

## MINUTES

*Regular Board Meeting*

*February 13, 2024*

*5:30 p.m.*

*Location: 631 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Arcata*

*Arcata Fire Station Classroom*

### **Board of Directors**

*Eric Loudenslager (Division 4) - President, Jason Akana (Division 5) - Vice President, Nicole Johnson (Division 2) - Director, Blaine Maynor (Division 1) - Director, Randy Mendosa (Division 3) - Director*

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The regular session of the Board of Directors for the Arcata Fire District was called to order by President Eric Loudenslager at 5:30 pm.

Prior to the Pledge of Allegiance, President Loudenslager called for a moment of silence for the passing of Anthony Benelisha, former career Engineer with the District.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Loudenslager.

### **ATTENDANCE AND DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

The meeting continued with a quorum and the following were present: President Eric Loudenslager, Vice President Jason Akana, Director Blaine Maynor, and Director Randy Mendosa. Director Nicole Johnson was absent.

Additional District administrative staff included Fire Chief Justin McDonald, Assistant Chief Chris Emmons, Board Secretary Becky Schuette, Board Secretary Trainee Katie Hill, and Public Information Officer Alyssa Alvarez.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

There were no public comments or comments from the Board.

It was moved to approve the agenda.

Following the motion, Board Secretary pointed out a spelling error in the agenda on page 2, item 2 under District Business. The attachment should read "Sample" instead of Sampe.

**Motion:** Akana; Second: Mendosa

**Roll Call:** **Ayes;** Akana, Maynor, Mendosa, and Loudenslager. **Absent;** Johnson  
**Motion Carries**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Senior Management Group – Nothing to report.

Local 4981 – Captain Nate Padula spoke on behalf of the Local, reporting support and recognition for the passing of former career Engineer Anthony Benelisha.

There were no public comments.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

1. Minutes from January 9, 2024, Regular Meeting
2. Minutes from January 19, 2024 Special Meeting
3. January 2024 Financial Report
4. Adopt Resolution 24-299 Authorizing the Update of Signers for the Arcata Fire District's Accounts with Coast Central Credit Union, CalTRUST, and the County of Humboldt Treasury Accounts
5. Adopt Resolution 24-300 Directing Transfer of Cash from the Humboldt County Treasury Account to the CalTRUST Liquidity Fund
6. Approve Updates to the Assistant Chief Job Description

It was moved to approve the consent calendar.

**Motion:** Maynor; Second: Akana

**Roll Call: Ayes;** Akana, Maynor, Mendosa, and Loudenslager. **Absent;** Johnson  
Motion Carries

### **DISTRICT BUSINESS**

**1. Consider Approval of Temporary Reorganization of the Admin Team and Reclassify Assistant Chief Emmons to Interim Deputy Chief:** Chief McDonald summarized his staff note.

There were no comments from the public or the Board.

It was moved to approve the temporary reorganization of the Admin team, reclassify Assistant Chief Emmons to Interim Deputy Chief, set his rate of pay to \$62.00, and approve the side letter with the Senior Management Group.

**Motion:** Maynor; Second: Akana

**Roll Call: Ayes;** Akana, Maynor, Mendosa, and Loudenslager. **Absent;** Johnson  
Motion Carries

**2. Consider and Provide Staff Direction as to the Reinstatement of Board Member Compensation:** Chief McDonald reviewed his staff report aloud.

Several of the Directors made comments, asked questions and had suggestions for the Ordinance language.

There was no public comment.

It was moved to continue with the reinstatement of Board member compensation and bring back a draft ordinance for the March 12, 2024, meeting and further discussion.

**Motion:** Maynor; Second: Akana

**Roll Call: Ayes;** Akana, Maynor, and Loudenslager. **Nays;** Mendosa. **Absent;** Johnson  
Motion Carries

**3. Consider and Approve Proposed Contract with Fire Grants Expert for FEMA SAFER Grant Application:** Assistant Chief Emmons reviewed his staff note aloud.

Several of the Directors had questions which were asked and answered and a lengthy discussion ensued.

It was moved to award the contract for grant writing services with Fire Grants Expert for a cost not to exceed \$6,500.00 and authorize the Fire Chief to execute the contract.

**Motion:** Mendosa; Second: Maynor

**Roll Call: Ayes;** Akana, Maynor, Mendosa, and Loudenslager. **Absent;** Johnson  
Motion Carries

Following the motion and the vote, Captain Tony Freeman commented and indicated the support from Local 4981.

**4. Review of 2023 Year End Statistics:** Chief McDonald introduced PIO Alyssa Alvarez who presented the Year-end report.

There were questions and comments from the Board and the public.

No action was taken, this item was for information only.

**CORRESPONDENCE & COMMUNICATIONS**

1. Public Correspondence – President Loudenslager advised that the AVFA Activity is available for review in the packet. Additionally, Chief McDonald read aloud a portion of an email from an Arcata resident regarding the Arcata General Plan and Gateway Area Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report. This correspondence will be attached to these minutes as **Attachment 1**. Director Mendosa read aloud his email response to Mr. Weis. Director Mendosa’s email response will be included as **Attachment 2**. President Loudenslager requested the topic be placed on the April agenda for further discussion.

2. Committee Reports:

a. Fire Station Committee (Maynor, Akana) – Director Maynor reported that the committee met today and they would like to disband until the completion of the Standards of Cover. Following additional discussions and clarification of the purpose of the committee, the subcommittee will remain. There is nothing to report.

b. AVFA, L4981, AFD Relations Committee (Maynor) – Nothing to report.

c. Budget Committee (Johnson, Loudenslager) – No meeting yet, however the fund registers are now available, and a meeting scheduled next week. Information should be provided at the next meeting.

3. Fire Chief’s Monthly Report – Chief McDonald reviewed his staff report. He added an update to the Measure F committee. He also added that due to the weather event the previous week, CalOES had authorized and paid for District staff and equipment to be pre-positioned for response.

4. Director Matters – Director Mendosa commented on the loss of Anthony Benelisha.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

President Loudenslager adjourned to closed session at 7:21 pm.

The meeting was reconvened at 8:10 pm.

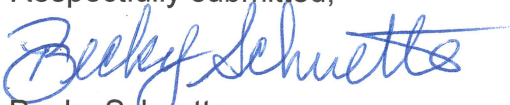
Report out of closed session by President Loudenslager; staff was given direction.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

President Loudenslager adjourned the meeting at 8:11pm.

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for **March 12, 2024, at the Arcata Downtown Station Classroom, 631 9<sup>th</sup> Street in Arcata at 5:30 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,



Becky Schuette,  
Clerk of the Board

**Justin McDonald**

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**From:** Fred <fred@arcata1.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 1, 2024 12:28 PM  
**To:** Eric Loudenslager; Justin McDonald; Randy Mendosa; Blaine Maynor  
**Subject:** from Fred Weis: Arcata Gateway and General Plan Environmental Impact Report

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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**To:** Chief Justin McDonald, Board President Blaine Maynor, Board Director Randy Mendosa, Board Director Eric Loudenslager  
**From:** Fred Weis  
**Re:** Arcata General Plan and Gateway Area Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report

Dear Chief McDonald, Chair Maynor, and Directors Mendosa and Loudenslager --

Please feel free to forward this message to your other Board members, staff, and to anyone you want.

First of all, thank you always for your service and dedication to our extended community, and to the protection of the health and safety of the people of our region.

Second: To be very clear, I am here to support you. If it ever sounds as though I'm saying "I think you should do this or that," then I apologize, as that's not my intent. You are the experts. To the extent that I can supply information that helps you, I am happy to do that.

For clarity, I am dividing this message to you into two sections:

1. What is in the draft EIR
2. My views and opinions

Thank you.

-- Fred Weis  
707-822-4400

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## 1. What is in the draft EIR

As you are likely aware, the draft Environmental Impact Report for the Arcata General Plan Update (including the Gateway Area Plan) is now available for viewing. The public comment period is from the current date through 5 p.m. March 18, 2024.

The draft EIR document is based on the presumption that the population of Arcata will grow to be 40% greater (about 7,500 people) than a 2020 baseline by the year 2025. This corresponds to a population of about 18,860 in 2020, about 19,600 in 2023, and 26,400 in 2045. Students living in Cal Poly-supplied housing would be **in addition** to these figures.

The entire document is 1,990 pages. It is available at:

[https://www.cityofarcata.org/DocumentCenter/View/13935/Arcata-GP-DEIR\\_20240126](https://www.cityofarcata.org/DocumentCenter/View/13935/Arcata-GP-DEIR_20240126)

In this draft EIR, because the document's Table of Contents, list of Figures, and list of Appendices is quite minimal (and as such is of very limited value, in my view), I have made a Table of Contents that is more thorough. I'll be posting this, along with other documents, on the [Arcata1.com](http://Arcata1.com) website over the next few days. If you want, I can send it to you directly. Without a good table of contents, it can be difficult to locate important areas.

I'm including in this message the page numbers of items that I believe would be of interest to you. There will be other areas of the draft EIR of interest to you too. Included here are the more obvious ones.

I'll also be breaking up the 1,990 pages into segments to make it more manageable to the reader. I'll likely have a segment on fire safety, because of its importance.

The following pages are connected with the AFD and your services. The page numbers here are the page in the document (chapter and page) and the PDF page number. (I find that using the PDF page number to be far more useful.)

- Letter from Chief Justin McDonald to David Loya, February 24, 2022. Response to the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of the EIR. (Shown in Appendix B (no page numbers); PDF pages 625 and 626.) **Note: As shown, this letter is not complete. The full letter is not there.** It is possible that a portion of the letter is shown on page 635. There are four images listed in the cover memo shown on page 626 -- **those four images are missing.** Even with the contents of pages 625 and 635, this letter does not seem complete.

**[A request:** Could you forward this complete letter and images to me. Thank you.]

- Evaluation Criteria and Significance Thresholds: 3.10.4. (Page 3.10-40; PDF page 307.) Impacts and Mitigation Measures is 3.10.6. ( Page 3.10-41; PDF page 308.) **This is the crucial area of the draft EIR for fire protection service.**  
The draft EIR states:  
Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary  
Level of Significance: Less than significant impact
- "Fire Protection within the Study Area" (Starts at 3.10-1; PDF page 268.) This is a little over one page in length.
- Section 3.10.3 is "Regulatory Framework." (Starts at 3.10-8; PDF page 275.) It shows the "National Fire Protection Association Codes and Standards" for fire response. The following page mentions:
  - State Title 8 Sections 1270 "Fire Prevention" and 6773 "Fire Protection and Fire Equipment"

- California Code of Regulations Title 24 (California Building Standards Code) Part 9 (California Fire Code)
  - California Health and Safety Code Division 12 (Fires and Fire Protection)
  - State of California Emergency Response Plan"
  - And more.
- City guidelines for Fire and Emergency Preparedness. (Starts at page 3.10-13; PDF page 280.) "All fire protection and prevention duties, except those hereinafter mentioned, within the City of Arcata have been and continue to be the responsibility of the Arcata Fire Protection District."
  - Page 3.10-31 (PDF page 298.)
  - Table 3.10-2: Annual Call Volume Since 2008 and Response Times within the City Limits. (Page 3.10-2; PDF page 269.)
  - Statement attributed to Justin McDonald: NFPA standard is not used as level of service thresholds. (Page 3.10-41; PDF page 308.)  
Draft EIR states: "Both the City and AFD do not have an established level of service expected for fire protection services."
  - Table 3.10-7: NFPA 1710 Deployment Models and Common Local Deployment Strategy. Showing personnel requirements for varying critical tasks. (Page 3.10-42; PDF page 309.)
  - Statement attributed to Justin McDonald on Response Times.  
Draft EIR states: "Therefore, response times are not anticipated to increase based on call distance from the station." (Page 3.10-43; PDF page 310.)
  - Statement attributed to Justin McDonald on responses to vegetation fires. (Page 5.7-2; PDF page 525.)
  - AFD is cited as a reference. "2016. Summary of PPC Review For Arcata FPSA" (Page 3.10-53; PDF page 320.)

### Other items to note:

- The word "fire" is in this document 668 times or so. In addition, the word "wildfire" is there 138 times or so.
- The Hazards and Hazardous Materials section is at 3.6-1 (PDF page 175).
- Toward the bottom of page 1.0-13 (PDF page 19) are two questions on the summary of impacts and mitigation measures for Hazardous Materials.
- "Fire Hazards" is at 3.6-9 (PDF page 183). It is one paragraph that, to me, says very little.

One of the questions on the impacts of the planned growth on Fire Protection.  
The Impact question is on Page 3.10-41 (PDF page 308). Highlights added in bold.

**Impact PSR-a1:** Would adoption and implementation of the General Plan result in substantial adverse **physical impacts** associated with the provision of new or physically altered

government **facilities**, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for fire protection?

These two paragraphs below are a part of the reply to that Impact question. Highlights added in bold.

**While AFD may not have adequate staff, training, or equipment to serve the full buildout of the General Plan 2045, those have been determined to not result in the need for renovated or new facilities because no new training facilities are needed, and current facilities could accommodate additional staff and equipment.** AFD's existing facilities will remain sufficient to adequately serve the 2045 projected population within its existing service area based on staffing levels, equipment needs, and response times from existing stations.

The adoption and implementation of the General Plan 2045 may result in an increase in the number of calls for service, placing a greater demand on fire protection services. In order to maintain current response rates, a new facility or substation may be required if call volume increases and call distribution changes significantly. The City and AFD would need to continue monitoring and review call volumes, call distributions, and response times to determine adequate level of service or if a new facility should be constructed. The growth anticipated in the General Plan 2045 could potentially result in the need for new or expanded fire protection facilities. The exact location and extent of facility improvements or expansion is not known at this time and would likely be based on future call distribution in order to most effectively serve the community. AFD would be required to address the potential environmental impacts of the development of additional or expanded fire facilities at that time. As a programmatic, policy-level analysis, the adoption and implementation of General Plan 2045 would not result in significant environmental impacts caused from the alteration and construction of fire protection facilities to maintain acceptable service ratios and response times. **Impacts would be less than significant.**

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary

Level of Significance: Less than significant impact

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## 2. My views and opinions

Based on the contents of the draft EIR found on pages 3.10-41 through 44 (PDF pages 308-311) it seems that we are seeing something similar to what was presented in the draft EIR for the Craftsman Mall dorms. Namely that the EIR question is only about the physical facilities of the AFD -- the buildings. Matters such as response time and personnel requirements are not part of the EIR process.

To me, this approach to the issue really misses the point. In terms of CEQA requirements, this narrow view fulfills the law. In terms of the real-life situation of providing fire safety and protection, to reduce the issue of fire protection to one of "is your station large enough" is essentially a sham.

Perhaps the Arcata City Council will request a more real-world assessment of what's involved in providing adequate fire protection and emergency response times.



I am hopeful that the study commissioned by yourselves, the university, and the City will bear fruit and help create some meaningful change. You likely will not have the results from that study by the time that the Arcata City Council approves this draft EIR, however. We all want the many specific areas of concern to be resolved in a way that is satisfactory to you.

Back in September 2023 I wrote an article of what I saw as the large issue of fire protection in the Gateway area, and wrote a possible solution. This article was not based on interviews with you -- just my ideas on the subject.

This article is located at the following link. Estimated reading time is 8 minutes.

<https://arcata1.com/gateway-big-issues-fire-protection/>

**Contents:**

1. [Introduction and Background](#)
2. [A possible solution](#) — Here's what we can do
3. [Quotes from our City Councilmembers](#) — from the August 22, 2023, joint City Council / Planning Commission study session
4. [Video of that discussion](#)

Other AFD-related links on the Arcata1.com website:

[Arcata Fire District Director: Eric Loudenslager – August 4, 2022](#)

[Arcata Fire District presentation to the Planning Commission – January 10th, 2023](#)

[Fire Protection, Police, Wastewater, Infrastructure – Selected articles](#)

As a possible solution, my proposal was as follows. This is included in the September 2023 article:

Developers can design a four-story or taller building, get their funding, have the building approved, start construction and even complete the construction. But they will not be eligible to get a certificate of occupancy until the Arcata Fire District says it's okay. Whether that means the lower three floors of the building could have occupancy (with higher floors blocked off) or if the entire building cannot be occupied, I'll leave that to the AFD. And that could be a case-by-case decision, based on other fire-safety elements, such as number of stairwells, and so forth.

In theory, the AFD will have this matter of providing fire protection in taller buildings worked out over the next 2 to 5 years. And construction of apartments in Arcata might start to happen in about that same time-frame.

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## Re: from Fred Weis: Arcata Gateway and General Plan Environmental Impact Report

Randy Mendosa <rmendosa@arcatafire.org>

Sun 2/4/2024 9:12 PM

To: Fred <fred@arcata1.com>

Cc: Justin McDonald <jmcdonald@arcatafire.org>; Chris Emmons <cemmons@arcatafire.org>; Becky Schuette <bschuette@arcatafire.org>

Dear Mr. Weis,

Thank you for sending information on the Arcata General Plan and Gateway Area DEIR. I appreciate your work referencing pages in the DEIR that are related to the Fire District. I will definitely review those pages.

The public process for the proposed Gateway project has been extensive. I believe the City has been receptive to public safety concerns expressed by Fire District personnel. I particularly appreciate how the City has stepped up to partner with the Fire District on the upcoming Standards of Coverage Study.


Speaking only for myself as one vote on the Fire District Board of Directors, I believe it would be inappropriate for the Fire District to opine for or against the Gateway Project. My input to our staff and board members, has been that we should confine our comments to issues directly relating to the delivery of fire / public safety services to the five communities we serve.

Thank you very much for reaching out. Please feel free to contact me anytime you have questions or comments about anything involving the fire district.

Randy



**RANDY MENDOSA**  
Director

 (707) 825-2000

 rmendosa@arcatafire.org

 www.arcatafire.org

*"Every Effort. Every Hour. Every Call."*

On Feb 1, 2024, at 12:28 PM, Fred <fred@arcata1.com> wrote:

- Table 3.10-7: NFPA 1710 Deployment Models and Common Local Deployment Strategy. Showing personnel requirements for varying critical tasks. (Page 3.10-42; PDF page 309.)
- Statement attributed to Justin McDonald on Response Times. Draft EIR states: "Therefore, response times are not anticipated to increase based on call distance from the station." (Page 3.10-43; PDF page 310.)
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