

The Palomar Mountain Community Fire Association

Minutes of the monthly meeting of The Board of Directors, June 7, 2025.

The meeting was called to order at 8:57 A.M. by President Robert Carlyle. Board members present in person at the Community Center (Station 79 grounds): Robert Carlyle, Tom Mendenhall, Keith Ronchetti. Also present in person were CAL FIRE Captain Dean Kowalski, Miriam Munoz, Cliff Kellogg, Yvonne Vaucher, and Chris Clarke. Elizabeth Getzoff, Bill Leininger, and board member Michael Pique joined our Zoom teleconference.

Pledge: Robert led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment: none offered.

Minutes: The minutes from the May 3, 2025, meeting were approved.

Financial Report: Keith Ronchetti's written report (available at palomar-fire.org) showed a balance of \$93,087.96, with an additional \$1220.29 held for CERT. He has our fictitious business name renewal ready to mail; cost \$55. The report was approved.

Station 79 Report: Captain Kowalski says that we have an additional engine at the station now, a "Type 3 Wildland" engine. Overall, Cal Fire is leading up to a "three platoon" staffing structure, which is six people with two captains with some overlap. We are working on how to accommodate a whole second crew at station 79. This will give us more resources for a traffic accident or initial fire response, but more stress on our parking, water heater, and septic systems. We are not sure if we'll get fast coverage from offsite if we're away. The new crew does not have any paramedics so we still have only three. On defensible space inspections (DSI), we made our quota of 200 structures. Cliff Kellogg asked the status on the new pump system for the underground tanks. Captain Kowalski says it is done but had some problems with the test last week.

County Fire Advisory (CFA) Board: Cliff Kellogg says that Chief Mecham was back for the May 12 meeting. The county has two additional water tenders now. A twin engine helicopter with nighttime capabilities for rescues and firefighting is "in the works". A new detailed plan of "Standards of coverage" has been released. The next meeting will be September 8.

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT): Bill Leininger says CERT has a focus on skills, practice, and preparedness updates during the slow pre-summer months. In May, CERT in Ramona conducted a Middle school class teaching home preparedness. We are collaborating with Valley Center CERT. Our next outreach will be at the Palomar Mountain Hoedown on Labor Day weekend. Cliff Kellogg asked how we can get the CERT trailer out, now that the forest service has put gates on Summit Circle. Bill says we can pull the trailer up and out across the fire department parking lot.

Robert Carlyle offers to bring his tractor for this. Bill assures as he is pursuing getting an official key to be left at the fire station.

Community Center of Palomar Mountain (CCPM): Robert Carlyle, Chair. Robert said that the PMPO did a good job cleaning up after the May 24 PMPO Pancake Breakfast. Chris Clarke points out that the grounds around the CCPM desperately need weed-whipping; Robert offers to help.

Palomar Mountain Fire Safe Council (PMFSC): Yvonne says the FSC has about \$27,000, \$15,000 of it being the new San Diego Regional Fire Foundation (SDRRF) "SAFE" grant - 7 dumpster rentals and 4 chipping days. About \$12,000 of our funds are unrestricted. The Dead & Dying Tree Removal grant is funded, but still awaiting USFS approval to release the funds. No work has been done yet and sign-ups are still welcome. The USFS is finished with this season's prescribed burns, with herbicide work in progress on the strip of USFS land in Jeff Valley west of Conifer Road. The PMPO has funded four dumpster days. Our CCI roadside clearing grant can fund two chipping days. Robert Carlyle says that the road down to Pedley Valley is washed out and he can't get the chipper down and back there.

To reduce fire insurance costs, Palomar Mountain probably needs to join the "Fire Wise" association, which works at a community progress level. Joining Fire Wise would reduce FAIR plan premiums by about 10%. We will host another Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) workshop the morning of June 14. The next FSC meeting will be 9 AM July 26, in person at the CCPM and by Zoom; we will skip the May meeting because its date conflicts with the PMPO breakfast and skip the June meeting because the WUI workshop is the week before.

Palomar Mountain Planning Organization (PMPO): The PMPO is planning to apply for TOT (Transient Occupancy Tax) money to remove a large rock that is blocking emergency vehicle access along Easement Road 30, east of the Lodge. Chris Clarke, newly elected PMPO Chair, says the cost has risen to \$11,000 from the originally allocated \$8,000. He asks for funds from the PMCFA to contribute to the work. Keith Ronchetti says the big issue is that the PMCFA does not have any revenue or significant donations. Any funds we get would have a priority of water storage tanks, dumpsters, and tree clearing. Robert Carlyle asked if we could get \$3000 in private donations for the rock removal work.

Adjournment: 10:09 AM 06/07/2025. The next PMCFA meeting will be at 9 AM, July 5, 2025, at the Community Center. We expect to have Zoom call-ins available.

Michael Pique, Secretary

Minutes approved by PMCFA Board 07/05/2025.