acknowledge that public service providers cannot refuse to provide services. At the planning commission meeting they did not seem to be asking if we can do the job but what the impact would be on the district. The planning commission's objective was to determine if safety concerns from the project would preclude or otherwise delay approval. Chief Gow indicated that there would be no impact on average response times and staffing levels. When pressed for further explanation no detail was provided. It seemed that the information provided was not helpful in the commission's decision making. I encourage the board provide more meaningful answers or defer to a subject matter expert.

Public Member – The hearing was an eye opener for all of us. The planning department failed by not soliciting reports, information and data to make an informed decision. I would ask that we be proactive as we now know what is needed. They need the education and data about utilization. If personnel is spending more time on calls it takes away from their mandated training and equipment & station maintenance. The commission needs the data to make a decision, including that of law enforcement and ambulance. They didn't know what to ask the engineer, related to evacuation.

Public Member – Have attended several planning commission meetings, and this one was not that bad. Items that I noticed; they didn't seem to know that Penryn Rd. is the main evacuation route, wondering if contact has been made with the equine hospital and what it would take to evacuate, and county counsel didn't prep the commission about them needing to show the burden of proof to be able to make it so the state wouldn't sue them.

Public Member – When I attended the meeting I heard facts and I wondered if there was really some proof, wondering what research was done. It seemed like there wasn't concrete data. Wondering if we can count on everyone to, despite the agreements we have with other agencies.

Chair Hotaling shared that the way people are defining Penryn as the 1,000 residents that is not the Penryn Fire Protection District, we serve around 3,200 residents. Even if you take the highest number of 1,300 that would not double our current resident size. We were not asked to do a presentation at the Planning Committee meeting.

Public Member – Being put on the spot, Chief, is not fun and appreciate what you gave. The actual call for service, that I've seen, was 73% in Sac City. Then some other recent research was 79%. When we talk about current calls for service we are talking about a different population. If you read the 5 year Placer County senior report 85% of the population will be 85 years or older and we are the largest population. Previous studies showed a greater need in these type of communities because they have a greater need. They won't have down time, the engines will need repairs.

Public Member – Why does Placer County not provide evacuation routes or primary protective routes like in other counties? Given the need for a ladder truck and the need for mutual aid would the project not use the design standards of the mutual aid partners or whichever are the most stringent standards. Can you clarify how the aerial fire apparatus lanes applies to this project?

Public Member – You mentioned the MSR and low utilization, the MSR is typically used to look forward and not typically used for the impact of a project. The point of the MSR is about the response time and not utilization. My point is that citing a low increase in the MSR perhaps doesn't do justice.

Public Member – I think it's important to present the fact that calling Rocklin is a 13 minute response time. The NFPA says the initial response should be 4-6 minutes response. 6 minutes is going to cost lives, it's important to bring this point up.

Public Member – It think what was brought up about the standards was important. When the county was asked about there being enough room for a fire truck they said yes there is and I don't think they knew. They didn't speak knowledgeably about other things. We have a lot of horse trailers in the area and it will complicate things in an emergency. I am assuming there can be a lot of children in this complex, we could have a lot more children than the schools can handle. You are going to have children with special needs and wrap around services and will be more likely to have a need for a hook and fire truck.

Public Member - One of the planning commissioners asked how big the walls are around the complex and it turns out the walls will be 19 ft. tall. If there is an evacuation people won't be able to climb over a 19ft wall. Concerned about evacuating people from a 3-story building. The roundabout limits the number of lanes. Penryn residents pay for the fire department with taxes and bonds.

Sue – During the presentation it was mentioned that the fire department has experienced evacuations, in particular the fire in the Colfax area, but this is a much different situation. This is stacked and packed with panicked people. I wonder if there has been planned training and how much it will cost. Has there been a training planned to use Rocklin.

Travis – Community of pickup trucks and trailers, everyone will try and jam them full of staff and there will be a lot of inexperienced people driving the roads. Family is the Paradise fire, the biggest problem was the roads getting jammed up and no one could get by. I think we need to compare ourselves to Paradise, in the case of an evacuation.

Public Member – This roundabout is a single lane that is 120 feet wide. Trucks will be able to get through the inside but will we able to get around on the outside if the roundabout is jammed. Can we get any vehicles around the outside, including emergency services.

AJ – I am proud of everyone for being civil, we are all neighbors. I think we do have some good ideas to share with each other. The county has been taking cash in lieu saying they don't have to build anything for years. I am for housing for those that need it but it needs to be a reasonable amount and have access to services. It's a disservice to put it in the location and scope of size it is. I think we need to keep the onus on the county and the state representatives.

Debra – Question about the assessments on our property taxes, the developer said they do not have to pay the property taxes but have to pay the school and fire assessments. Is he paying 100% of those?

Chair Hotaling shared that they would still be paying Measure A & C but are exempt from property taxes.

Public Member – Need to look at the cumulative fire impacts, common sense defies logic. Why wasn't OES consulted, they didn't include the sheriff and there is big holes in their reports. Why all of these agencies would not be asked about wildfire evacuations. Everything they are doing is speculative. I think we need to look at the big picture and what it can do to our fire district. Ask you folks to be tough within the bounds of your jurisdiction and your authority. We need to be able to prove the adverse impact on public health and safety.

Chair Hotaling shared that she did receive emails from people from Penryn, after the Planning Committee meeting.

Director Shields shared that he was able to monitor the meeting online. He found it to be a tough meeting, the part I found confusing was that the Chief from Placer County fire was

brought up to speak on the fire truck. It just seemed like the way the meeting was run was awkward.

Update from LAFCO Meeting:

Chief Gow reported the Placer Hills/ Newcastle reorganization application has been waiting for a resolution from the county, regarding the tax rate negotiations. The resolution has been added to the Board of Supervisors agenda on November 4th, we believe it will be a consent item. LAFCo will hear the application in January.

Chair Hotaling reported that we attended a workshop, they seem to still be deciding their order of priority regarding the outstanding MSR parts compared to the Eastern part of the county. We asked that they do not take action on the Penryn SOI until after resolution of the Placer Hills/Newcastle reorganization. At some point it may come back the idea of LAFCo funding a financial study of potential consolidation options that is a broader look than they originally discussed. Just a workshop, no actions were taken.

E. Status on Placer County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan update for 2026

Battalion Chief Williamson reported that survey was closed a few days ago, do not have the stats yet. Our next meeting is scheduled for October 28th.

F. Review and discuss the Draft Injury Illness Prevention Program (IIPP)

Chief Gow reported that there is nothing further at this point, the document is still being reviewed with staff.

G. Review and discuss the Draft Employee Physical Exam Position Paper

Chief Gow reported that we did find one more company and updated the position paper that will go to the committee and union rep to talk about it. I will be scheduling a meeting and may be ready to share at next month's meeting.

9. Action Items:

A. Adoption of the 2025 California Fire Code with amendments, conduct a Public Hearing for a second reading, by title only, and by resolution, adopt Ordinance Number 2025-01

Battalion Chief Williamson reported that we just need two readings and asking that you adopt the new fire code. The main changes are the chapters and sections, from the previous code.

Public Hearing Opened at 8:10pm

No comments

Public Hearing Closed at 8:10pm

Motion made by Vice-Chair Hardesty to approve Fire Code Ordinance Number 2025-01 by resolution. Director Heimlich seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously by roll call.

Chair Hotaling shared that she would like to call a Special Meeting for this week. The meeting was set for this Thursday, October 23rd at 6:30pm, to review a draft letter that we may want to send to the Planning Commission.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:14pm.

Next Board Meeting: Monday, November 17, 2025 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM (PST)

Respectfully submitted,



District Manager