



**GRATON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING AGENDA  
3750 Gravenstein Hwy N, Sebastopol, CA 95472  
May 07, 2024, at 7:00 pm  
*Director Peterson will be participating telephonically or by Zoom and her location is  
33 Green Valley Dr, Jumping Branch, WV  
Her phone number is (707) 360-5857***

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
4. Corrections and/or Modifications to the Agenda
5. PUBLIC COMMENT: *The Board of Directors welcomes participation in Board meetings. Matters under the jurisdiction of the Board that are not posted on the agenda may be addressed by the general public. This opportunity for comment is provided by the Ralph M. Brown Open Meeting Act. However, California Law prohibits the Board from acting on any matter which is not on the posted agenda unless the Board determines that it is an emergency or other situation specified in Government Code Section 54950 et seq. No adverse conclusions should be drawn if the Board does not respond to public comment at this me. Public comment is limited to three (3) minutes per individual.*
6. Closed Session
  - a. Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation – Complaint by Linda Tripoli  
(Authorized pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(2))  
(1 Matter)
7. Return to Open Session - Report Upon Return from Closed Session.
8. CONSENT CALENDAR: *Consent calendar items are considered routine and are acted upon by the Board with a single action. Members of the audience wishing to provide public input may request that the Board remove the item from the Consent Calendar. Comments may be limited to three (3) minutes. – Action Item*
  - a. Draft Regular Board Meeting Minutes – April 09, 2024
  - b. Report Upon Return from Closed Session for April 09, 2024, Board Meeting
  - c. Financial Reports – April 2024

**ADA Compliance**

*In compliance with Government Code 54954.2(a), the Graton Fire Department, will, on request, make this agenda available in appropriate alternative formats to persons with a disability, as required by the section 202 of the American Disabilities Acts of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12132), and the federal rules and regulations adopted in implementation thereof. Individuals who need this agenda in an alternative format or who need a disability-related modification or accommodation in order to participate in the meeting should contact Board Recording Secretary, at (707) 823-8400 x107, 72 hours or more prior to the disability accommodations being needed in order to participate in the meeting.*

9. Old Business

- a. Board Vacancy – Discussion Item, possible Action Item to vote to appoint and swear in Board Candidate

10. New Business

- a. Legal Services Increase – Action Item
- b. Fire Chief Compensation – Action Item
- c. Amend Preauthorization Limit – Action Item

11. Committee Report

- a. Apparatus Committee
- b. Sebastopol Fire Cooperation Committee

12. Purchase Requests – Action Item

- a. Structure Turnouts
- b. Structure Gloves
- c. Well Rehabilitation

13. Correspondence

14. Fire Chief's Report

- a. Roster, Alarms, and Drills

15. Future Agenda Items: Board members may raise issues for the next board meeting that need attention. Board members may also recommend that future agenda items be considered at a board special meeting.

16. Adjournment – Next meeting: June 11, 2024

**Certification**

I, Tiffanie Herring, Recording Secretary to the Board for the Graton Fire Protection District, do hereby declare that the foregoing agenda for May 7, 2024 Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Graton Fire Protection District was posted on the door outside the District Headquarters by Saturday May 4, 2024. In compliance with Government Code Section 54957.5. Any non-exempt writing or documents provided to a majority of the Board of Directors regarding any item on this agenda are available during normal business hours for public inspection at the Fire District headquarters office, located at 2750 Gravenstein Hwy N, Sebastopol, CA 95472. This agenda is also available on the District website

[www.gratonfire.com](http://www.gratonfire.com)

  
Tiffanie Herring, Recording Secretary

Dated: May 4, 2024

**ADA Compliance**

*In compliance with Government Code 54954.2(a), the Graton Fire Department, will, on request, make this agenda available in appropriate alternative formats to persons with a disability, as required by the section 202 of the American Disabilities Acts of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12132), and the federal rules and regulations adopted in implementation thereof. Individuals who need this agenda in an alternative format or who need a disability-related modification or accommodation in order to participate in the meeting should contact Board Recording Secretary, at (707) 823-8400 x107, 72 hours or more prior to the disability accommodations being needed in order to participate in the meeting.*

# CONSENT CALENDAR



**GRATON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
3750 Gravenstein Hwy N, Sebastopol, CA 95472  
April 09, 2024**

1. Call to Order: 7:00 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call: Maddocks, Fisher, Hebel, and Peterson (via Zoom). Also Present: District Counsel Representative Bill Ross and Chief Bullard.
4. Corrections and/or Modifications to the Agenda: None.
5. PUBLIC COMMENT: Received a personnel complaint from Linda Tripoli. District Counsel provided a copy to Chief Bullard.
6. CONSENT CALENDAR: Motion by Hebel to approve Consent Calendar as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Fisher.
  - a. Draft Board Meeting Minutes – March 12, 2024
  - b. Report Upon Return from Closed Session for March 12, 2024, Board Meeting
  - c. Financial Reports – March 2024
7. Old Business – None.
8. New Business
  - a. Resolution 24-04-01 – Establishing Reserve Account for Capital Outlays – Motion to approve by Fisher and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Peterson.
  - b. Resolution 24-04-02 – Authorizing Reinvestment of Maturing Certificate of Deposit and Purchase of New/Additional Certificates of Deposit – Motion to approve by Fisher, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Hebel.
  - c. Board Vacancy – Due to the notice guidelines, a reschedule regular meeting will take place.
9. Committee Report:
  - a. Apparatus Committee – The final inspection has been completed on the type 1 engine. We should be taking delivery in the next 2 to 3 weeks.

b. Sebastopol Fire Cooperation – Members of the council attended and invited everyone to join their meeting on April 16<sup>th</sup> at 6pm.

10. Purchase Requests:

a. Fire Shelters – Motion to purchase 8 wildland fire shelters from Cascade Fire Equipment not to exceed \$5500 by Hebel, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Fisher.

b. Web Gear – Motion to purchase 5 sets of Web Gear and additional accessories from Mystery Ranch not to exceed \$3000 by Fisher, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Peterson.

11. Correspondence: None.

12. Fire Chief's Report: 4/13 is the annual awards dinner at Union Hotel @ 6pm. 5/19 is the Pancake Breakfast.

a. Roster: Matt Skinner was promoted to Engineer. Motion to approve promotion by Hebel, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Fisher.

b. Alarms: 77

c. Drills: 8

13. Future Agenda Items: Motion to approve to reschedule the next regular meeting to May 7<sup>th</sup> @ 6pm by Fisher, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Hebel.

14. Closed Session – 7:31pm

a. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION  
(Authorized pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(2))  
(1 Matter)

b. PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION  
(Authorized pursuant to Government Code Section 54957(b)(1))  
Position: Fire Chief

15. Return to Open Session – 8:06pm. District Counsel indicated there was no reportable action and that a written report from Closed Session would be prepared.

16. Adjournment: 8:06pm

William D. Ross  
David P. Schwarz  
Kypros G. Hostetter  
Christina M. Bellardo

Law Offices of  
**William D. Ross**  
400 Lambert Avenue  
Palo Alto, California 94306  
Telephone: (650) 843-8080  
lawross.com

Los Angeles Office:  
P.O. Box 25532  
Los Angeles, CA 90025

File No: 19/65

April 12, 2024

**VIA E-MAIL**

The Honorable Bob Maddocks, President  
and Members of the Board of Directors  
Graton Fire Protection District  
3750 Gravenstein Hwy, N  
Sebastopol, CA 95472

Re: Report Upon Return from Closed Session; Regular Meeting of the Graton Fire Protection District Board of Directors: April 9, 2024

Dear President Maddocks and Members of the Board of Directors:

This communication sets forth reportable action of the Board of Directors ("Board") of the Graton Fire Protection District ("District") consistent with provisions of the Ralph M. Brown Opening Meeting Act (Government Code Section 54950, *et seq.*) resulting from the Closed Session of the District's April 9, 2024 Regular Board Meeting.

After convening in Open Session at 7:00 p.m. and proceeding through the Open Session matters, and confirming that there were no comments on matters agendized for Closed Session, the Board adjourned to Closed Session at 7:31 p.m.

There were two matters agendized for Closed Session consideration.

- 14.a. Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation  
Authorized pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(2)  
One Matter; and,
- 14.b. Public Employee Performance Evaluation  
Authorized Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957(b)(1)  
Position: Fire Chief

With respect to Closed Session Agenda Item No. 14.a., there was no reportable action under the common law attorney-client privilege and that provided by Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(2).

The Honorable Bob Maddocks, President  
and Members of the Board of Directors  
April 12, 2024  
Page 2

With respect to Closed Session Agenda Item No. 14.b. from which Chief Bullard removed himself from the Closed Session at 7:47 p.m., there was reportable action acknowledged by the Board that they had received an April 9, 2024 communication from Linda Tripoli entitled "personnel complaint re Chief Bullard per Board Policy 1104.2 and that a copy of the communication had been given to Chief Bullard. Except as indicated, there was no other reportable action under the common law attorney-client privilege and that provided by Government Code Section 54957(b)(1).

The Board returned to Open Session at 8:06 p.m. where District Counsel indicated that a written report upon return from Closed Session would be prepared consistent with the provisions of Government Code Section 54957.1.

This communication should be added for review under the Consent portion of the Agenda of your next Regular or Special Board Meeting.

If there are any questions concerning its content, it may be taken off the Consent Calendar at that time or our office may be contacted in the interim.

Very truly yours,



William D. Ross

WDR:jf

cc: Bill Bullard, District Chief  
Tiffanie Herring, Clerk of the Board



## GRATON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT - APRIL 2024 OVERVIEW

<b>DEPOSITS:</b>		
Duty Shirt Reimbursement	\$157	4/6/2024
Equipment Maintenance Reimb.	\$1,000	4/4/2024
Mutual Aid Support	\$20,000	4/12/2024
Property Tax Revenue	\$771,540	4/24/2024
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$792,696</b>	
<b>CURRENT ASSETS:</b>		
Summit Operating Account	\$198,636	4/30/2024
Summit ICS Account	\$808,523	4/30/2024
Schwab CD's	\$1,000,000	4/30/2024
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$2,007,159</b>	
<b>ACCTS. RECEIVABLES:</b>		Billed
COVID FEMA Reimbursement	\$57,591	12/29/2022
Jan-Feb Storm Pre-po	\$10,618	2/2/2024
Feb Storm	\$24,319	2/17/2024
Donut Media	\$1,000	4/26/2024
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$93,528</b>	



**Graton Fire Protection District**

**Check Detail**

**April 1-30, 2024**

<b>Num</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Debit	CalPERS	Employees \$1050 / GFPD \$200 (Parker Matching)	1,250.00
Debit	CalPERS	Pepra	9,132.60
Debit	CalPERS	Classic	2,112.86
Debit	ADP	Fee	135.45
Debit	ADP	Payroll Taxes	12,299.64
Debit	ADP	Direct Deposits	40,691.81
Debit	Summit State Bank	Wire Fee	25.00
5353	Napa Auto Parts	Equipment Maintenance	635.01
5354	US Bank - Corporate Payment Systems	Cal Card	3,519.27
5352	Ed's Custom Truck Bodies	8403 Repair	1,000.00
5355	O'Reilly Auto	Fuel	5.33
5356	Aaction Rents	Tiller	96.50
5357	Aflac	Employee Paid Benefit	449.93
5358	Bauer Compressors	Maintenance	18,212.82
5359	Cliff Walker Supply & Maint	Cleaning	360.00
5360	Curtis Tools For Heroes	PPE	2,127.69
5361	Dynamic Mobile Truck Repair	8481 / 8463 Repair	1,661.78
5363	Law Offices of William D. Ross	Legal	5,359.56
5364	Major Alarm Inc	Alarm	88.50
5365	P&W Wireless	Pagers x 5	3,171.00
5366	Santa Rosa Uniform	Blumenthal	223.96
5367	T-Mobile	Internet	18.26
5385	Tiffanie Herring	MAR 2024	1,700.00
5368	Cal Net ATT	Phone	230.82
5369	CalChoice	Health Benefits	5,518.14
5370	Firefighter First Credit Union	Local 1401 Union Dues	720.00
5371	Chaz Mathias	Reimbursement Sleeper Shifts	35.00
5372	Darrell Kopriva	Sleepers	120.00
5373	Ian Muskar	Shift Reimbursement	225.00
5374	Kristin Lupo	Shift Reimbursement	120.00
5375	Mathias Bonse	Sleeper Reimbursement	35.00
5376	Matt Skinner	Sleeper Reimbursement	35.00
5377	Moses Castrellon	Sleeper Reimbursement	325.00
5378	Robert Sabrowsky	Reimbursement	75.00
5379	Shelby Buchmann	Shift Reimbursement	145.00
5380	Stephen Jaramillo	Sleeper Reimbursement	170.00
5381	Trevor Morrison	Reimbursement	205.00
50779	Kenji Fagundes	Reimbursement	200.41
50780	Jacob Roberts	Reimbursement	200.41
50781	Darrell Kopriva	P/R Stipend	288.59
50782	George Ristad	Stipend	57.72
5382	ADTS, Inc.	Drug Testing	425.00
5383	Aflac	Employee Paid Benefit	449.93
5384	Bill Bullard	Reimbursement 2nd QTR 23/24	1,743.75
5386	Choice Builder	B15055	583.31
5387	FRMS	Quarterly Payment (4)	20,291.25
5388	Galls Inc.	Custom Badge	707.94
5389	Standard Insurance Company	LTD	174.00
5390	Bill Bullard	Reimbursement 3rd QTR 23/24	1,831.88

**Graton Fire Protection District  
Check Detail  
April 1-30, 2024**

5391	Jones Garage Door Co., Inc.	Replaced Transformer	717.00
5392	North Bay Tree Weed & Pest	Pest Control Service	194.00
5393	PG&E	Utilities	32.76
5394	REDCOM	Dispatch Agreement 23-24	1,669.05
5395	Santa Rosa Uniform	Uniforms	807.14
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>142,610.07</b>



**Graton Fire Protection District  
US Bank Credit Card  
April 2024**

Name	Memo	Category	Amount
Sacramento Co. Airport Parking	Parking	7300 · Transportation/Travel	33.00
Home Depot	Training	7120 · In-Service Training	145.07
B&H Photo	Office Return	6400 · Office Expense	-161.67
Light Bulbs	Sign Lighting	6180 · Building Maintenance	150.65
Ballast Shop	Sign Lighting	6180 · Building Maintenance	106.09
76 Fuel	Fuel -8440	7201 · Gas/Oil	57.01
Light Bulbs	Lights	6180 · Building Maintenance	212.33
Costco	Training	7120 · In-Service Training	186.78
Verizon Wireless	Tablets	6040 · Communications	166.34
Costco	Household	6080 · Household Expense	9.49
Global Fueling System	Refund	6140 · Equipment Maintenance	-69.74
Brooks Tree Farm	2024 Season	7000 · Tree Farm Expense	1,074.00
Amazon	Cables	6400 · Office Expense	40.95
AT&T	Internet	7320 · Utilities	74.90
Lucky	Household Items	6080 · Household Expense	92.08
Galls Inc.	PPE	6020 · Personal Protective Equipment	95.88
Weebly	Membership	6400 · Office Expense	240.00
Amazon	Vehicle Maintenance	6140 · Equipment Maintenance	37.10
West Marine	Boat Parts	6140 · Equipment Maintenance	57.69
Occidental Union Hotel	Awards Dinner	6400 · Office Expense	1,667.89
Raley's	Awards Dinner	6400 · Office Expense	14.18
West Marine	Boat Parts	6140 · Equipment Maintenance	53.34
El Tarasco Restaurant	Lunch for School T	6080 · Household Expense	117.31
Mystery Ranch LTD	Wildland Packs	6880 · Small Tools/Instruments	2,688.64
FasTrak Violation Processing Department	Bridge Toll	6140 · Equipment Maintenance	9.75
<b>TOTAL CREDIT CARD CHARGES</b>			<b>7,099.06</b>



Graton Fire Protection District

Through April 2024

Specific and General Legal Costs, Cumulative										
Subject	* Tripoli Claims/Litigation		Sabrowsky, Alvarez, Nunes Complaint		Alvarez Claims/Litigation		Personnel (Alvarez, Tripoli, Misc.)		Other (general, retainer, Tripoli PRA/complaints)	
<b>Last month - April 2024</b>										
Liebert, Cassidy, Whitmore										
William Ross			\$	3,525	\$	175	\$	1,660		
Merrill, Arnone, Jones										
Allen, Glaessner, Werth										
<b>To-date</b>										
Liebert, Cassidy, Whitmore	\$	41,859	\$	43,606	\$	10,437	\$	-	\$	42,681
William Ross	\$	91,069	\$	-	\$	61,472	\$	47,155	\$	64,403
Merrill, Arnone, Jones	\$	4,830	\$	-	\$	25,051	\$	-	\$	4,500
Allen, Glaessner, Werth	\$	-	\$	-	\$	9,393	\$	-	\$	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>137,758</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>43,606</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>106,352</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>47,155</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>111,583</b>
									<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 446,454</b>

**\* Court Denied Ms. Alvarez's Motions 10/04/23 \***

# OLD BUSINESS

Rebecca Arvold  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Graton Fire Board,

My name is Rebecca Arvold and I am interested in sitting on the Graton Fire District Board. I have lived in Sonoma County for around 50 years, 45 of those in Graton. I attended Oak Grove and continued on to graduate from El Molino High School. I currently work at Oak Grove in RSP and have been there for 12 years. I love our community and look forward to serving it through the fire board. The Graton Firehouse is a valuable resource that should be protected and supported. I served as President for 5 years for our Arts Foundation, a nonprofit at Oak Grove and helped raise a goal of \$80,000 annually to help with art programs.

I have seen our community go through a lot of changes and look forward to being hands on in the upcoming years should I be on the board. I know many people throughout our community including friends and students that have been part of the Graton Volunteer Fire Department. I have two teenage daughters and finally feel I have time to dedicate to something that interests me. Being part of the community, I feel I would be a good choice for you. Hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Arvold

CERTIFICATE OF APPOINTMENT AND OATH OF OFFICE  
DISTRICT DIRECTOR

THIS CERTIFIES that at a regular meeting held on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_,  
the \_\_\_\_\_ District  
appointed \_\_\_\_\_ to hold the office  
of District Director of the above named district to hold the office for the completion of the term expiring  
\_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

OATH OF OFFICE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA )  
COUNTY OF SONOMA )

I, \_\_\_\_\_, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of California against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of California; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties upon which I am about to enter.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Candidate's Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address)

Subscribed and sworn to before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Person Administering Oath)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Office or Title)

# NEW BUSINESS



William D. Ross  
David P. Schwarz  
Kypros G. Hostetter  
Christina M. Bellardo

Law Offices of  
**William D. Ross**  
400 Lambert Avenue  
Palo Alto, California 94306  
Telephone: (650) 843-8080  
Facsimile: (650) 843-8093  
www.lawross.com

Los Angeles Office:  
P.O. Box 25532  
Los Angeles, CA 90025

File No: 19/65

April 16, 2024

VIA E-MAIL

Bob Maddocks, President  
of the Board of Directors  
Graton Fire Protection District  
3750 Gravenstein Hwy N,  
Sebastopol, CA 95472

Re: Amendment to Agreement for Legal Services

Dear President Maddocks:

Our office currently provides legal services to the Graton Fire Protection District ("District") pursuant to our March 1, 2021 Legal Services Agreement.

Our legal services are divided into two categories: general legal services and litigation services.

General legal matters (such as attending Board Meetings, responding to public records requests, advising District Staff on day-to-day legal issues, and similar matters) are subject to a *flat* monthly retainer. This flat rate allows District Staff to frequently seek legal advice on general matters without fear of incurring unexpected fees.

Our retainer rate of \$1,500 per month has remained unchanged for three years. Regrettably, due to record inflation and rising costs across all sectors of the economy, we propose a modification to the current flat retainer rate.

Effective May 1, 2024, the monthly retainer amount would increase from \$1,500.00 to \$2,000.00 a month. That amount will be subject to a 3% annual increase in order to minimize the impacts of inflation.

Based on current IRS mileage rates and legal database access rates, our reimbursable expenses include:

Mileage:	\$0.67.5 cents per mile (or current IRS Rules)
Access Charges for Legal:	Cost varies on amount of monthly use Data Bases

Bob Maddocks, President  
of the Board of Directors  
Graton Fire Protection District  
April 16, 2024  
Page 2

While general legal matters are included in the flat monthly retainer amount, matters involving litigation or administrative proceedings are billed separately on an hourly basis. Our firm provides discounted hourly rates for government agencies on these types of matters. **These non-retainer hourly rates are not increasing.** Those non-retainer rates will remain:

- \$350.00/hr for partners
- \$275.00/hr for associates
- \$145.00/hr for Paralegals
- \$80.00/hr for Legal Secretaries

All other provisions of the March 1, 2021 Agreement will remain unchanged.

Unless there are any questions, please sign and return a copy of the following verification that accepts these updated terms.

We appreciate the opportunity to continue to serve the District.

Very truly yours,



William D. Ross

WDR:jf

cc: Bill Bullard, Fire Chief

**ACCEPTANCE OF UPDATED TERMS**

I hereby agree to the terms and conditions for amendment of the legal services of the Law Offices of William D. Ross to the Linda Fire Protection District who has authorized me to execute this agreement.

Dated: April \_\_\_\_\_, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bob Maddocks, Board President

# PURCHASE REQUESTS

## Structure Gloves

5/7/2024

	Vendor	Price
1	The Fire Store	\$ 1,567
2	Feld Fire	\$ 1,523
3	Public Safety Store	\$ 1,562
4		

**Requested Motion:** I Make a Motion to purchase 12 pairs of Structure gloves, from The Fire Store not to exceed \$2,000

# CORRESPONDENCE

**From:** Linda Tripoli <latripoli@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 2, 2024 3:34 PM  
**To:** bmaddconst@gmail.com; carla5850@aol.com; Jonathan Hebel;  
bmaddocks@gratonfire.com; cpeterson@gratonfire.com; jhebel@gratonfire.com;  
sfisher@gratonfire.com  
**Cc:** wross@lawross.com; 'Richard C. Bolanos'; stiedemann@lcwlegal.com  
**Subject:** April 2024 Complaint re: Chief Bullard.  
**Attachments:** April 2024 Complaint re Bullard.pdf

Board Members Maddocks, Peterson and Hebel,

I am writing to follow up on my Personnel Complaint filed against Chief Bullard at the April Board Meeting.

I want there to be a record of what considerations I believe you should seek from a public sector employment law attorney with regard to my Complaint.

I believe such an attorney will confirm the following.

First, no cause is required to release the Chief.

However, even if it was, it is a fundamental principle in public safety fire and police that dishonesty is a terminable offense on its own especially if repeated and substantive.

This is set out in more detail in my Complaint.

In addition, repeated and serious acts of retaliation and discrimination is also a terminable offense on its own. (And illegal.)

Under your Board Policies, both things are also true.

In addition, since cause is required for terminating a paid Fire Fighter/Engineer/Captain, if you do not terminate Chief Bullard, then Local 1401 will be able to successfully argue that the Board cannot terminate their members for lying and/or engaging in serious retaliation/discrimination against another member of the Department because Chief Bullard engaged in the same misconduct and was not terminated.

That principle is known as the fifth test of "just cause" which is: *Unless a valid distinction justifies a higher penalty, an employer may not assess a considerably stronger punishment against one employee than it assessed against another known to have committed the same or a substantially similar offense.*

I would anticipate that Chief Bullard may argue that he did not terminate two individuals in the past who lied about an incident involving a tire but anyone can see that Chief Bullard's dishonesty was repeated and serious and there was not additional, terminable misconduct in

that tire situation. Nor did it result in a \$535,000 voluntary settlement against the District and other significant legal expenses.

I have copied your outside public sector employment law attorney on this e-mail so you can (and should) seek his advice or the advice of other similar firms. I am not sure how many terminations District Counsel has handled but I have copied him.

I am hopeful that you will do the right thing but if not, at least no Board Member will be able to say that they did not understand the legal, ethical and financial consequences of their decision.

Sincerely,

Linda Tripoli

PS. Per your requests, I have also emailed you at your Graton Fire email although I am not sure how quickly it will be forwarded to you.

LINDA TRIPOLI  
3936 El Molino Lane  
Sebastopol, CA 95472

April 9, 2024

Board of Directors, Graton Fire Protection District  
Bob Maddocks  
Carla Peterson  
Jonathan Hebel

Re: Personnel Complaint re: Chief Bill Bullard per Board Policy 1104.2

Director Maddocks, Peterson and Hebel,

The factual basis for my complaint arises from the District's recent settlement of \$535,000 with District Engineer Sapphire Alvarez and the related attorneys' fees incurred because of Chief Bullard's intentional misconduct.

If you took the time to review the materials presented to you at last month's March 12, 2024 Board meeting, you know that the following facts are basically undisputed:

**Bullard failed to take any appropriate corrective action to stop the sexual harassment of Sapphire Alvarez between 2011 and 2017.**

Between 2011 and 2017, by his own testimony, Bullard was aware that a significant number of male firefighters had formed a "clique" with the goal of undermining Alvarez, the District's only female firefighter, by "looking for any opportunity to discredit her as a member of the department."

Despite that knowledge, Chief Bullard violated District policy by failing to take any appropriate corrective action to stop it.

In August of 2017, Alvarez, still the District's only female firefighter, formally complained about the harassment to the then-Board of Directors. In April 2018, following an investigation by an outside investigator, Alvarez' complaint was resolved.

**Bullard blamed Alvarez for an attempt by the "clique" to oust him as Chief.**

After being subjected to the sexual harassment investigation, a majority of the "clique" male firefighters signed a petition calling for Bullard's ouster. While Bullard survived the petition to ouster him, he blamed Alvarez for the attempt.

At this point, Bullard began a course of intentional retaliation against Alvarez.



**Bullard's first attempt to terminate Alvarez in 2020 was overturned by the then-Board.**

On October 5, 2020, Bullard terminated Alvarez for supposedly leaving the station without obtaining permission or arranging cover. Alvarez had left due to a family emergency to pick up her young son who had been evacuated as a result of a local wildfire.

Alvarez opposed her termination pointing out that the SOG upon which Bullard based the termination applied to a standard 12-hour shift and not to an emergency event staffing shift which she was on, which allowed a firefighter to commit to be at the station for as much as she could manage but could come and go as needed.

Alvarez appealed her termination to the then-Board of Directors.

On October 16, 2020, the then-Board issued an Agenda for a Special Meeting to be held on October 19, 2020. The only thing agendized was a Closed Session for "Fire Chief Job Review."

On October 17, 2020, anticipating a complaint by Alvarez to the Board that he had subjected her to a retaliatory termination, Bullard sent a text to almost all members of the District, but not Alvarez, urging them to attend and speak out against Alvarez (although he didn't mention her by name, the communication made clear she was the target). In response to Bullard's text, a number of volunteers but none of the 6 paid firefighters spoke on his behalf. Bullard survived again.

On November 19, 2020, the then-Board overturned Bullard's decision to fire Alvarez as being "inappropriately harsh" and reinstated Alvarez.

**Clear and convincing evidence of Bullard's retaliatory animus towards Alvarez.**

Bullard's first termination of Alvarez in 2020 was a claim in the lawsuit. Under oath, Bullard testified and produced what he claimed were "contemporaneous" notes regarding his investigation of Alvarez prior to her October 5, 2020 termination. However, a review of the metadata of the computer file containing the notes established that the notes were written by Bullard no earlier than October 16, 2020 and modified on October 25, 2020, 11 and 20 days respectively, after her termination and thus Bullard's testimony under oath was knowingly false.

Bullard's retaliatory animus behind Bullard's first attempt to terminate Alvarez was further proven during the litigation as follows: Bullard claimed Alvarez had left the station during a standard 12-hour shift. As stated above, Alvarez had responded to her termination that it was an emergency wildfire event staffing shift which only required that she commit to being at the station as much as she could manage but could otherwise come and go as needed; thus she did not violate the SOG claimed by Bullard. When overturning Alvarez' termination, the then-Board did not focus on that difference.

However, during the January 5, 2024 sworn depositions of Graton FPD Assistant Chief Ian Muskar and Firefighter Jenna Dunbar, they both testified that in signing up for the August 26, 2020 emergency wildfire event staffing shift, Alvarez was only agreeing to be present as much as she could manage – and come and go, exactly as Alvarez had claimed from the beginning. Therefore, Bullard's justification for Alvarez' first termination was knowingly false.

The testimony of Ian Muskar and Jenna Dunbar, in direct contradiction to that of Bullard is especially significant since it was Bullard who promoted Muskar from Captain to Assistant Chief in April 2023. With regard to Dunbar, Bullard testified that in the past Bullard had personally loaned Dunbar between \$1,000 to \$1,500 and had also nominated Dunbar to appear in a documentary about volunteer firefighters.

**Bullard failed to promote Alvarez to Engineer despite the then-Board having approved that promotion.**

Prior to Bullard's termination of her, the Board had promoted Alvarez to Engineer. However, when reinstated after the Board's decision, Bullard demoted her back down to Firefighter. Bullard testified that though Alvarez was fully qualified and deserved the promotion, he no longer considered her "trustworthy."

**Bullard second attempt to terminate Alvarez by placing her on indefinite administrative leave for refusing to sign off on District policies and SOGs when she was under no obligation to do so.**

In January 2021, shortly after her reinstatement, Bullard put Alvarez on indefinite unpaid administrative leave, ostensibly for not signing off on certain policies and SOGs.

During 2020, Graton was in the process of adding to and revising its policies and SOGs. When revision of a particular policy or SOG is complete *and* it has been approved by the Board, firefighters are required to sign off that they've read and understood the latest version

As of the beginning of July 2020, Alvarez had gone through the pending policies and SOGs and acknowledged all but a handful. She spoke to Bullard thereafter to advise him of the policies she hadn't signed and why, pointing out errors and inconsistencies she'd discovered including that certain policies had not yet been approved by the Board.

As 2020 ended, the handful of policies about which Alvarez had raised concerns had still not been amended or approved by the Board and Ms. Alvarez had not yet signed off on them, as was her right.

On December 9, 2020, Bullard set a December 31, 2020 deadline for acknowledging *all* policies and SOGs without regard to Board approval, and threatened to place anyone that failed to do so on indefinite administrative leave without pay.

On January 13, 2021, during a Board meeting with Bullard and Alvarez both present, the Board indicated that it had received Alvarez's written notice about her concerns, including discrepancies within the Policies and SOGs. The Board indicated to Alvarez that it was looking into the matter.

Nevertheless, two days later, on January 15, 2021, Bullard placed Alvarez on indefinite unpaid administrative leave telling her that his decision was not grievable nor appealable to the Board.

Significantly, during the litigation, Board President Maddocks testified that the Board had no criticism of Alvarez for refusing to acknowledge those policies and agreed she acted reasonably in not acknowledging them since they had not yet been approved by the Board.

**Alvarez filed her lawsuit in January 2022 after her repeated complaints about Bullard's harassment and continuing retaliatory actions against her were ignored.**

During his July 22, 2023 sworn deposition, Bullard testified that about 60 days prior, he had become aware that in 2018 and 2019 Alvarez had engaged in "a very serious fraudulent practice" while at the District. However, Bullard testified that he never informed the Board of this supposedly serious issue, not even when discussing the litigation in closed session.

Bullard testified under oath that he was informed by Firefighter Jenna Dunbar that approximately 40% of the time when Alvarez was signed up for a regular shift, she left the station "to conduct personal business and reported the time on her timesheets as time worked." Bullard also testified that Dunbar told him there were multiple occasions when she had to call then Capt. Muskar to quickly come to the station to respond to an emergency because Alvarez, though signed in to the shift, was absent from the station.

Bullard claimed Muskar confirmed that on at least a couple of occasions he received calls from Dunbar requesting him to report to the station because Alvarez had left the station while on duty.

Confirming his retaliatory animus towards Alvarez, Bullard testified that he would launch a serious investigation into this alleged fraud only if and when Alvarez tried to resume her career as a firefighter with the District.

However, during their January 5, 2024 depositions both Dunbar and Muskar for a second time flatly contradicted Bullard's sworn testimony. Dunbar testified there was only one occasion in all the shifts she worked with Alvarez where she had to call Muskar because she couldn't find Alvarez at the station, though Dunbar conceded that on that single occasion Alvarez may have just stepped out for a quick local errand which is allowable under Graton's policy. Dunbar also confirmed she never told Bullard that 40% of the time Alvarez was absent from her assigned shift.

Similarly, Muskar testified there was only one time he received a call from Dunbar because she could not locate Ms. Alvarez, and he never told Bullard it occurred more than once.

Clearly this was not a case of Bullard "mis-remembering" what Dunbar and Muskar told him. It simply cannot be that in light of the significance of his own testimony and given his pattern of unlawful harassing and retaliatory conduct towards Alvarez and given all of the relevant undisputed evidence.

For reasons which should be very obvious, one month after Dunbar and Muskar's depositions, the District settled Alvarez' lawsuit for \$535,000. \$535,000 is a very significant sum for a *voluntary* settlement in a case involving a volunteer with minimal wage loss.

**Graton FPD Policies Violated by Bullard.**

**Graton FPD Policy 100** – In carrying out this mission, the GRATON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT will: Communicate openly and honestly to our members and community to inspire trust and confidence.

**Graton FPD Policy 101.1 – Standards of Conduct** – “all personnel have an obligation to conduct their official duties in a manner that . . . upholds the public trust, and protects District resources. To this end, all personnel have the responsibility to: . . .

(b) Demonstrate integrity, honesty, and ethical behavior in the conduct of all District business. . .

(f) Treat the public and other members fairly and equitably, without regard to age, disability, ethnicity, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or any other factor unrelated to District business. . . .

(q) Have integrity and display ethical behavior.

**Graton FPD Policy 1102.2** – The Graton Fire Protection District is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to creating and maintaining a work environment that is free of all forms of discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment and retaliation. . . . The Department will take preventive and corrective action to address any behavior that violates this policy or the rights and privileges it is designed to protect.

**Graton FPD Policy 1102.5 – Investigation of Complaints**

**Graton FPD Policy 1103 – Conduct and Behavior**

**1103.1 – Purpose and Scope** – The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to prevent activities or behaviors that may lead to disciplinary actions or dismissal.

**1103.2 – Policy** – It is the policy of this department that its members strive to attain the highest professional standard of conduct and discharge their duties in a courteous and professional manner.

**1103.5 – Professional Conduct** – All members should be governed by the ordinary rules of behavior observed by law-abiding and self-respecting citizens, and should conduct themselves at all times in such manner as to reflect favorably on the Department. Conduct unbecoming a member shall include that which discredits the Department or the person as a member of the Department or which impairs the operation or efficiency of the Department or its members.

#### **FIREFIGHTER CODE OF ETHICS**

In addition, Bullard, as an “Executive Fire Officer” and a member of the “National Society of Executive Fire Officers,” understands that he is bound by its FIREFIGHTER CODE OF ETHICS and he has the responsibility to conduct himself in a manner that reflects proper ethical behavior and integrity. The CODE specifically pledges those in the Fire Service to “Be truthful and honest at all times and report instances of cheating or other dishonest acts that compromise the integrity of the fire service.”

#### **Former Deputy Chief and current Board Member Scott Fisher**

I have not copied Scott Fisher with this Complaint for good reason: Former Graton FPD Deputy Chief Fisher was appointed to the Board in July 2021 after Alvarez was placed on the retaliatory unpaid administrative leave. As such, Fisher was second in command during the entirety of the time that

Bullard was harassing and retaliating against Alvarez. Furthermore, sworn testimony established that Fisher not only failed to take corrective action to stop the harassment of Alvarez by the "clique," he encouraged their harassment of her. In addition, he participated in disciplinary meetings regarding the unjustified disciplinary actions against Alvarez, disciplinary actions he knew or should have known were discriminatory and unjustified.

Clearly the Board's attorneys understood this direct conflict and made Fisher recuse himself from any Closed Sessions and from voting on any matter that involved Alvarez and Bullard's conflicts with Alvarez, including the decision to suspend Bullard for two weeks because of the text harassing Alvarez. Now, as then, Fisher should be recused from any review or consideration of this Complaint.

**The Board's Fiduciary Duty to District Taxpayers**

A review of attorneys' fees and monetary voluntary settlement related to Bullard's intentional unlawful conduct towards Alvarez:

Attorneys' fees incurred because of Bullard's text targeting Alvarez and for which he was suspended for two weeks -	\$ 43,606
Attorneys' fees incurred to address ( <i>but not correct</i> ) Alvarez' claims and litigation -	\$102,827
Attorneys' fees incurred from District Counsel Ross - (estimating ½ were related to Alvarez' claims and issues.)	\$ 23,490
\$285,000 of the \$535,000 settlement voluntarily approved by the three of you	\$285,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$454,923</b>

As elected officials, you three remaining members of the Board owe a Fiduciary Duty to the District's taxpayers to release Bullard, an "at-will" member of the Department so that all are confident his course of intentional unlawful and dishonest conduct comes to an end. The Board is not required to have cause, but there is clearly cause here. (Graton FPD Policy 201.3) The Board's obligation to do so is not only owed to the District's taxpayers and not just the female members of the Department but all members of the Department. See, [www.scu.edu/government-ethics/resources/public-officials-as-fiduciaries](http://www.scu.edu/government-ethics/resources/public-officials-as-fiduciaries).

**Conclusion**

As you three are obligated to do under Graton FPD Policy 1104.2 and 1104.3, please take this complaint seriously.

Sincerely,

*Linda Tripoli*

# FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT




# Graton Fire Protection District

Post Office Box A, Graton, California 95444

www.gratonfire.com

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Bill Bullard, Fire Chief   
**DATE:** May 7, 2024  
**RE:** Fire Chief Update

Below is a partial list of accomplishments and milestones reached by the Graton Fire Protection District in the last few years:

- 1) **Parcel Tax** – District volunteers and the community successfully adopted a parcel tax, with 77% of voters casting ballots in favor of the tax. These funds are being utilized to enhance the District's staffing, facilities, and equipment to better serve the community.
- 2) **Hiring** – The District has transitioned from being staffed solely by volunteers to a partially career-staffed organization. Six full-time career staff were hired, who made the following improvements possible:
  - a. 80% faster response times: Average enroute times decreased from 5:30 minutes in 2019 to 1:23 minutes in 2022
  - b. The District's rating with the Insurance Services Organization (ISO) has improved from a rating of 5 to a rating of 4. This improvement provides monetary savings to property owners and residents of the District due to reduced fire insurance premiums
  - c. Over 100 defensible space checks have been completed
  - d. All commercial building preplans have been completed
  - e. Seven certification classes have been conducted, which trained our firefighters and brought in revenue from outside of the District
- 3) **Retention** – The District has retained 100% of its career staff for 2020-2023
- 4) **Volunteers** – The District has seen a 20% increase in volunteers since 2020. Ten new firefighters will be graduating soon, and there are 11 pending firefighter applications
- 5) **Vehicles** – The District maintains a modern fleet to ensure readiness for responding to emergencies and fires; the Board recently authorized two new purchases which were prepaid using our capital reserves for a discount and no new debt incurred
  - a. Type I (Structure) Engine – 2022
  - b. Type III (Wildland) Engine – 2024



# Graton Fire Protection District

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- 6) Finances** – Because the District is primarily funded by local taxpayers, the District has made fiscally sound decisions to best allocate and preserve those finances so they can be used to maximize the benefit to local residents and businesses.
- a. Annual Budget Surplus – \$500,000 annually over the last five years; these funds are held in reserve upgrading the District’s facilities, equipment, and staffing, or as a reserve for potential critical needs
  - b. Measure H – Secured \$600,000 annually to add a third career firefighter per day and increase salaries to the county standard, adding more career opportunities and improving retention at no cost to the District taxpayers
  - c. Refinance – Fire Station mortgage, saving the District \$350,000
  - d. Prepay – Five years of mortgage principal, saving taxpayers \$380,000
  - e. FEMA/California Grants – \$900,000 in the last four years for staffing and equipment
  - f. FEMA Disaster Grants – The District secured \$500,000 in public assistance funding from federally-declared disasters
  - g. Strike Teams – \$1,600,000 in revenue generated from state-wide deployments
  - h. Mutual Aid Reimbursement – \$20,000/year from Sonoma County Fire District
  - i. No Tax Increase – No change since passed in 2019
- 7) Leadership**
- a. Disasters – The District has assisted in eight federally declared disasters in the last seven years
  - b. Incident Commander – Numerous house fires, traffic collisions, and wildland fires
  - c. Promotions – Selected the right personnel to fill critical positions as officers
  - d. Evaluations – Conducted semi-annual performance evaluations for all career staff
  - e. Hiring – Recently completed a hiring process for limited term firefighter and to create an eligibility list when Measure H funding becomes available





# Graton Fire Protection District

Post Office Box A, Graton, California 95444

www.gratonfire.com

## ROSTER

#	Name	Rank	CDL	Cell	Home	Wk/Pgr/Other
1	Bill Bullard	8400	Chief / EMT	B		
2	Josh Skikos	8401	Deputy Chief	C		
3	Robert Sabrowsky	8402	Asst Chief / EMT	B		
4	Ian Muskar	8403	Asst Chief / EMT	A		
5	Darrell Kopriva	8404	Captain	C+		
6	Dustin Blumenthal	8405	Captain / EMT	C+		
7	Dusty Parker	8406	Captain / EMT	B		
8	Shane Spelman		Engineer / EMT	C+		
9	Matt Miller		Engineer / EMT	C+		
10	Kyle Bartlett		Engineer / EMT	C+		
11	Matt Skinner		Engineer	C+		
12	Jonathan Preciado		Firefighter / EMT	C		
13	Chaz Mathias		Firefighter	C		
14	Jenna Dunbar		Firefighter / EMT	C		
15	Sam Ballenger		Firefighter	C		
16	Evan Jacobs		Firefighter / EMT	C		
17	Emily Fuller		Firefighter / EMT	C		
18	Mathias Bonse		Firefighter	C		
19	Angel Cuevas		Firefighter	C		
20	Trevor Morrison		Firefighter / EMT	C		
21	Ryan Waner		Firefighter / EMT	C		
22	Keenan Whyte		Firefighter / EMT	C		
23	Jerimiah Mahan		Firefighter / EMT	C+		
24	Stephen Jaramillo		Firefighter / EMT	C		
25	Shelby Buchmann		Firefighter / EMT	C		
26	George Ristad		Firefighter	C		
27	Moses Castrellon		Firefighter / EMT	C		
28	Kristin Lupo		Firefighter / EMT	C		
29	Ella Griffith		Firefighter	C		
30	Brianna Cook		Firefighter / EMT	C		
31	Rex Boggs		Trainee	C		
32	Cesar Barragan		Trainee	C		
33	Matthew Menesini		Trainee	C		
34	Jonathan Oseguera		Trainee	C		
35	Nate Thalhamer		Trainee	C		
36	Orlando Banielos		Trainee	C		
37	Craig O'Donnell		Trainee	C		
38	Tyler Bishop		Trainee	C		
39	Austin Beckman		Trainee	C		
	Bob Maddocks		President			
	Scott Fisher		Vice President			
	Jonathan Hebel		Treasurer			
	Carla Peterson		Secretary			
			Member			
Business Phone Number						823-8400
Fax Number						823-7251
Firefighters Association Phone Number						823-8400 x120
On-Duty Engine Officer						
Administrative Assistant, Tiffanie Herring						
Tree Farm, Heather O'Dell						
Fire Investigator, John Teague						