



## **CRESCENT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

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### **MINUTES OF THE CRESCENT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**SPECIAL MEETING HELD  
THURSDAY, JUNE 17, 2021  
AT 4:00 P.M.**

**DIRECTORS PRESENT:**

Chairman Jim Nelson  
Vice Chairman Dave Short  
Director Jim Erler  
Director Joe Gregorio

**ABSENT:**

Director Rick Kelley

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Bill Gillespie, Fire Chief  
Vanessa Duncan, Clerk of the Board  
Alissia Northrup, County Registrar of Voters/Elections Officer  
Colette Metz-Santsche, consultant with Planwest Partners

**ROLL CALL:**

Chairman Nelson called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Director Gregorio.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Roger Gitlin: stated he'd like to start off with three questions: Is the protocol for the first election the same as the second election? What are the costs associated to the public for the posting of both elections? Can the calls be charged back to the user that are utilizing 911 services? Requested the results be accepted as is, for the creation of an ad hoc committee.

**NEW BUSINESS**

*Take action as necessary and appropriate.*

**3.1 RECEIVE UNOFFICIAL BALLOT TABULATION RESULTS FOR BENEFIT ASSESSMENT AND CONSIDER REQUESTING A RECOUNT BE COMPLETED BY THE DEL NORTE COUNTY ELECTION'S OFFICE**

**RECOMMENDATION**

1. Receive staff report
2. Take public comment
3. Board Discussion
4. Consider and approve a request for recount by motion

Chief Gillespie briefed the board stating on June 14, 2021, the Crescent Fire Protection District Board held a public hearing which marked the end of the voting period for the Proposed Fire Protection and Emergency Response Services Benefit Assessment which would fund the services and improvements included in Crescent City Fire and Rescue's 10-year Financial Master Plan adopted in November 2019. He also noted that in absence of additional funding, it is estimated that the Crescent Fire Protection District would exhaust its limited reserve funds within a 2-3 year period while trying to maintain the current level of service that residents have come to expect.

Chief Gillespie presented the unofficial ballot tabulation results, which were: Yes ballots at a value of \$72,348.40 and No ballots at a value of \$72,367.60, with a .013 percentage difference of Yes/No ballots. Because of how close the ballot count was, and the chance for human error when tabulating the ballots, staff is recommending that the Board officially request a ballot recount by the Del Norte County Elections Office. This would be conducted prior to the certification of balloting results by the District Board at its regularly scheduled meeting on July 12th at 5:00PM. At this meeting, the Board shall hear and determine any and all controversies concerning the regularity of the balloting. The determination of the governing body shall be final. If the recount determines that a majority protest does not exist, then the Board may conduct a second reading and adopt Ordinance No. 21-001 on July 12th.

Chairman Nelson directed Chief Gillespie to answer questions from public comment.

Chief Gillespie answered the first question regarding if changes have been made in the way the benefit assessment was conducted this time compared to the time prior; Chief Gillespie stated that in the Fall, the ballots were weighted according to the proportional financial obligation of the affected property, which is the same process for the current proposed benefit assessment.

Chief Gillespie redirected the second question to staff, regarding the election totals for both 2020 and 2021. Vanessa Duncan, Clerk of the Board, gave an approximate total of \$146,000; \$41,000 for 2021 and \$105,000 for 2020.

Chief Gillespie answered the third question regarding returns tied with 911 services; Chief Gillespie stated that the District does not currently do any billing for service for

medical calls, but the District is looking to receive revenue for traffic collision responses.

The Board directed questions regarding the traffic collision revenue to Chief Gillespie. Chief Gillespie noted there has not been success yet with any traffic collision claims.

Colette Metz-Santsche, with Planwest Partners, added further response to public comment provided by Roger Gitlin, stating there is an oversight committee that will be put in place to oversee the expenditures in the District. Chairman Nelson and Director Gregorio suggested that the oversight committee meet a least twice a year, if not more.

*The following citizens addressed the Board:*

Linda Sutter: stated that Clerk/Recorder Northrup "suddenly finds a Yes vote in the pile of No votes".

*Due to poor audio quality from Linda Sutter's connection, Chairman Nelson requested that we go to the next public comment.*

Thomas Barnes: requested the District to accept the unofficial results, form a committee with members of the public, and stated legal action would be taken if the District moves forward otherwise.

Linda Sutter: expressed her concerns with the tabulation process and the error that was found.

Donna Westfall: stated that she thinks it's "despicable" to put this amount of tax on this community. She would like to know if there are tax exempt properties that are being assessed and why?

The Board requested to hear from Alissia Northrup, Registrar of Voters and Election Officer of Del Norte County. Del Norte County Registrar of Voters/Elections Officer Northrup reported the total of ballots collected along with the number of invalid ballots. She then proceeded to go over the tabulation process. Del Norte County Registrar of Voters/Elections Officer Northrup stated that there were members of the public and County employees that conducted the tabulation and explained the handling as well as the storage process. Director Gregorio questioned if the ballots were being canvased by election staff; Del Norte County Registrar of Voters/Elections Officer Northrup reported that was correct, only election staff are the only ones allowed to canvas. Chairman Nelson questioned if the Election Office will go through the votes to find any other mistakes. Del Norte County Registrar of Voters/Elections Officer Northrup said she has not and will not go through the ballots to find errors unless directed to conduct an official recount.

Hank Akin: questioned that the votes were sorted and entered, which would be a double check process, at what point do we cut it off for human error?

Consultant Metz-Santsche answered an anonymous question submitted through the Q & A regarding low income exempt properties. Consultant Metz-Santsche read the response from the Assessor's Office stating that the Low-Income Housing Exemptions can reduce the taxable value on a property but it does not exempt the property from receiving any additional Fees/Benefit Assessments that are in addition to the ad valorem taxes.

Consultant Metz-Santsche commented on previous concern that the Harbor District was not mailed ballots, stating that the Harbor District was mailed ballots for both proposed benefit assessments.

Director Gregorio requested that Crescent Fire Protection District members do not attend the official recount.

Director Erler would like to see a total recount done.

On a motion by Vice Chair Short, seconded by Director Gregorio, motion carried 4/0/1, with Director Kelley being absent; the Board of Directors REQUESTED A COMPLETE RECOUNT BE COMPLETED BY THE DEL NORTE COUNTY ELECTION'S OFFICE ON JUNE 28, 2021.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the Board Members of the  
**CRESCENT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

This 17th day of JUNE 2021, by the following polled vote:

YES: 4, Chairman Nelson, Vice Chair Short, Director Erler, Director Gregorio

NOES: 0

ABSENT: 1, Director Kelley

**OLD BUSINESS - None**

**BOARD COMMENTS - None**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Director Gregorio made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:10 pm of the Crescent Fire Protection District Board of Directors to the next regularly scheduled meeting on July 12, 2021 at 5:00PM.

CRESCENT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES JUNE 17, 2021



Vanessa Duncan, Clerk of the Board  
Crescent Fire Protection District