



Felton Fire Protection District Board of Directors

Special Meeting Agenda Minutes

(reading of letter received May, 9 2025, assignment to ad hoc committee)

Time: Monday, May 12, 2025, 6PM

Location: Felton Fire Protection District, Training Room, 131 Kirby Street, Felton, CA.

1.1 - Call to order

Meeting called to order by Director Crandell at 6:05pm

1.2 – Directors roll call

Directors present – Schwanbeck, Shults, Crandell, Anderson

Directors absent – Conrad

Staff

Fire Chief - Ayers - present

Board secretary – Fitzgerald – Absent

Guest – Isaac Blum (requested by Director Crandell to take minutes) -

Present

During roll call Director Crandell discussed with the Board his inability to access his assigned district email account due to an ongoing FOIA request and asked for a show of hands of who on the Board presently had access to their district email account.

Schwanbeck – full access, Crandell – limited access, Shults - limited access, Anderson – full access

Director Schwanbeck asked Director Crandell in what official capacity former Chief Blum was participating in the Board meeting. Director Crandell stated that Blum was only acting as member of the public and that was only there to assist in taking notes in the absence of the Board secretary .

2.0 – Additions to agenda

None

General Business

3.1 - Reading of letter from the Ben Lomond Fire Protection District, May 9, 2025

Letter read by guest Blum (Attachment 1)

Action – none

Public commit - none

3.2 - Statement of chronological facts leading up to May 9, 2025 letter (attachment 2)

Statement of facts read by Director Crandell,

Action – none

Public comment - none

3.3 - Discussion of options for continued service

Handout read by Director Crandell (attachment 3)

- *Director Anderson stated that he had spoken with Chief Wilson from CAL Fire and that CAL Fire has offered support of an engine response upon 2nd page for Felton.*
- *Director Crandell stated that he hoped there would be a chance of working with the Zayantee Fire District on a limited response model, but at a minimum Felton would be required to answer its own nighttime calls.*
- *Director Schwanbeck asked Chief Ayers where the District training records were at and if they were current. Chief Ayers stated that they were in a Google Doc account on the computer*
- *Action - none*

Public Comment

- *Firefighter (FF) Berlanga addressed the board and stated his concern for the present firefighters capabilities in anything other routine calls, FF Berlanga also stressed that presently the Fire District did not have any Captains, Battalion Chiefs, and limited or no Engineers. FF Berlanga also stated he felt that there was a lack of support and true understanding from the board on the condition and morale of the firefighters. FF Berlanga also discussed his concern for another contract for services.*
- *Director Anderson addressed FF Berlanga's comments and stated that he felt the same frustration bringing up the fact that it was not the Felton Fire Districts intent to exit the contract and that the Board is presently in the 30 day clause within the contract and attempting to correct some of the issues brought up by FF Berlanga. Director Anderson also brought up a lack of communication in the Fire Chiefs reports and a lack of opportunity for the FF to communicate with the Board.*
- *Director Schwanbeck addressed FF Berlanga and said she felt that the Squad had not been fully or appropriately heard.*
- *FF Berlanga again stated that he was frustrated, that things like this lead to a lack of morale, and is discouraged in the lack of information given, and that it was his duty to the district to speak up.*
- *Director Crandell asked Chief Ayers the status of the EMT class and what if anything needed to be done. Chief Ayers replied that everything except the scheduling of the weekend skills sessions had*

been done. Director Crandell asked that Chief Ayers complete that prior to June 9th.

- Chief Ayers spoke about a call that Felton was dispatched to but was ultimately taken care of by the Zayante Fire District. Chief Ayers stated that the Ben Lomond Fire District should have gotten the call to respond to Felton's incident but that there was an issue with the dispatch center not notifying Ben Lomond. Chief Ayers noted that they are looking into the incident.*
- Director Anderson asked Chief Ayers when he intended to conduct Engineer training, Chief Ayers stated that Driver Operator 1A would start in June and that Driver Operator 1B would start in July.*
- Director Crandell asked Chief Ayers to conduct a head count to see if any of the firefighters intended to leave at the conclusion of the Ben Lomond contract.*
- Director Crandell then spoke to the plan in the next 30 days to select the two most viable options for staffing.*
- Director Crandell said he needed to contact District Secretary Dennis to what her intentions were and if she intended to stay or leave the District at the conclusion of the Ben Lomond contract.*
- Director Crandell stated that because of the poor access to district email that anyone who wished to contact the Board should still do it by email, but should also contact Chief Ayers to insure contact is made with the Board.*

3.4 - Designation of Board members to form ad hoc committee to review all service

options and report back at the next meeting.

Director Crandell spoke about creating an ad hoc committee to attend the Zayante Fire District Board meeting and explore staffing options.

- *Director Schwanbeck stated that she could attend the meeting on the 15th*
- *Director Shults stated that he could attend both meetings if necessary*
- *Director Anderson stated that he could attend the meeting on the 14th but may have a conflict with the meeting on the 15th.*
- *Ad hoc committee was set and will attend the Zayante Fire District Board meetings, Anderson 14th, Schwanbeck, Shults 15th*
- *Director Crandell spoke to the fact that he hopes to have some form of agreement for help from the Zayante Fire District.*
- *Chief Ayers stated that after June 9th that until Felton has duty coverage that he had spoken with the Zayante Fire District and that they would respond to incidents requiring a battalion Chief.*
- *Director Schwanbeck stated that she felt that one meeting a month was not going to be enough given the need for communication and the decisions that need to be made in the next 30 days.*
- *Director Crandell requested special meetings to be scheduled every Monday night for the next month.*
- *Director Crandell thanked the squad and Chief Ayers for their service and support.*
- *Director Anderson asked the squad to please reach out to the Board if you feel you need remedial training.*
- *Director Crandell asked Chief Ayers to please focus on the basic firefighter tasks for the remainder of the month.*
- *Chief Ayers stated that the month was engine block training and that is exactly what they are focusing on.*

- *Action – Ad hoc committee was set and will attend the Zayante Fire District Board meetings, Anderson 14th, Schwanbeck, Shults 15th*

Public Comment

- Don Jarvis stated that the crisis Felton is facing is not new to the volunteer fire service and that since the inception of proposition 13 that fire districts have been on a budgetary decline. That with an increase in call volume and a decreases in funding that the District needs to be honest with the community and acknolage that they are not providing the best service possible. Mr. Jarvis went on to say that the district should consider a merger with either the Zayante Fire District or with the new CSA 48. Mr. Jarvis stated that the assed property tax could be applied to the Felton Fire District parcels and their by increasing the operating budget for the assuming district. Their-by increasing the projected services that the town of Felton could receive.
- Engineer Albers thanked the firefighters for their dedicated service and encouraged them to continue to respond. He spoke to their willingness to cover night shifts and to their commitment to train and continue to get better and run calls.
- FF Marcus? Palo asked the board if they intended to reinstate former Chief Blum as Fire Chief, or who is the new Fire Chief? Director Crandell stated that it was a possibility but that all of the conditions were so new that nothing had been formally discussed yet.
- FF Marcus asked what the financial impact was on the district now with the separation of the Ben Lomond contract? Director Crandell stated that initially there would be a reduction of costs paid out as we would no longer be paying Ben Lomond for their services.
- FF Marcus asked what is the plan for training moving forward? Director Crandell stated that there have been several people who have reached out offering their time and support if needed to continue training for the firefighters.
- Director Crandell apologized to the public for not having all the answers but reiterated that this was a new development and that this was the first time the board had been able to meet and discuss this.
- Director Schwanbeck thanked the public for bringing their questions.
- Director Crandell thanked the Squad for their service

4.0 - Adjournment
Meeting Adjourned at 7:04PM

Approved:


Chair Norm Crandell

Attest:


Isaac Blum



Ben Lomond Fire Protection District

9430 Highway 9, Ben Lomond CA 95005

831-336-5495 / fax 831-336-0300

www.benlomondfd.com

Felton Fire Protection District Board of Directors
131 Kirby St
Felton CA 95018

Dear Felton Fire Protection District Board Directors,

The Ben Lomond Fire Protection District Board of Directors conducted a duly noticed Special Meeting on Friday, May 9, 2025 at 11:00 a.m., at which time the Board voted unanimously to exercise Section 6.1, Termination, of the Temporary Contract between The Ben Lomond Fire Protection District and the Felton Fire Protection District executed on November 1, 2024. This letter is to notify the Felton Fire Protection District the Temporary Shared Services Agreement will terminate 30 days from receipt of this letter.

During the 30-day notification period, Assistant Chief Mike Ayers shall assume all duties of Felton Fire Protection District Fire Chief. During this time, members of the Felton Fire Protection Board of Directors shall have no contact with Chief Stacie Brownlee. All communications relating to Felton Fire Protection business shall be directed to Acting Chief Ayers and/or the Ben Lomond Fire Protection Board Chairperson Lisa Hill or her designee.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Hill", is written over the printed name.

Chairperson Lisa Hill
Ben Lomond Fire Protection District Board of Directors

Attachment 2

Statement of facts May 12th 2025 regarding contract for services between the Felton Fire Protection District and the Ben Lomond Fire Protection District.

On November 1st 2024 Chief Brownlee assumed the duties of Fire Chief for the Felton Fire Protection District. Those duties were outlined in an agreement titled "Agreement For Temporary Services" and signed by the Felton and Ben Lomond Fire Boards.

The terms and deliverable conditions of that contract were

- Provision of Fire Chief
- Provision of Training Chief
- All terms in Exhibit A (scope of services)

From November 1st 2024 through May 9th 2025 Chief Brownlee performed those duties. During that time Chief Brownlee brought no written or formal complaint of any kind to the attention of the Felton Fire Board.

On April 16th Chief Brownlee requested a meeting with the Chair of the Felton Fire Protection District Norm Crandell.

On April 17th both Director Crandell and Chief Brownlee met, at which time Chief Brownlee advised Director Crandell that she had conducted a Board meeting at the Ben Lomond Fire Protection District.

Chief Brownlee advised that one of the outcomes of that meeting was an ultimatum that Assistant Chief Blum must leave the Felton Fire District or she was instructed by the Ben Lomond Fire Board to submit a 30-day notice of intent to exit the contract for services.

On April 17th Director Crandell contacted Assistant Chief Blum to inform him of the ultimatum given by the Ben Lomond Board and Fire Chief Brownlee.

On April 20th After much consultation between Director Crandell and Assistant Chief Blum it was decided that Chief Blum would resign in lieu of having the Ben Lomond Fire District and Chief Brownlee exit the contract. That resignation took place on April 22nd.

(It should be noted that at no time before or after the ultimatum to Director Crandell did Chief Brownlee make any complaints or charges against Assistant Chief Blum to the Felton Fire Board.)

On May 9th Director Hill and Maxson of the Ben Lomond Fire Protection District asked to meet with Director Crandell. During the brief interaction the Ben Lomond Directors presented Director Crandell with a signed letter advising that the Ben Lomond Fire District intended to invoke article 6 (6.1) and exit the contract for services 30 days from the date the letter was received.

The letter provided, explicitly stated that the Felton Fire Board should have no further contact with Chief Brownlee and that Assistant Chief Ayers would be assuming all duties for the remainder of the contract.

On May 9th a special meeting was requested by Director Crandell and the meeting was scheduled for May 12th

This takes us to this present point and concludes the statement of facts at this time.

Service options

- Stipend shift work for volunteer firefighters
- On call duty response for firefighters living in district
- Contract for services – Private
- Contract for services – municipal
- Paid district staffing – (PERS)
- Auto aid response – partial
- Combination of any of the above

Things to be accomplished in 30 days- District

Select the two most viable options for staffing – Review – and assign resources to complete

Select an operational district point of contact

Identify if any district employees intend to leave at the conclusion of the Ben Lomond contract

Identify if Felton has administrative assistance

Identify any outstanding contracts or purchases made by Chief Brownlee that have not been fulfilled. Identify if such contract/purchase is still needed.

Identify short comings operationally – address immediately

Change all contact info, ensure communications with neighboring agencies in the county

Things to accomplish in 30 days – staff

Meet with and assure the staff that there is a plan

Assure them that they are still a valued resource for the district

Hear them out, ask questions, hear their concerns (show genuine interest and concern)

Gain buy in, explain to them they are part of the solution

Confirm minimum competencies (identify training needs)

Explain future changes before they take effect

Brief and roll out operations plan