

Bodega Volunteer Fire Department

Minutes – Regular Meeting of the Board

Date: January 13, 2026

Meeting Called to Order: 7:38 PM

Board Members Present: Ron Albini, Vice President. David Hamilton, President.

Sarah Molica Dougherty, Treasurer, James Piazza, Secretary

Board Members Absent: None

Others in Attendance: 8 community members

Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting were presented and approved by the Board.

Topics Discussed

1. Bylaws Update and Organizational Matters

The updated bylaws, new organizational name, and Articles of Incorporation have been submitted to attorney Jeremy L. Olsan for review at a rate of \$525 per hour. An update is expected prior to the next meeting.

Jeremy noted that the membership structure requires additional clarification. It was reiterated that the organization is no longer in the fire service business.

2. Mission Statement

The Board discussed the need for a formal mission statement. Key themes identified include:

- Preservation and upkeep of the historic building
- Support for volunteer firefighters
- Community scholarships
- Establishment of a community emergency group

A draft mission statement was previously sent to Jeremy. Further refinement will be completed for inclusion in the bylaws.

3. Treasurer's Report

As of January 1, total funds were **\$532,884.83**, consisting of:

- **Exchange Bank:** \$92,500.05
- **Morgan Stanley:** \$440,366.78

Upcoming expenses include hall floor and railing repairs, as well as legal fees.

An IRS notice was received regarding an inquiry dated November 12, 2025. There may also be an additional IRS penalty related to the period ending June 30, 2023. Follow-up with the IRS is required.

4. Membership Dues

The Board discussed membership dues, which are referenced in the old bylaws without a specified amount. With the organization no longer operating a fire department, discussion focused on:

- Purpose of dues
- Membership eligibility and boundaries
- Appropriate use of funds (hall repairs, community improvements, etc.)

It was agreed to finalize the base bylaws first and address membership dues through a future amendment.

5. Donations from Non-Members

The Board discussed donations received from non-members, including automatic payments made to the former name, *Bodega Volunteer Fire Department*. Checks made payable under the old name cannot be deposited. Donors will need to be contacted to update payment information.

6. Distribution of Meeting Minutes

A request was made to improve access to meeting minutes for members unable to attend. The most recent posted minutes are from August 2025.

It was agreed that Patty will receive finalized minutes to post a physical copy in the window, and that minutes will also be emailed to the membership list.

Building and Property Management

7. Gold Ridge Agreement Update

A tentative agreement with Gold Ridge is being finalized addressing tax responsibility, insurance, and the fire station septic system.

Septic System:

Gold Ridge will install a bypass or holding tank as a short-term solution and will cover all costs, including easements and construction. A meeting is scheduled to determine the tank's location.

Building Conversion:

Gold Ridge plans to convert the rear meeting room into two bedrooms, which will also resolve fire exit compliance issues.

Formal Agreement:

Eric will draft a written summary of all agreed-upon terms for review prior to attorney preparation of the final lease.

8. Hall Floor Repair

The Board approved an additional **\$500** to add a bluish-gray tint to the polished concrete floor for a more uniform appearance. Work will include the main bay, small office, and bathroom.

The contractor advised that chairs without rubber feet may damage the new floor surface.

9. Railing Repair

Alex has not yet provided an updated bid to replace approximately 9 of 12 rotted railing posts. The Board requested a firm price to avoid future uncertainty.

10. Drainage Issues

Significant drainage and flooding issues around the building were reported, affecting new walls and upcoming floor work.

A motion was made to investigate corrective measures such as additional piping or grading, with work likely scheduled for mid-summer.

11. Propane Tank Management

The propane tank is equipped with a sensor that automatically triggers refills at 20–25%. As a backup measure, the Board suggested adding “check propane level” to the post-event rental checklist.

12. Hall Use Requests and Other Items

- A request from the Bodega Land Trust to use the hall was discussed.
- A request from the “folders” to use the building on February 28 was noted.
- The water company requested to use the firehouse address as its official mailing address, which received general support.

13. Storage Space

Future storage needs for fundraising equipment were discussed and deferred, as no immediate decision is required.

Community, Fundraising, and Volunteer Support

14. Upcoming Fundraisers

- **Polenta Feed:** Tentatively scheduled for March 28, with March 21 also under consideration. Due to increased meat costs (\$15–\$16 per pound), the Board discussed raising ticket prices to \$25 for adults and \$15 for children. A formal budget is required.

Sourcing options for approximately 130 pounds of stew meat were discussed, including previous suppliers, local markets, and potential rancher donations.

15. Volunteer Stipends and Support

The Board discussed Gold Ridge’s reduction in per-call volunteer pay, which is expected to be reinstated.

Alternative support options were discussed, with preference given to educational stipends for firefighting classes rather than cash payments due to tax considerations. Gold Ridge reportedly covers many training costs.

16. Firefighter Training

The Board expressed support for funding a whitewater rescue class for interested members to help them qualify for the water team. If a class becomes available prior to the next meeting, members may seek Board approval.

17. Community CPR and First Aid Training

The Board discussed offering public safety classes such as Hands-Only CPR and Stop the Bleed. An AHA-certified instructor within the group offered assistance with organizing these classes.

Meeting adjourned at 8:42 PM