

Tuolumne County  
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Heather Ryan  
*Clerk of the Board  
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**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF TUOLUMNE**

David Goldemberg, *First District*  
Kathleen Haff, *Fourth District*

Ryan Campbell, *Second District*

Anaiah Kirk, *Third District*  
Jaron Brandon, *Fifth District*

**MINUTES -SPECIAL MEETING**

**Fire Safety Advisory Committee – October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021 @ 10:30 am**  
Board of Supervisors Chambers  
2 South Green St. 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Sonora, CA

**AGENDA**

1. Call the Meeting to Order: Meeting called to order by Supervisor Campbell at 10:32 am, OES staff took roll call.
  - a. Committee Members present (quorum established with 8 members initially present then more came in shortly after roll call)
    - i. Supervisor Ryan Campbell -District 2
    - ii. Supervisor David Goldemberg – District 1
    - iii. Chief Andy Murphy- Tuolumne County Fire
    - iv. Chief Aimee New – Sonora City Fire
    - v. Undersheriff Neil Evans – Tuolumne County Sheriff
    - vi. Dennis Randall – District 2 public representative
    - vii. Malcolm Carden – District 5 – public representative
    - viii. Chief Mark Ferreira – Tuolumne County Fire Chief’s Association
    - ix. Scott Fremd – District 1
    - x. Jerry McGowan -Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians
    - xi. Glenn Gottschall – Tuolumne Firesafe Council representative (absent)
    - xii. Monica Fox – Chicken Ranch Band of Me-Wuk Indians (absent)
    - xiii. Eric Holly – District 4 public representative (absent)
    - xiv. Wesley Brinegar – District 3 (absent)
  - b. Others present
    - i. Dore Bietz – OES Coordinator
    - ii. Neil Evans – Tuolumne County Undersheriff
    - iii. Maria Sullivan – County Counsel (with intern)
    - iv. Public – various folks

- i. Chief Neil Gamez – Twain Harte Fire and Strawberry Fire Protection District
- ii. Dee Martin and Rich Combs – Strawberry Fire Protection District

2. Public Comment

- a. Strawberry Fire District Dee Martin and Rich Combs were here to listen and introduced themselves as members of the Strawberry Fire board.

3. Approval of minutes for September 22, 2021 - Motioned by Mark Ferreira, seconded by Scott Fremd.  
Vote taken all in favor, no nays, no abstentions.

4. Old Business

Sheriff wanted to update Alert FM cost dropped down to \$650,000. Add to next agenda as an item of discussion.

5. Reports/Presentations

None

6. Working groups

- i. Emergency Planning workgroup

- i. Outdoor audible alerts – Workgroup members spoke about workgroup meetings that have been held since the last Fire Safety Advisory Committee on Sept 22:

- a. Monday 9/27 @ 3pm – to discuss meeting with County counsel on authorities and those systems already in existence. Workgroup discussed that we need time to understand all the entities that already exist and what sound they use, what they use for etc. (Columbia has a siren that goes off at 12 noon every day to signify lunch, Blue Mountain Minerals has a siren that signifies when they blast? TID has one for dam failure.)

- b. Tuesday 9/28 @ 3 pm – to discuss with agencies/entities such as Tuolumne Safe, Twain Harte and Groveland CSD who already have installation of systems in progress. Workgroup heard from those agencies about status of project and intent. Several locations for placement involve third parties (Tri-Dam, Cold Springs Water) so there will be a need to work out agreements with those agencies as they are not in or on Fire District or CSD property.

- c. Tuesday 10/5 @ 3 pm – to go over recommendation to committee and Oct 19<sup>th</sup> BOS item and review County counsel memo on authorities. Goal if approved, to develop memo and presentation prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> BOS mtg.

- Based on discussion at the September 22 full Fire Safety Advisory Committee and subsequent above workgroup meetings, it is recommended:

- Fire Safety Advisory Committee discuss and approve a recommendation to Board of Supervisors at the October 19<sup>th</sup> meeting an agenda item to decide whether Tuolumne County supports outdoor audible alerts (or sirens) as a part of an Alert and Warning system in Tuolumne County and that no new sirens be installed or activated until such a plan is completed as is required by law.

- Consideration of the three areas of outdoor audible alerts be inserted into any policy limiting new installation or new activations.
  - Existing ones already in place and working
  - Ones planned for immediate installation due to grants
  - Future installation or locations
- Create a reasonable timeline to bring a policy/process/protocol back to full committee and then BOS for final approval

## 7. New Business

- a. Recommendation to BOS to decide whether Tuolumne County supports outdoor audible alerts (or sirens) as a part of an Alert and Warning system in Tuolumne County and that no new sirens be installed or activated until such a plan is completed as is required by law.

### General comments and discussions:

- OES staff reviewed how verbiage was developed based on workgroup and county counsel review
- County Counsel went through the memo and summarized California Law and SEMS how it is delegated. BOS must make decisions on which alert and warning systems will be put into place with Tuolumne County. They will then delegate how that functions on down through Emergency Services. County counsel also spoke to MOU's that need to be in place with county and whatever agency is responsible for maintenance. County is not taking on additional liability by sirens not working
- i. Sheriff spoke of his office's intent is only use for wildfire and for evacuation purposes only. Undersheriff spoke of consistency of systems. If there are too many different or multiple systems how could we possibly manage the activation? Would take staffing, impact on current dispatchers. Sheriff emphasized that there should not be any more systems than the ones in place or in progress for installation. Let them be the test cases for how it could work.
- Fire Chief's spoke about need to just make initial decision first and it must be made by BOS...do we want outdoor audible alerts as a part of the Tuolumne County Emergency Alert system. Then if BOS say no what happens? County counsel stated that if they are a district that has authority (fire can do it for fire, TID or TUD as required under dam failure). County counsel stated that even if county does not add sirens to its alert and warning system, those Districts with authority could still operate under their own authority for that purposes (A Fire District could alert for fire, Utility could alert for dam failure etc. without having support of county system).
- Asked by committee members, is there any liability on county for suggesting a certain system or vendor...OES staff explained that county cannot tell which vendor agencies have to use but we could put standards of an ideal system into the protocol/policy.
- Committee members asked what other counties use sirens and how are they doing. OES staff spoke of the outreach to others. Both Mariposa and Calaveras do not use sirens. Several counties or cities that do in more urban areas have agreements in place for activation. Other counties do not even want to consider.

### Public Comment

- Chief Gamez Spoke about their vendor who says they can make it compatible with other systems.
- Rich Combs Strawberry Fire Protection District stated that it was critical and necessary to have sirens in our county. Mentioned Idyllwild city similar situation put in a system that covers about a 20-mile radius a partial solution, what about telling folks to Tune to AM 1610 for more information. Spoke to control of 1610 mentioned and who has control (mentioned Cal Trans who might have access to it). Spoke about how to get the word out. Be prepared message on 1610.

Committee member discussed further:

- Fire Chief's stated that it isn't a question if they support or do not support as they all believe sirens can be used as a layer of the alert notification system, but they all feel we need to take a pause and create a process otherwise just anyone can install and activate.
- Supervisors Campbell and Goldemberg also stressed that committee needs to make a strong recommendation to the board as the experts who have been asked an opinion.
- Public Comment  
 Chief Gamez– asked has anyone went out to public and asked does community want this? Sheriff replied that he understands that many do. There has been no public forum though inviting public comment.

Chief Ferreira motioned that

- The Fire Safety Advisory Committee recommends that the BOS **not allow** new sirens or outdoor audible alert systems to be installed or activated until an Alert and Warning System Plan (that considers outdoor audible alerts) is developed and approved as is required by law.
  - That such a plan will be developed by the Fire Safety Emergency Planning Workgroup, brought to the full Fire Safety Advisory Committee for initial approval then brought back to the Board of Supervisors for final approval before being implemented.
  - Existing and working outdoor audible systems will be allowed to operate but would need to comply with any approved plan if they want to be a part of the county alert system.
  - For those in progress, while the committee recommends, they wait until a plan has been approved before going further, we understand financial commitments and funding restraints so they can continue to install but cannot activate until a plan is in place and agreements between parties have been made regarding activation, maintenance, security, and messaging, etc.

Motion seconded by Scott Fremd. All in favor. No nays, no abstentions.

8. Adjourned @ 12:13pm

- a. Committee encouraged to attend Oct 19<sup>th</sup> Board of Supervisors Meeting @ 1:30 pm
- b. **Next Fire Safety Advisory Committee Meeting – October 27<sup>th</sup> @ 10:30 am**