

Chester Public Utility District  
PO Box 503  
251 Chester Airport Rd.  
Chester, Ca. 96020  
530-258-2171

**Minutes of Special Meeting:** March 29, 2022 at 3:00pm. Located in the Chester Public Utility District conference room: 251 Chester Airport Road.

**Directors Present:** Steve Voboril, Steve Graffweg, and Royce Raker.

**Directors Absent:** Liz Steffen and Blake Mathews

**Conference Call:** Kevin Goss and an unknown number

**Guests Present:** many, number unknown. Mass public showing.

**Staff Present:** many, number unknown of CPUD/CFD employees and volunteers.

1. **Call to Order:** Director Voboril called the meeting to order at 3:00pm.
  - a. Director Voboril led the Pledge of Allegiance.
  - b. Agenda Approval: Director Graffweg made a motion to accept Agenda. Director Raker seconded. All in favor, motion carried.
  
2. **Public Comment Agenda Items:** Many, noted in each of the agenda items.
  
3. **Closed Session:** A through D read verbatim by District Counsel Member, Margaret Long. She then asked for public comment on closed session items only, and any questions will be answered after closed session.
  - When did Adam Cox become manager?
  - When did board approve GM Contract?
  - Brian Meiers read from a written statement. (Exhibit A) He explained many conflicts of interest in the process of hiring Sectaris and questions Mr. Cox's experience and quals.
  - Millard Ralph stated that many bad decisions were made: Lapse in liability coverage, hiring Cox and firing Chief Layne. He the called for Mr. Cox resignation.
  - The Fire Department was thanked for saving Chester during Dixie.
  - How will homeowners' insurance be affected with no EMS?
  - Sean Stark state rep. for IAFF: Priority #1 is to protect the citizens of Chester. Without a local fire department, then they are no more than foundation protection and this is gross dereliction and endangers the community. Currently your mission statement is to provide fast and efficient EMS services. The Chief should have been commended, not fired. IAFF will be watching.

Director Voboril moved to closed session at 3:23pm. He stated that they will reconvene at 5:00pm.
  
4. **Reconvene:** 5:00pm.
  
5. **Report on Closed Session: by Margaret Long**
  - a. Direction given to Staff.
  - b. Direction given to Negotiators.

- c. Board has authorized District Counsel to initiate an investigation regarding the facts surrounding the situation that led to the personnel and insurance issues.
- d. Evaluation was held.

**6. Temporary Shut Down of CFD operations presentation by GM Cox: (Exhibit B/ slide show handout)**

GM Cox stated that the liability non-renewal was because we have a “loss history” with claims payout. This fact makes us too risky to cover. This is also the reason it has been difficult to find liability insurance that is affordable. It was not an easy decision to temporarily shut down the fire department.

Public members voiced their concerns on why the Chief was fired and why the GM position wasn't flown. District counsel explained that employer law obligates that personnel issues remain private.

He then announced Joe Waterman as temporary Chief.

Director Voboril stated that February 22, Sectaris/Adam Cox was appointed as GM with a 4 of 5 board vote.

Elizabeth Steffen and Blake Mathew stated that they cannot remain on a board that doesn't have good intentions. An emergency meeting was asked for, and denied by the board on 3-25-2022. On 3-26-2022 the Chief was terminated, this is inexcusable.

Many public members had comments, questions and opinions on the agenda item. Most questions were answered without violating the investigation or any employees' privacy rights. The discussion got to a heated, non-productive state.

*The board recessed from 6:03pm to 6:15pm.*

A public member asked about a checks and balances policy. District Counsel stated that the auditor checks for those and advises if needed. Audits happen annually.

IAFF Local 5317-president, Matt Maumoynier gave a unanimous vote of no confidence for Joe Waterman, as he has quit the department twice already, and gave a unanimous vote of no confidence for the Board and Mr. Cox, stating that they systematically and deliberately fired the Chief and the community deserves better.

A recall of the board was threatened by a public member.

Many more public members and agencies shared their concerns on the agenda item as well their admiration of the fire department, especially during the Dixie fire and the creek floods that happened soon after.

Director Voboril stated that the GM job position is currently flown and open and he signed the contract on 3-10-2022.

District Counsel stated that RFPs and not needed for professional services.

Plumas County Supervisor Goss was on the conference call. He said he will meet with GM Cox soon to discuss some of CPUD's challenges as well as other challenges around the county.

*The board recessed from 7:45pm to 7:49pm.*

**7. GM Spending threshold for Liability Insurance:** GM Cox stated that he would like a 200K authorization to get the Liability Insurance in place if that much is needed.

Director Raker stating that we don't have much choice, and made a motion, that upon Mr. Cox receiving approval and review by counsel for the purpose of checks and balances, authorizes the 200K limit. Director Graffweg seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

8. **Plumas Bank: Update signors:** Director Raker made a motion to Eliminate Elizabeth Steffen, Blake Mathews and Brain Layne. All others to remain the same. Director Graffweg seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

9. **Comments:**

**Directors:** None

**Staff:** GM Cox thanked everyone for coming. He stated that the GM job posting is open ended.

10. **Adjournment:** Director Raker made motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:02pm. Director Graffweg seconded the motion. All in favor, meeting adjourned.

Clerk to the Board, Cheryl E. Johnson

Approval of Minutes 