

August 12, 2025

Bodega Volunteer Fire Department

Minutes - Regular Meeting of the Board

Board Members Present: David Hamilton, President. Ron Albini, Vice President. Sarah Molica-Dougherty, Treasurer. James Piazza, Secretary.

Board Members Absent: None

Others in Attendance: 11 Community Members

Meeting Called to order at 7:40 PM

Topics Discussed:

1. Approve Meeting Minutes
2. Update on Lease and Equipment
3. Rename Organization, Redefining Mission, Membership Criteria, Legal & Operational Boundaries
4. Treasurer's Report, including 501C3 Update.
5. Christmas Fair
6. Polenta Feed

I. Meeting Minutes from July 08, 2025, were approved.

II. **Update on Gold Ridge lease and equipment.**

The discussion focused on the transfer of engines and trucks to Goldridge, compliance with FEMA regulations, and the signed agreement requiring the equipment to remain at the Bodega station for its full useful life. Questions were raised regarding Goldridge's staffing plans for the station and communication protocols.

Staffing and building improvements were also discussed. It was noted that staffing may not be in place for several months, with a likely start date around the beginning of next year.

A review of the current lease agreement revealed that the only signed document with Goldridge is the property lease. Goldridge is requesting a 15-year lease before making additional commitments. No formal agreement regarding staffing terms has been signed at this time.

Fire Station Lease Negotiations and Facility Requirements

Lease Terms and Occupancy

The discussion focused on lease terms for 24/7 occupancy of the fire station, including the current one-year lease and the proposal from Goldridge for a 15-year agreement.

Key considerations include long-term operational needs, facility usage, and organizational stability.

Facility Modifications

Several building upgrades are necessary to support full-time occupancy. These include installing a room divider, additional doors, a fire escape, and constructing a dedicated bedroom. These changes are required to meet safety and livability standards for around-the-clock staffing.

Lease Negotiation Process

The group reviewed the lease negotiation process, including forming a committee, the potential use of a mediator, and a shared goal to finalize the lease agreement before Christmas 2025.

Insurance Issues

Ongoing challenges were reported in obtaining insurance certificates for the fire station and fire trucks, including delays and the need for multiple resubmissions.

Fire Truck Assignment and Station Closure

Concerns were raised regarding the assignment of fire trucks and the potential impact of station closure if a long-term lease and staffing are not secured.

Septic System Responsibility

The impact of 24/7 occupancy on the septic system was discussed, with a clear understanding that Goldridge would be responsible for its maintenance under the new lease.

Lease Payment

It was noted that the lease agreement specifies an annual payment of one dollar, which has not yet been received.

Non-Transferable Lease Clause

There was strong support for including a non-transferable clause in the lease to ensure that, if Goldridge is unable to fulfill the lease terms, the property reverts back to Bodega ownership.

- III. **Rename Organization, Redefining Mission, Membership Criteria, Legal & Operational Boundaries.** The board discussed renaming the merged Women's Club and Fire Department, considering options such as:
- a. Bodega Community Fire Services
 - b. Bodega Community and Volunteer Association
 - c. Bodega Social Fireman Association
 - d. Bodega Community and Fire Support
 - e. Bodega Community Fire Association
 - f. Bodega Fire & Community Alliance

- g. Friends of Bodega Fire & Community
- h. Bodega Community & Fire Alliance

Mission and Community Support

There was strong interest in maintaining the organization's role in supporting the broader Bodega community, including scholarships and emergency services not funded by the county or fire department. A proposal was made to expand scholarship opportunities to local youth, particularly those pursuing interests in agriculture or fire service.

Membership Criteria and Dues

The group explored the need to define membership eligibility, dues, and geographic boundaries. Suggestions included using the fire district map as a guide, setting annual dues (historically \$25 or \$50), and allowing for exceptions for members residing outside the district.

Voting Rights and District Boundaries

Clarification was requested regarding voting eligibility, specifically whether it should be based on residency, property ownership, or local business involvement within the district.

IV. Treasurer's Report.

Current Financial Balances (as of August 31, 2025):

- Exchange Bank: \$51,816.82
- Morgan Stanley Account (08/12/2025): \$433,755.53
- Total Funds Available: \$485,522.35

Organization is now active 501C3.

Big Event Financials:

Some expense receipts have yet to be submitted.

Total Income \$27,750

Preliminary Expenses \$9,884.44

Preliminary Net Income \$17,865.56

V. Christmas Fair Organization.

Christmas Fair Planning

The group discussed organizing this year's Christmas Fair, with Jennifer Fox volunteering to lead the effort. Approval from both the board and the community will be sought to move forward with planning.

Quilt Storage and Raffle

A proposal was made to store the community quilt at the meeting location, with access available to members of the quilting group. The quilt will be raffled at the Christmas Fair as part of the event's fundraising efforts.

- VI. **Polenta Feed Event.** Inquiry about the scheduling of a polenta feed event, with a tentative date for March 2026.
- VII. Meeting adjourned at 8:58 PM.