



# LITTLE LAKE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT



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74 E Commercial Street  
Willits, California 95490  
(707)459-6271

## MINUTES

March 10th, 2026

- OPENING:** Tony Madrigal called the regular meeting of the Little Lake Fire Protection District Board of Directors to order at 5:03 PM.
- ROLL CALL:** Tony Madrigal, Skip Lucier, Nancy Stipe, Tom Herman and Arnie Mello
- MINUTES:** Approved by Skip Lucier 1<sup>st</sup> and Nancy Stipe 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- TREASURER'S REPORT:** Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report: Arnie 1<sup>st</sup>, Skip Lucier 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- CORRESPONDENCE/PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Michelle Schnitzius announced there is a Brown Act and Ethics class on March 26<sup>th</sup> via zoom or in person at the County of Mendocino.
- OLD BUSINESS:** **INSPECTIONS:** Captain Harry So informed the board that there is one charter school to complete and 2 motels so far have been completed. Fees for inspections have increased and were adopted in the fee schedule. Fees increased due to time, equipment used, fuel, maintenance, and the Streamline Program used for the state-mandated inspections. A re-inspection is free and there have been two entities that had gas leaks that were caught during inspections. Brookside School had a small heater that was plugged in with an extension cord that caught on fire. In schools, only 50% of artwork on walls are allowed and exits cannot be blocked which has been an issue. Chief Alvarez also added open communication with hotels/motels, schools and apartments are important. Captain So informed the board that inspections are now Tuesdays and Thursdays with the City of



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Willits assisting if needed. That way, business owners will get the City of Willits and the Fire Department at the same time, so everyone is on the same page. Captain So also reported that he recently had an evacuation meeting with the Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians, during which they discussed rally points for evacuation emergencies. Medical vans for ambulatory residents during evacuations were also discussed. Captain So volunteered the water tender to help clear out some of the older burn piles that have been stacked up over the years.

**ELECTRICAL FOR CARPORT:** Chief Alvarez is still waiting on a third quote. This project will be added to the next fiscal budget.

**WEIST LAW:** Michelle is currently waiting on the Section 115 presentations to be emailed for review.

**ENGINE 5480 REPAIR:** Chief Alvarez reported there is no date scheduled yet. The repair will be in Healdsburg.

**NEW BUSINESS:** **BURN ROOM:** FF1 and FF2 from Mendocino College classes recently have used the burn room for training. Staff worked on the burn room until 8PM the night before to make sure it was ready. The instructors were thanking staff for donating their own time to get the burn room ready for them as staff had one day notice.

**STAR LINK:** Chief Alvarez stated to the board that staff looked into Star Link for a money saving option for Station 541. Staff also added a roaming device for Deputy Chief Thomens truck which will be helpful in emergencies and out on strike teams. Staff is saving about \$70.00 per month with this option. Arnie Mello asked if staff would have switched even without the coast savings. Chief Alvarez replied yes as better service and reliability. Captain So also added staff has used it with tablet command out at fire calls and will be extremely helpful in emergencies where there is



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normally no service.

**BILLS:** Motion to pay bills: Tom Herman 1<sup>st</sup>, Arnie Mello 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**TRAINING REPORT:** Captain So reported that to date there has been a total of 190 training hours with our volunteers. The last drill was a geography test “Where am I” for roads around the district. This drill helps new members and refreshes seasoned members as well. Red card training will start soon. On March 24<sup>th</sup>, there will be a wildland drill which will include different stations. Captain So will use different instructors for the stations. On March 31<sup>st</sup>, there will be a captain's meeting. On April 7<sup>th</sup>, there will be a water-supply and pump-and-roll scenario. EMT in March was taught by Abe and was successful. The association had a behavioral health specialist through RCS to discuss psychotic situations that firefighters may be subject too. On April 1<sup>st</sup>, EMTs will be breathing emergencies. Captain So is also waiting on a video from the Willits High School scrubs class for the MCI drill that Captain So helped coordinate.

**FIREFIGHTERS’ ASSOC. REPORT:** Captain So announced the Top 10 dinner will be this Saturday at 5 PM and invited the board to attend. Captain So also reported that at this time, the association is looking for a president. Chief Alvarez reported there has been a lack of response recently, which is concerning. The roster is full, but there is a limited response. Chief Alvarez has spoken with other departments, and many are having the same issues. There is an open position in the fire department, but it is difficult to find a firefighter with the required qualifications. Chief Alvarez is thankful for the mutual aid, as some calls need multiple departments to get enough personnel on scene. Ukiah Valley uses Redwood Valley and Hopland when needed as well, therefore many departments depend on mutual aid. EMT and an engineer is a preference for the new position, and the position will allow 1 year for EMT certification if needed. Tom Herman asked about the new fire science building at Mendocino



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College's Willits campus. Skip Lucier added there is no curriculum as of yet for the new building. Captain So added colleges are requiring more prerequisites for firefighter degrees that are not offered locally so makes it difficult to obtain.

**CHIEFS REPORT:** Chief Alvarez reported there were 61 calls in February and 132 calls to date. There was a recent EMCC meeting where EpiPens were discussed. EpiPens are costing the department \$350.00 each at this time, and they only have a shelf life of 12-18 months. Even though unused, the department has to dispose of them and purchase new ones, which are unaffordable. Staff is looking for a way to still provide medical services but at a more affordable cost. It was brought up to train on syringes which would cost the department \$32.00 vs. \$350.00. Teresa from Medstar will assist with the transition and there will be a mandatory EMT training night on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026 for the syringes. The vials are good for two years. Captain So also added only EMT's will be allowed to administer. Chief Alvarez announced he will be attending the Chief's meeting tomorrow in Fort Bragg. Chief Alvarez thanked our firefighters who assisted with a swiftwater rescue recently. The districts boat was used to save two men from the back of a truck on Tomki Road. The award ceremony for the Top 6 and the Engineer of the Year will be this Saturday. Chief Alvarez announced that Deana Rutledge was nominated from Teresa at Medstar for the survivors union due to her accident. The ceremony will take place in May. Tony Madrigal thanked Tom Herman for assisting with the engineer plans that have come in to the department. Captain So reported that CalFire has been training with Little Lake Fire and has been successful. Captain So stated cross training is important for mutual aid. Tony Madrigal also added CalFire has been helpful when Little Lake has multiple calls at a time as volunteers have not been able to respond lately. Chief Alvarez did report that if Little Lake has multiple calls, there are some volunteers who recognize



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that help is needed, and they will respond.

Meeting Adjourned 6:42 PM  
Motion to adjourn: Tom Herman 1<sup>st</sup>, Arnie Mello 2<sup>nd</sup>.

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Tony Madrigal, Chairman

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Michelle Schnitzius, Secretary

***This institution is an equal opportunity provider  
and employer.***