

Draft

PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION  
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Monday, December 8, 2008  
9:30 a.m.

Santa Cruz City Council Chambers  
809 Center Street,  
Santa Cruz, California

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The December 8, 2008 Santa Cruz Local Agency Formation Commission special meeting is called to order by declaration of Chairperson, Jim Rapoza.

ROLL CALL

Present and Voting: Commissioners J. Anderson, Coonerty, Campos,  
Begun, R. Anderson, and Chairperson Rapoza  
Absent: \* Barrett, Pirie (\* arrived after roll call)  
Alternates Present: Reilly  
Alternates Absent: Bell, Estrada  
Staff: Patrick M. McCormick, Executive Officer  
Christopher R. Cheleden, LAFCO Counsel  
Debra Means, Secretary-Clerk

Alternate Reilly moves to the Commissioners' podium since Commissioner Barrett is absent.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Greg Tedesco, a Capitola resident, is concerned about the fiefdoms created in this county. He is concerned about Scotts Valley, Santa Cruz, Central, Aptos, and Watsonville. Each one of those fire departments has a chief, an assistant chief, about three battalion chiefs, a chief training officer, and a fire marshal. He thinks it is time for this to be addressed. There should not be five administrations and all of these chief officers. When he talks to firefighters, retired firefighters, and even board members, he thinks they all agree that there is so much waste at the top.

If one takes all the salaries and perks of the chief officers, more firefighters could be hired.

He has been to the Board of Supervisors about this issue. He thinks it is time for a major consolidation of all the fire districts.

He remembers when Central Fire was trying to form its own district. The biggest hurdle for that consolidation was the chiefs because they did not want to step down. The economy is right for a change to be made in this County to reduce the costs and make one fire district.

## MINUTES

November 5, 2008

### MOTION AND ACTION

Motion: R. Anderson Second: Campos	To approve the November 5 <sup>th</sup> minutes. Motion carries with a unanimous voice vote.
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### CONTINUED MATTERS

#### EGGLESON/AMOS ANNEXATION TO THE SAN LORENZO VALLEY WATER DISTRICT - LAFCO No. 927

\* Mr. Barrett arrives so he is the principal voting city member. Alternate Reilly is back in the alternate position where she can participate in the debate but she cannot vote.

Mr. McCormick says this is a continuation of the Eggleston/Amos annexation to the San Lorenzo Valley Water District (SLVWD), which is in the Quail Hollow area of Felton. The Commission talked at length about this at the last meeting. There was an excellent response from the neighbors regarding which additional neighbors wanted to be added into the annexation.

Staff recommendation includes all of the new property owners who want to participate in the annexation.

### MOTION AND ACTION

Motion: Campos Second: R. Anderson	To approve LAFCO No. 927 as recommended by staff. Motion carries with a unanimous voice vote.
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## NEW PUBLIC HEARING

LAFCO No. 913 RECONSIDERATION, FORMATION OF BONNY DOON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT AND DETACHMENT FROM COUNTY SERVICE AREA NO. 48 (COUNTY FIRE)

Mr. McCormick says that on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Commission conducted a public hearing on this application which proposes to form a new fire district in 49 square miles of Bonny Doon, and to detach the same area from County Service Area 48 (CSA 48), the funding mechanism for the County Fire contract with CAL FIRE.

On November 5<sup>th</sup>, the Commission adopted Resolution No. 913 making determinations and disapproving the application. The proponents, Bonny Doon Fire and Rescue Inc., have filed for a reconsideration of that resolution. Government Code Section 56895 specifies that LAFCO shall hold a public hearing on any reconsideration.

A 272-page staff report was released in early September. Materials in the current agenda packet start at page 24 and end at page 556. Additional written materials were filed after the agenda packet went to the printer. These include a letter from Noel Garin Bock supporting the Commission's previous decision to disapprove the application, a letter from Marsha and Bruce McDougall supporting the Commission's previous decision, an email from Sara Clarkson supporting the formation of the Bonny Doon Fire District, and some press articles.

Three items arrived right before the hearing. There is a letter dated December 8<sup>th</sup> from Dell and Cheryl Lewis supporting the formation of a fire district, a one-page item from Tom Scully dated December 8<sup>th</sup>, and a six-page letter from Friends of Bonny Doon dated December 8<sup>th</sup>.

Most of the agenda packet contains materials from prior LAFCO agendas. Within the main agenda packet, beginning on page 29 of the agenda packet, is LAFCO Resolution No. 913 disapproving the proposal and making determinations. Beginning on page 32 is LAFCO's letter to CAL FIRE suggesting that they redeploy a company to Bonny Doon. Beginning on page 34 is LAFCO's letter to the County Board of Supervisors suggesting that they support the CAL FIRE company moving to Bonny Doon, and suggesting that the County consider some revenue options to allow a vote to improve fire and emergency response capacity in the whole of County Service Area 48, and within any individual community served by County Fire. Beginning on page 37 is a letter and

attachments from Friends of Bonny Doon Fire supporting the formation of a fire district in Bonny Doon. Beginning on page 150 is the letter from Bonny Doon Volunteer Fire/Rescue, Inc., which is the formal request for reconsideration before the Commission. Beginning on page 553 are the approved minutes of the October 8, 2008 County Fire Department Advisory Commission meeting. On the bottom of page 554 and top of page 555 is the Advisory Commission's recommendation to the Board of Supervisors that County Fire establish a fire station in Bonny Doon to be housed at the McDermott Station on Empire Grade with year-round staffing.

His understanding is that the Board of Supervisors will consider FDAC's recommendations after LAFCO's reconsideration hearing is completed.

There are three alternatives the Commission can choose to act upon. The first alternative is to approve the request for reconsideration and direct that additional staff work be done that would lead to the Commission's consideration of a resolution authorizing the formation of the Bonny Doon Fire Protection District and the detachment from County Service Area 48. The second alternative is to make minor amendments to Resolution 913, such as changing the wording of a determination. The third alternative is to disapprove the reconsideration.

Staff is recommending the third alternative to disapprove the reconsideration, thus sustaining the denial of the application. Staff believes that the Commission has made the correct decision, in accordance with state and local LAFCO policies, and that the extensive record supports the Commission's previous decision.

Chairperson Rapoza opens the public hearing.

Tom Scully, says, as one of the proponents, that they asked for a reconsideration as a way of expressing their determination to create, ask for local voter approval, fund, staff, and operate a Bonny Doon Fire Protection District as a way of improving a whole variety of fire and life safety services available to the residents of Bonny Doon.

This determined effort is why the Commission must seriously consider the application in a new and different light. This effort began in December of 2001, when they first came up with the idea. They did not enter into the LAFCO application quickly, lightly, or without much thoughtful reflection and research. They began researching different approaches to the goal to increase fire and life safety capabilities that included many other options. They met with County Fire to work out meaningful improvements. They also met with every fire chief in

the County, several fire boards in San Lorenzo Valley, and the community. They thoroughly examined each of the proposals beyond the fire district proposal. Eventually, they decided that a new fire district would better serve their needs as well as those of the surrounding communities. It was the most effective and efficient way to proceed.

A committee of 18 people within and outside Bonny Doon drew up a draft proposal to create a fire district. They met again with fire chiefs, fire board members, County staff, their community, and neighboring communities to make their proposal more effective and efficient. They updated their proposal many times to make it better. They wrote their final proposal and went to their community voters to see if there was sufficient support to proceed to LAFCO with an application. They gathered twice the signatures needed to qualify under LAFCO's rules. They submitted their application, petition, service plan, and budget on October 31, 2006.

They were totally open with all their actions leading up to the September 22, 2008 public hearing. They repeatedly stated for anyone with a better plan than they submitted to LAFCO to come forward and they would examine it as an option. But no one came forward and no suggestions were made by anyone to amend their proposal. Thus, they presumed their proposal was acceptable.

The proponents challenge specifics of the Commission's decision process on September 22, 2008. Everything done prior to the September 22<sup>nd</sup> hearing was done by dedicated, educated, experienced, and thoughtful people. They took every opportunity to craft a proposal that was realistic, honest, documented, considerate, and complete. They feel this did not come across in the Executive Officer's report, the report that is used by the Commission to base their decision. They believe they have a proposal that will make a difference for Bonny Doon and the entire county. The gentlemen who spoke first (Greg Tedesco) is a good indication of the changes needed within County Fire and the whole county. He thinks they have a proposal that will increase their fire and life safety and will help the whole county.

Commissioner Begun asks about the options considered. He asks if the proponents considered moving the fire station from Felton to Bonny Doon.

Mr. Scully answers no. It was not brought up as a possibility. The fire station in Felton is seasonal. It is not an Amador station or a full-time station. Moving the station up to Bonny Doon would be a CAL FIRE decision, not even a County Fire decision. If it was moved to Bonny Doon, it would be out of their control. They did consider annexations, consolidations, and JPAs (Joint Power Authorities) with all the neighboring fire departments. He met with all the fire

boards to see if they were amenable to join with Bonny Doon in creating a single fire department out of two entities. They were unfortunately told that Bonny Doon had no right to do that because they are not a district. They could not go to Felton and join with them as a JPA or annex or consolidate because that would be a County Fire decision.

They tried to find a way not to create a fire district that stood on its own. They tried to work with CAL FIRE and get a seasonal station or make changes within the CAL FIRE contractor as County Fire to improve the situation in Bonny Doon. They concluded that creating a new fire district was the only way to proceed.

Commissioner Jim Anderson asks how Bonny Doon Fire positioned themselves regarding the CSA 48 rate increase that was requested. He asks if they encouraged their constituency to vote for it.

Mr. Scully says they published a policy paper that encouraged them not to support the increase. An increase into the current system of CSA 48 would be more money out of Bonny Doon's pocket and no increase in service. The money would go to support the current system as a fire engine 25 minutes away from Bonny Doon. There would not be an engine moving closer or another engine added because of the increase. Bonny Doon already pays \$300,000. They would have to pay \$400,000 or more without getting an increase in service.

They had issues with how the increase was proposed. The advertising and the fear-mongering was inappropriate for a vote to the people. So they encouraged the residents to vote no.

Robert Caldeira is a 25-year resident of Bonny Doon and the co-founder of the Friends of Bonny Doon Fire, which is a concerned citizens group in support of locally governed fire districts in Bonny Doon and throughout the county. He is an entrepreneur with a technical and business bent who makes his living developing business plans, building businesses in Fortune 500 divisions, and conducting industry assessments all with the sole objective of creating profit and delivering investors a return on investment.

He is accustomed to dealing with data, facts, and experienced individuals who can be counted on to develop and deliver the goods.

He became deeply involved in this issue after studying County Fire CSA 48 for hundreds of hours, the minute details of the Bonny Doon Fire District proposal, and other relevant information about firefighting and emergency services. Based upon the data reviewed, he became more interested in understanding the facts behind the proposal. They summarized information and recently

packaged some of it and submitted it to LAFCO on December 1, 2008.

He thinks there is data available to make a fact-based decision regarding the Bonny Doon Fire District (BDFPD) whether the results are positive or not. The BDFPD budget is said to be inadequate, but it was vetted and accepted as adequate by all San Lorenzo Valley Fire District chiefs. The loss of revenue and service is said to be significant and drastic, but not proven. The transfer of assets is said to be a major impediment to the formation of this district, but was not negotiated in good faith by the County who is the owner of the assets.

LAFCO's procedural matters and policies, which are said to be the guiding doctrine for decisions made by this Commission, were flawed during the examination of this application. The Executive Officer published a memo to the Commissioners on December 1<sup>st</sup> paraphrasing that no new or relevant facts were presented in the reconsideration meeting paper that was submitted on December 1<sup>st</sup>. He respectfully disagrees with this opinion.

The principal document where all relevant facts are presented is the Executive Officer's Report. This report contains all relevant facts upon which a recommendation and subsequent board decision is made. For example, the significance of this essential document has been tested through legal precedence where decisions were challenged through litigation due to the lack of substantial data.

Since the information provided in the submission cannot be found in the Executive Officer's report or in any subsequent addendums, they firmly believe many relevant, new, and different facts are presented. BDFPD's budget is found in Sections 1.4, 2 and 2.3 of the submission. Except for Table 3 of the Executive Officer's Report, which highlights the salaries and benefits of other locally fire districts, there is no supporting data that compares the BDFPD line items to budgets of several other locally governed fire districts. The data should be provided and presented to insure there is no doubt that components of the pro forma budget, whether positive or negative, exists. The results of Table 3 conclude that the Bonny Doon staffing model parallels the successful time-tested 66 years of the Zayante Fire District.

On September 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Commissioners specifically stated that the budget did not feel right. Given these statements, it could be assumed that either additional data was needed or the data presented in the staff report was unclear.

Several agencies such as the Fire Department Advisory Commission (Attachment G) were solicited for their feedback to include in the staff report. The County General Services Director (Attachment W) raised many valid

questions. He asks where the relevant data is to properly answer these questions. They are provided as concerns, but there is no evidence of the answers.

The document submitted by Friends of Bonny Doon Fire answers these valid budget concerns based upon relevant facts and supporting data. To further the credibility of a solid sustainable budget, five fire districts in the County reviewed in support of the BDFPD's budget and allowed them to provide their endorsements as part of their submission to the Commission as shown in Attachment 2.2.

They have presented comparisons and analysis to demonstrate the cost effectiveness of their fire district model for the defined pro forma budget. The supplemental data presented in the submission shows that the BDFPD proposal is well thought out, solid, and sustainable.

CSA 48's loss of revenue and service is found in Sections 3 through Sections 3.3 of their submission. The Executive Officer's Report states that CSA 48 will lose significant revenues but not realize significant reductions in service costs. It further states that staff's estimate of loss of service is approximately the cost of keeping one of the four paid stations open outside the fire season.

There is no doubt that concerns were raised in the report over the loss of service as a result of the loss of revenue should Bonny Doon be allowed to form its own district. He wonders where the supporting data is that attempts to quantify the loss of service other than possible station closure. He wonders why it is not approximately equal to the County Fire purchase of a new fire engine, for example. He wonders how it relates to the existing \$700,000 budget fund or the \$300,000 contingency funds which currently exist in the County budget. He wonders if it is a fact that a station would close. He has not seen any data that supports this conclusion. He wonders why the County did not provide an assessment with supporting data to draw this important conclusion. It is difficult for a group of part-time community citizens to address the definitions of this loss of service. He thinks there should be a good faith effort provided by local government representatives to lay out the options with facts. He asks if this lack of information is a reason for denial.

The most significant factor to LAFCO policy is the negative impact upon a level of service being provided to other communities. If this single decision-making factor is significant, he wonders why there was not an assessment of the loss of service prior to voting for denial. This factor should have a wealth of substantial evidence leading anyone to a conclusion, without any question of doubt, whether the conclusion is positive or negative.

After the September 22<sup>nd</sup> hearing, members of the Friends of Bonny Doon Fire met with members of Davenport and the North Coast in an attempt to understand the concerns of this loss of service and to describe some of the possible advantages the BDFPD would provide. The Davenport and the North Coast residents were told the Big Creek station would close as a result of Bonny Doon forming its own fire district. He sympathizes and supports the Davenport/North Coast community for expressing their concerns about the possible closure of their fire station. Given that this closure was such a major concern at the September 22<sup>nd</sup> hearing, he wonders why this was not answered prior to the vote. He wants to see the relevant data to support this as a legitimate concern.

Members of the County's Fire Department Advisory Commission communicated that drastic service loss would result from the formation of a Bonny Doon Fire District. Then the County Fire Department Advisory Commission proposed at their meeting of October 8<sup>th</sup>, per Attachment AA Section 5.2.3 on page 554, to establish a fifth Amador station in Bonny Doon by recommending the staffing of 20 Firefighter I personnel.

It was specifically stated by a Commissioner at the September 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting, that allegedly 'a set pot of money is all there is to work with'. He wonders if this means a potential loss of service through staffing in the existing four Amador stations would need to occur or does it mean finding additional budget money that would nearly equate to the Bonny Doon annexation financial loss. He wonders where the supporting data is.

Their submission could only provide limited information, but at least it is relevant information regarding the loss of service. There is no cost analysis supporting the quality of service, which is paramount to public safety matters. It is not simply a financial quantity that matters, it is quality. To properly fund the Bonny Doon community, residents would need to pay more than what they currently pay. With the assistance of the LAFCO Executive Officer, Bonny Doon Fire and Rescue Inc. attempted to converge on terms and conditions with the County about the transfer of assets. Bonny Doon proposed a transfer of property and equipment for one dollar. The County never provided a counter proposal except for a fair market assessment of \$3.7 million. He does not think Bonny Doon should be expected to pay \$3.7 million to the County for the transfer of assets. He wonders if anyone at the County investigated the history of the property and equipment. The real estate property for the Martin Station was donated to the County for the specific use as a fire station with a yearly leaseback of \$1 per year. The building was deeded to the County by the Bonny Doon volunteers who built the station on their own. The County did not even

provide a counter proposal.

After careful study of California Government Code, they believe there are several violations that have occurred. They wonder why a vote was taken on November 5<sup>th</sup>, nine days past the 35-day deadline to deny a proposal after receiving a request for reconsideration on October 17<sup>th</sup>.

The intentions of the Friends of Bonny Doon Fire's reconsideration paper submission were to provide what they consider to be relevant factual data and provide it in an overly-aggressive short timeframe. They think it is imperative that decisions be made on fact, not speculation or presumption. Considerable facts do exist that address all of the Executive Officer's major concerns. If conflict exists, then clarification should be sought. If facts are unclear, then postponement and/or contingency options should be explored and considered. Independent judgment should always be utilized. Processes should be made clear and strictly followed. If this can be done, then it can be concluded that justice and fairness has been achieved.

The devoted Bonny Doon Fire and Rescue team have stepped up to offer superior cost-effective fire and emergency services to the community of Bonny Doon. They have created a proposal that sets the gold standard in performance through nearly 70 years of learning about what does and does not work for a rural community. They have established an autonomous, sustainable, high-performance company that their community is proud of.

Commissioner Roger Anderson appreciates Mr. Caldeira including some of the budgetary information. He is baffled by the bottom lines of the comparisons between the fire districts. Their revenues are much smaller than their proposed expenditures. The comparison is on page 69 on the bottom two lines.

Mr. Caldeira says they tried to include only what was relevant. The total expenditures shown are between the five fire districts. The numbers support that the total revenues less the expenditures are actually negative. There are other factors that play into this that are not included. They were being used solely as a comparison regarding the legitimacy of their budget and their line items, relative to the five other fire districts. These five districts have experienced success for many years. They felt as long as they were at least comparable, they had a budget that was solid and sustainable.

Commissioner Begun does not understand the Commission's concern about the budget that Bonny Doon is proposing. It is a Bonny Doon problem. If the budget is not adequate, they will have to raise more money or they will cut services. He can relate to the Branciforte Fire District. He got involved with their

finances several years ago. When they ran short of money, the fire chief did not take his salary.

Mr. Caldeira agrees. There were comments made that their budget was questionable. Mr. Scully tried to outline the process of the development, which took a long time. Many people were involved. They feel they have a strong budget.

Chairperson Rapoza says that the budget shows \$10,000 for Buildings and Improvements. He wonders what it will do to Bonny Doon Fire's budget, and subsequently, having to go back to the community for an assessment if they are not able to negotiate a \$1 transfer for the assets and the actual cost is significantly more money than that.

Mr. Caldeira replies that it could be a significant increase. They believe there needs to be a strong, good faith effort made by both parties to converge on a resolution and terms and conditions on what that transfer would be. They think Bonny Doon has subsidized a lot of it. The Martin station is 100% from Bonny Doon. The McDermott station was built with Measure E funds. He questions whether this would be an impediment to move forward. They would be able to perhaps address in a contingent fashion. There will not be a district if they cannot resolve these numbers. They are asking to move forward and let the community voters have an opportunity to decide that. Hopefully, between now and then, they can get mutually-agreed upon terms and conditions of the property transfer. There are many details that still need to be addressed. Some of these items could be contingent upon a decision.

Commissioner Begun thinks if the parties do not move from their present position, a mediator may need to be assigned to the problem.

Mr. Caldeira thinks several methods could be employed in order to find out what it means to the Bonny Doon taxpayers in terms of an additional assessment.

John Ferreira, Chief for CAL FIRE and the Santa Cruz County Fire Department, says it would be the County Board of Supervisors that would direct them where monies would be made up, whether it would be through reductions in the number of personnel or reductions in services, or to generate additional funds through a revenue measure.

Commissioner Begun asks where the analysis is to get to those numbers and why it is not made public.

Chief Ferreira thinks the analysis is included in the LAFCO report.

Mr. McCormick says the significant issues are the potential loss of revenue to County Fire if Bonny Doon were to secede, and what that loss of revenue would transfer to in terms of service impacts. The staff report was clear about the numbers and the conclusion. If it cannot be made up by the County in some other fashion, it would be the equivalent to the staffing for one of the four Amador stations: Big Creek, Loma Prieta, South Skyline, or Corralitos. It would be the County's determination, not CAL FIRE's. It would involve off-season staffing and whether it is one station, or the cut would get spread across all of the stations. The data in the current staff report is on page 549. In the original staff report, the data is found on pages 10, 23, 80, and 86. Staff worked on trying to validate all the numbers in the report. They are critical numbers. Staff agrees with the numbers presented by the County.

Chief Ferreira says \$435,000 to \$500,000, \$600,000 or \$200,000 cannot be removed from County Fire's budget without expecting to see some reduction in the services provided under the cooperative agreement or an effort by the County to replace that money from other sources within County government.

Commissioner Begun wonders about page 549, the adverse impacts on County Fire. There are three numbers: \$425,000 revenue reduction, a \$65,000 saving, and a net loss of \$360,000. He does not see any backup for those numbers.

Mr. McCormick replies that staff has separately verified the main number regarding revenue loss. The process used was going directly to the County Auditor and getting both the property tax collections and the assessments from the Bonny Doon area. The dollar revenue loss he calculated is greater than the amount presented by the County. His number in the original staff report is in Attachment I, which is a summary done by staff. Line item 6 on page 86 of the original staff report represents the current year situation in Bonny Doon for revenues generated using \$120.84 assessment for a typical house. The total assessment revenue to the dollar is \$161,140. The amount of property taxes collected in that area to the dollar is \$287,471. He got that data directly from the Auditor. The spreadsheet includes every parcel in Bonny Doon.

If those two numbers are added together, the revenue loss to County Fire in the current fiscal year is \$448,611, which is greater than the amount the County estimated in their letter. The remaining number to get to the net conclusion is the estimated savings that would come to County Fire if they do not have to insure the Bonny Doon volunteers and maintain their equipment. It is an estimate, which could be reduced or increased by 50 percent but does not change his conclusions.

Commissioner Begun asks if there is any backup for the \$65,000.

Mr. McCormick asked the County what was included in their estimate. He does not think their estimate is missing significant cost savings that they could realize.

Commissioner Begun asks if he can conclude that Bonny Doon is putting in \$400,000 or \$500,000 and they are getting out about \$65,000.

Mr. McCormick replies that it is a similar situation for any rural fire district that has both a staffed station and a volunteer station. It is the same in County Fire for the Loma Prieta station, for example. If the first response area for any volunteer station is assigned only the incremental costs to support the volunteers, the remaining staffing and overhead costs assigned to the staffed station will be much larger for the staffed station. This would be the case for the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District as well. They have a volunteer station at Mount Madonna. If all the costs are loaded into the staffed station and only the incremental volunteer costs are assigned to the volunteer station, the same revenue disparity applies.

For any fire agency he is familiar with, when they do a service plan, their goal is to get to a certain percentage of the incidents in a certain amount of minutes. Their service plan is not based upon the returning the services to the same areas in the same proportion as the revenues come in.

If the estimate is increased or lowered by 50 percent, he gets to the same conclusion because he validated the higher number. The revenue generated in Bonny Doon was higher than the number the County presented. He worked with a spreadsheet that included every parcel in Bonny Doon. He does not think he is off by more than a dollar or two for the total revenue.

Chief Ferreira adds the \$45,000 or \$65,000 number represents an estimate of the direct costs for the support of the Bonny Doon volunteers such as vehicle maintenance and training costs. Like any other agency, the large majority of costs are for paid staff. To try to disaggregate the costs just for the Bonny Doon volunteers is difficult because they did not maintain detailed records for any of the volunteer companies. They made a best guess estimate for the direct costs of the Bonny Doon volunteers.

Commissioner Begun thinks it is time to look at the countywide problem.

Commissioner Roger Anderson thinks it could be a raw deal for Bonny Doon in

terms of only getting \$65,000. He wonders how much mutual aid there is and how many service calls respond to Bonny Doon by CAL FIRE or County Fire.

There are statistics in the packet about response times for various companies. He does not find any information about the relative number of responses, and he thinks this is important. He wants to know what services the residents of Bonny Doon are receiving in addition to the direct support of \$65,000 per year.

If County Fire did not exist and everyone got their \$65,000, there would be lower taxes but there would be a much lower service. There are other services County Fire provides to Bonny Doon.

Chief Ferreira adds that in the mid 1970s, there was a staffed engine in Bonny Doon. At the request of the Bonny Doon Fire Brigade members or for other reasons, that engine was removed from Bonny Doon and moved to the Davenport area. At the County's request, the plan now is to move an engine back up to Bonny Doon. It is not a popular decision with some of the Bonny Doon members.

In most cases, the closest staffed-engine company comes from UC Santa Cruz to get to Bonny Doon. This is a result from agreements between the fire agencies in the County. A boundary line does not mean a fire engine will stop at that boundary line. UC Santa Cruz FPD relies on the City of Santa Cruz FPD and Scotts Valley FPD for support when they have a big incident. Depending on whether it is fire season or not, a typical structure fire in Bonny Doon would include a response from UC Santa Cruz, the staffed CAL FIRE engine in Davenport, the volunteer engine from Davenport, the Bonny Doon volunteers, Felton Fire District, and Ben Lomond Fire District. If it is fire season, a staffed engine from Felton CAL FIRE also responds. These agreements have been in effect for many years. He does not think he can place a value on having this agreement between the agencies.

Commissioner Roger Anderson is interested in a measure of that value, but those numbers apparently do not exist.

Kathleen Lineberry, from CAL FIRE, says they have been working with the County on the feasibility and the budget of moving the Felton engine to Bonny Doon.

Nancy Carr-Gordon, the Deputy Director of Emergency Services, says they are planning to go to the Board of Supervisors with a proposal to move the Felton CAL FIRE station to Bonny Doon, pending the outcome of this meeting. At the September 22<sup>nd</sup> hearing, the constituents spoke about their feelings of a lack of

fair treatment with the other four volunteer stations; so, they are prepared to rectify that problem.

Commissioner Begun asks if this proposal would be seasonal or year-round.

Ms. Carr-Gordon replies that it would be year-round.

Commissioner Coonerty asks if it would be year-round with additional funding needed. If it was seasonal, would it be revenue-neutral.

Ms. Carr-Gordon answers yes, under the Amador plan.

Commissioner Coonerty asks what would happen if the Commission decided to approve the new fire district. He wonders about the lack of hard data or decisions about where the funding would come from. He wonders if it would close a station or would it be spread among the other stations. He asks if she would take that information to the Board of Supervisors for a decision about the impact of the loss of revenue on CSA 48.

Ms. Carr-Gordon says that is correct. They will come back to the Board of Supervisors.

Commissioner Coonerty says the reason why there is no hard decisions is that they are not the body who makes that decision. He asks if the decision would be made after the fact.

Ms. Carr-Gordon says that is correct.

Alex Leman represents Loma Prieta Fire Volunteers and is a commissioner for the County's Fire Department Advisory Commission (FSAC). There is no difference or change in the proposal. The weaknesses that were there before still exist. The communities he represents are concerned about the possibility of losing service in their area should this fire district be formed.

One change they see is that Mr. Scully indicated at the September 22<sup>nd</sup> hearing is that a lack of a paid engine in Bonny Doon is a deep concern. FDAC has recommended a year-round paid engine in Bonny Doon. He thinks this should alleviate those concerns and provide additional service to Bonny Doon at a cost that would be considerably less than the Bonny Doon proposal.

Kim Johnson and his wife have lived in Bonny Doon for 31 years. They were evacuated during the Martin Fire. He attended the September 22<sup>nd</sup> hearing and was dismayed and surprised about the concerns of closure of stations if Bonny

Doon succeeded in forming their own fire district.

The proposal was put together by many who have spent their entire careers fighting fires. They also serve on the Bonny Doon Fire and Rescue Team and have experience knowing what needs to be done to improve their service. Two of their captains, Todd Meyer and Charlie Springmeyer, have 12 years between them as paid professional firefighters and over 20 years each as a volunteer. Dennis Mason, another fire captain, has been a firefighter for 33 years. Tom Scully, a board member, has been a firefighter for 33 years. Mike Phinn was a firefighter for 30 years. John Forbes has been a volunteer for almost 40 years. These people helped create a well-thought out proposal.

To those who felt they would lose service if Bonny Doon formed their own fire district, he thinks the data would show otherwise. He wants them to talk to the Bonny Doon firefighters and the board. They are committed community members who are trying to increase fire safety but not at someone else's expense. They did their homework.

There was very little consultation or constructive analysis done during this two-year process. No alternatives or suggestions were ever proposed, discussed, or analyzed with their fire team. Instead, a closure of another station was implied if Bonny Doon succeeded. He thinks this is fear mongering without supporting evidence. To deny them based on factual analysis or offering alternatives is one thing, but to deny them for lack of due diligence or misinformation is not acceptable. He asks the Commission to base their decision on the facts and not misinformation.

Paul Mulholland, a Bonny Doon resident for 35 years and a professional firefighter for 36 years who retired from the San Jose Fire Department, is concerned that the Commission was overwhelmed by the September 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting because there were so many people from Davenport and other areas like the Summit who are not directly affected by what is happening in Bonny Doon or Davenport.

The residents of Davenport were well-organized at the September 22<sup>nd</sup> hearing. He thinks some Bonny Doon residents did not sign up to speak because of the Davenport influence. He reads part of a letter from Noel Bock, the chairperson of the Davenport/North Coast Association.

"We are concerned that the formation of a Bonny Doon Fire Protection District will result in the closing of the Big Creek station."

He feels that the last dime will leave the State of California before the Big Creek

station is closed.

Davenport citizens were saying that due to the response area, they need emergency response when the emergency occurs. He thinks Bonny Doon lacks the ability to provide proper response times to nearly every type of emergency. Time is critical. Bonny Doon is sorely behind the rest of the County in response times to emergencies.

Donita Springmeyer, one of the proponents, says there is evidence that the Commission did not have before. They made a budget comparison of the five other fire districts, the four in San Lorenzo Valley and Branciforte Fire Protection District. They compared percentages of the different categories in the budget such as salaries and benefits.

One of the Commissioners commented that the salaries and benefits seemed low for public safety. The reason they are low is that they used models from those fire districts that operate with a combination of paid and volunteer firefighters. Many volunteers have other jobs.

They turned in their five-district budget comparison with the original application. Mr. McCormick updated it a year or so later. She was disappointed that neither one of those comparisons were in the staff report for the September 22<sup>nd</sup> hearing.

The cost effectiveness of putting an Amador station in Bonny Doon is in the September 8<sup>th</sup> staff report in Attachment I on pages 86 and 87. It would be \$250,000 more to put a staffed station in Bonny Doon. She does not know if it would be staffed by two or three people. If County Fire is losing what Bonny Doon pays, this would be using \$250,000; so, County Fire would not be ahead. She compared the square mile revenue for County Fire and Bonny Doon. If Bonny Doon is detached from County Fire, County Fire's revenue per square mile goes up a little. She elaborates on the question of how County Fire came up with the \$65,000 figure. Attachment A-4.2.1 in the Friends of Bonny Doon Fire document shows the figure to be about \$41,000. That is the only explanation they got for \$65,000. Attachment A-1.6 shows a detailed five-year record.

Russ Mackey, thanks CAL FIRE for all the work they have done in Bonny Doon. He has been a Bonny Doon resident for 35 years. He thinks LAFCO must reconsider the proposal due to new facts and issues that became available after September 22<sup>nd</sup>.

On November 4<sup>th</sup>, the voters of rural Santa Cruz County voted down Measure B,

the 911 funding tax. That is the second time in over a year that rural taxpayers have been unwilling to vote additional funds for county emergency response services. The voters were told that, if Measure B did not pass, there would be lost seconds that could cost lives. The call to 911 could result in nothing more than a ringing telephone.

The first rejection of a tax fee in rural Santa Cruz County was in 2007 when the Board of Supervisors sought to increase fire service assessments on property within CSA 48. The voters were told that the failure to approve the ballot measure could increase an emergency service response time by anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour. That measure still failed.

LAFCO is required to consider the adequacy of budgets. Santa Cruz County has recently failed to obtain voter approval for monies that the Board of Supervisors claim is needed to do nothing more than maintain the prior level of service. The residents have been promised reductions in service since those measures were not passed. In light of the willingness Bonny Doon residents have expressed to increase the taxes they pay in order to form a fire district, it appears that the only agency that can feasibly provide the needed service in an efficient and accountable manner would be the proposed Bonny Doon Fire District. He asks the Commission to reconsider the earlier vote and support the organization that seeks to expand services rather than one that is costly with services reduced.

In Friday's Sentinel, there is notice that a lawsuit was filed to end the collection of the existing County 911 fee, which amounts to another \$1.2 million. The Mercury News has a quote from the Chairperson of the Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors that says:

"The loss of funding would be troubling. If we don't have that, we'll have to cut back 911 services and take money from somewhere else..."

Lisa Morris, a resident of Bonny Doon for 16 years, says her property has raised three generations. In 1994, her father-in-law was injured and the volunteers were there. Unfortunately, he did not survive. In 2004, her daughter rolled her truck on Empire Grade. The volunteers were there. Fortunately, her daughter is fine. Fire safety is very important. She had to evacuate. Emergencies are important to her. The fact that there is a volunteer fire station nearby with an engine to respond where needed is also important to her.

On December 1<sup>st</sup>, a letter on page 9 was sent to the Commission regarding response times and how well the volunteers have done. If there is someone who does not have to respond from wherever they are to go get an engine to respond to an emergency, it takes maybe 20 to 30 minutes. She is paying all

these taxes and money and her community is not getting any representation. She wants the Commission to consider Bonny Doon creating their own fire station.

Ben Morris, Lisa Morris husband, says his grandfather settled in Bonny Doon in the early 1920s. His father grew up there, he grew up there, and his kids grew up there. He is not concerned about the fire issues; he is concerned with the medical response. The data for the volunteer team shows that 60 percent of the calls received come from outside fire season. 65 percent of the 500 calls in a year are medical. His long-term goal is improving the medical response in the Bonny Doon area.

Bonny Doon is willing to pay more taxes in order to get a fire district. If Bonny Doon gets removed from CSA 48, money goes away and impacts other people. It causes budget problems elsewhere. He hears that people are more concerned about those who are not willing to step up and pay for what they need.

Mr. Mackey has been trying to get a fire district for a long time. He is worried if they do not start taking steps to resolve these issues, his kids and generations ahead will still be discussing how to improve services in Bonny Doon. He wants permission to bring this issue to a vote, figure out the costs, send a bill, and he will write a check.

Glen Huimovitz is a public safety professional who designs dispatch systems and public safety systems, including many of the systems in Santa Cruz County. He has worked with volunteer fire agencies and paid public staff agencies and configured their dispatch systems. 911 calls come to the Netcom dispatch center and he works with them. Scotty Douglas is the current director. Currently, when a call comes to Netcom, it gets transferred to CAL FIRE. During that process, there is the possibility of a loss of information because there are more people involved. There could be delays from Netcom and CAL FIRE because there might be other calls that have a higher priority. There are issues of misinterpretation of information. The caller to 911 talks to multiple people and different information is passed along from one dispatcher to the other. Data could get lost.

He deals with computers and dispatch centers. Every keystroke is one keystroke too many. Whenever time is lost, someone's life or home could be lost. Last week, there was a fully-involved structure fire. It was fully involved because of the delays in paging, and they were not notified in time. Fortunately, all the people in the home got out. Faster response times are critical.

The other critical factor is auto aid and mutual aid. Bonny Doon has always supported Davenport by providing mutual and auto aid. In past years, there have been up to 70 calls that were auto aid and mutual aid related to Davenport. They provided rescue services and helped with auto accidents. This aid has ceased since the application went through, but not by their choice. They still want to provide services to other communities as part of the community of firefighters. He supports the formation of a Bonny Doon Fire District.

Pam Newbury is a 22-year resident of Bonny Doon. LAFCO disapproved Application 913 based on four issues: cost effectiveness, agency redundancy, availability of higher priority service agency, and the concern about degradation of service to other areas of CSA 48.

On all these counts, she urges LAFCO to reconsider. Service to Bonny Doon is inefficiently managed and not on a comparable level to other areas of CSA 48. When a call is made to 911, the first stop for the call is Netcom. Incidents from Bonny Doon as part of CSA 48 are dispatched to Felton CAL FIRE who determine the necessary response and send out the dispatch to Bonny Doon. This adds time and complexity to the job of dispatching to Bonny Doon. CAL FIRE dispatch may be attending to other incidents or they may simply need time to determine where the incident is and what to dispatch. The resulting delay can be as much as five minutes.

Dispatch is complicated by the need to send a tone out to multiple repeaters to reach all areas of Bonny Doon. She has heard of multiple incidents where the wrong tone was sent or all the tones were not sent. This resulted in a seven-minute delay in response to a house fire on Smith Grade. CAL FIRE dispatchers are not local and not familiar with the area. Due to CAL FIRE's policy of frequent staff rotation, some may be new to dispatch procedures in Felton. The inefficiency this delay causes could someday cost a Bonny Doon taxpayer to lose life or property. Were this application to be approved, the CAL FIRE link would be unnecessary and this delay would vanish.

When a call goes out to Bonny Doon, dispatch is also made to the Big Creek station which sends a truck to backup Bonny Doon in the event that none of the volunteers are able to respond. This truck takes 25 minutes to get uphill to Bonny Doon, however it usually turns around once informed the volunteers are onsite. This redundancy is inefficient. The response time is inequitable in comparison to other areas of CSA 48. This is not the same service. It is not provided in an efficient and accountable manner and it is not cost effective.

The third reason for denial is that a higher priority of service of organization provides a feasible service but this is refuted. The service provided by CSA 48 is

not adequate to the needs of Bonny Doon. All other communities in CSA 48 have a 12-minute response time from an Amador-plan station. With permanent staff at McDermott station backed up by dedicated volunteers, Bonny Doon would receive superior fire service in an efficient and timely manner.

With respect to the concern of degradation of service to other communities of CSA 48, LAFCO is in a 'Catch 22' situation. In approving or disapproving this application, it appears they must either condemn Bonny Doon to continue with degraded service or consider that approving it would affect some other community with a similar degradation of service.

Currently, Bonny Doon pays more taxes and gets less service than other communities. If this application is denied, LAFCO will have voted to preserve the current inequities. If the application is approved, LAFCO will be taking a positive action to begin the process of addressing the problems of fire service in Santa Cruz County, and will set in motion the means of making it fair for everyone.

John Forbes has been a Bonny Doon volunteer firefighter for almost 40 years. He has seen fire protection go from Civil Defense to CAL FIRE, and now to the proposed fire district. He wants to respond to some of the concerns of the LAFCO Commissioners and some of the opponents of this application regarding the viability and the sustainability of the proposed budget. They spent a lot of time modeling their budget after the highly successful volunteer fire districts in the San Lorenzo Valley. Prior to submitting the application to LAFCO, they developed a budget that would produce the highest level of service and sustainability. They invited fire chiefs from Boulder Creek, Ben Lomond, Felton, Zayante, and Branciforte to come to Bonny Doon and personally review the proposed budget. All the fire chiefs came and scrutinized the budget for many hours going over line items. They talked about managing coverage, staffing, and sleeper programs. Toward the end of the meeting, all the fire chiefs agreed that their budget was conservative and doable. They agreed that the management plan was solid. Attachment A-2.2 includes a signature statement of facts, as mentioned above, from Chief Sam Robustelli from Boulder Creek, Chief John Charcho from Ben Lomond, Chief Ron Rickabaugh from Felton, Chief Jeff Maxwell from Zayante, and Chief Pat O'Connell from Branciforte.

He knows what happened in Bonny Doon when the CAL FIRE engine was stationed in Bonny Doon because he was fire chief then. There were two reasons why that engine was asked to leave and go to Davenport. One was a personal issue that the CCAL FIRE personnel had with some of the community. The other issue was some of the responses from volunteers dropped drastically. He talked to Dave Dituri, the Battalion Chief at that time, and they both agreed

it was a wise decision to relocate the engine.

He works with all the volunteers in Bonny Doon. He is not happy with the proposal of putting a CAL FIRE engine in Bonny Doon now. They do not know who the personnel will be, they rotate personnel constantly, and he does not know what the capacity is. He does not think it will be effective. He wants the Commission to allow the community to vote on this issue because it is their right as a democracy to vote on their taxes.

Tom Walsh says the people in Bonny Doon want the right to vote on whether to pay to have their own fire district. Some think there is not enough money to deliver service improvements with the staffing and dollar amounts that were based on the five fire districts in San Lorenzo Valley.

He comments why the proposal has a fire chief only working 50 percent of the time. The proponents think that is all they need. As a comparison, CAL FIRE's fire chief only spends 20 percent of his time for the entire County of Santa Cruz. This is based on the County's Grand Jury report of 2007-2008. So a chief will not be needed full time. He thinks CAL FIRE's chief should only be getting paid 20 percent from this county.

CSA 48 failed because no one completed what was necessary to prove what was needed. The 911 failed because the money went into the General Fund. There was no accountability for the dollars. The County budget is \$389 million. Approximately \$400,000 of that would be lost if Bonny Doon got their own fire district and that is equivalent to .0012 percent. Certainly, the County can come up with less than .5 percent and revise it.

Rebecca Stoller has been a Bonny Doon resident for 15 years. She has been in Santa Cruz since 1970 and had to use the Bonny Doon Volunteers for an emergency. She was pronounced dead at Dominican and was brought back to life.

She is working toward becoming a Bonny Doon volunteer firefighter by May 2009, at the earliest. She has not completed enough classes yet to qualify as a volunteer.

She has been in finance for 33 years. She looked at the proposed budget. There is about a \$2 million budget for four Amador stations, which is about \$500,000 per station. It looks like it will cost more for the County to staff a station in Bonny Doon than what they are receiving in revenues. Bonny Doon is willing to pay for it; so, she wonders why not hand over the deficit and let Bonny Doon take care of it. Then, the paging time would be fixed. Bonny Doon is such a

rural area and currently help cannot get up the hill in time.

She does not understand why there is a discrepancy in the money. They could take over a problem for less money than it is costing the County to do it. She does not understand what the denial is about and the fear of trying to take something away from someone else. She does not see why it is an issue to Davenport residents. They would have better response time if there were more firefighters in Bonny Doon with more ability to take care of themselves. If it is about the money, she wants to see the facts. If it is not about the money, she wants to know what the denial is about. She wonders why not allow Bonny Doon to make their own decision.

If Bonny Doon is not allowed to form its own fire district, the amount of taxes that would be raised would be higher than the amount that would be raised for Bonny Doon to takeover itself. She thinks the money does not make sense.

Laurie Smith, a volunteer trainee with Bonny Doon, has a dual loyalty to Davenport and Bonny Doon. CAL FIRE has a lot of responsibility and volunteer training is one of them. They do the best they can. Rob Sherman is competent. She is happy with the training she has received from CAL FIRE. There could be an improvement in efficiency and the quality of training if they formed their own fire district. The issue is timeliness of training. To become a basic firefighter, to get beyond trainee status, one needs first-responder medical training, safety and orientation training, HazMat training, wildland training, structure training, and ideally, EMT training to be adequately equipped to respond to medical emergencies. Wildland and structure training are only offered once per year by CAL FIRE. For a firefighter to be trained, it takes a minimum of 15 months. She had to drop out of structure training. It has taken her an extra year to get that training and become fully trained as a basic firefighter. She is still a trainee.

If they formed their own district, the district would be able to structure the trainings according to their own volunteers. After the Martin Fire, there was an increase in the number of new volunteers, and they want to get them trained as soon as possible. Their community can respond and train the new volunteers in a timely fashion as they arrive. They can use reciprocal training with other fire districts. They could get more volunteers better trained quicker.

Sharon Smith brought up the recent incident where Bonny Doon was paged for a water tender, but they did not respond. They could not respond because they do not have that many people who are trained to drive a water tender.

Her next step in training is to become an operator. She will start the training

next month. If they get their own fire district, it will allow them to get their volunteers trained in a better fashion. She wants to drive a water tender and help Davenport. She wants to be paged for those calls. The reciprocity of having the volunteers trained well and to be able to help Davenport would be great for both communities.

She is frustrated by this issue that Big Creek is threatened as a station that could be removed. Geographically, it makes no sense.

Steph Marr, a Bonny Doon volunteer and a Friend of Bonny Doon Fire, supports the formation of the Bonny Doon Fire District. Training takes hundreds of hours to become a trained firefighter in the current training system provided by CAL FIRE. It is a great program, but it is geared towards their paid staff. It is not a flexible volunteer-oriented training program such as the one they propose to coordinate with themselves and Davenport, as well as joint trainings with Felton, Ben Lomond, Boulder Creek, and those fire agencies that they would be responding with in most calls.

It takes hundreds more hours to train to drive a fire engine. It takes more than a year to train as a volunteer. It is a big impediment to getting additional volunteers in and on the team. Their plan is to improve the training program by coordinating with the neighboring communities to shorten the training schedule, and provide more flexibility, but not reduce the training.

A Bonny Doon Fire District staffed station will improve the response time within Bonny Doon, Davenport, UC Santa Cruz, and the mutual aid to the City of Santa Cruz, Felton, Ben Lomond, and Boulder Creek. Those areas will have improved fire service as a result of forming a station staffed by Bonny Doon volunteers.

Susan Mason, a Bonny Doon resident for 16 years and a volunteer firefighter for nine years, notices an apparent 180 degree shift in the recommendations of the County Fire Department Advisory Commission. At the September 22<sup>nd</sup> hearing, three of the FDAC members who are also volunteers with County Fire, recommended that this district be denied because of a dramatic loss of revenues. No other comments were made about any possible solutions. At their next meeting, they recommended establishing a 5<sup>th</sup> Amador station in Bonny Doon, to ask for 20 more Firefighter I personnel, to get staffing back to where it should be, and to go to the Board of Supervisors to ask for more money.

She wonders where this recommendation was when this issue first started. She says this is new information that was not available September 22<sup>nd</sup>. This recommendation is a band-aid. The money is not there. She wonders why the

money could not be found to fill in behind whatever Bonny Doon takes to form their own fire district.

The other problem with an Amador station is that engine can be pulled at any time to go other places in the State. It is not guaranteed to be in Bonny Doon. With a paid Bonny Doon fire department engine, that engine can be requested for mutual aid, and they would have the ability and the guarantee of how to fill in behind that.

This recommendation is a band-aid that does not correct the unavoidable dispatch errors by having the calls go somewhere else than where they are dispatched. It does not correct the training delays. It took her two years to get trained. It took her two more years to become a driver because classes were not offered. The new fire district would fix these problems. The dispatch and the training were the reasons why Bonny Doon volunteers pursued forming their own fire district. They think they can provide fire and emergency services more efficiently than how it is currently working. She wants to know why FDAC did not have any money or know how much it would cost to pursue their recommendation. She thinks they may not be sure how much it would cost. She supports the reconsideration and wants Bonny Doon to be able to vote.

Dick McDermott has been a Bonny Doon resident for more than 40 years and was a volunteer firefighter before the Martin Road station was built. He knew Frank Helenthal who let the volunteers keep the fire equipment on his ranch. He donated the land to the County and the community. The Martin Road station was built for nothing. It did not cost the County anything. They gave the building and the land to the County. They now rent it for one dollar per year.

The McDermott station site was bought with a residence and about 1.5 acres of vacant land. They built the building through Measure E and earthquake funds. Watsonville Construction was the contractor who did the site work and built the building's shell. The community took over the project and finished it with mostly volunteer help. Most everything, including the cabinets and the furniture, was donated by the community. He feels strongly that buying the buildings back for dollars is ridiculous. It has already been paid for by taxpayers with the earthquake funds and property tax. They currently lease back for one dollar per month.

He has more than 20 years experience as a real estate appraiser with the County of Santa Cruz. He is familiar with values. This country was founded on freedom, and he thinks they have the right to vote on the issue.

Rich Conley, says most of the assets have been achieved by volunteerism, by

donations, and hard work. Those assets that should have a one dollar value have a \$3.7 million value from the County. He wonders where the mediation is with this issue. He wonders how these issues can be brought to a point where they can be resolved. There seems to be no way to bring this to closure so some of the emotionalism could be pulled out.

The \$3.7 million was obviously an obstacle from a financial stand point which killed their argument. If CAL FIRE moves up to the McDermott station, he warns that there may be a bill of \$3.7 million.

The county pays 2.5 times more in tax revenue than ten years ago. Proposition 13 has not killed increases in property tax revenue. The turnover of property and continued valuations makes our community pay significantly more than ten years ago. During these economic times, it is not about asking the County what they can do for the community, it is what can one do for themselves. This opportunity could reinforce a community through volunteerism and a real knowledge of the issues to put a team together to service the community and do it cost effectively.

Charlie Springmeyer, a 40-year resident of Bonny Doon and a 20-year volunteer firefighter, thinks moving an Amador station to the McDermott station is a band-aid. There is a lot more to improving fire protection than just moving an engine. There are many issues to consider such as dispatch issues, training, volunteer recruitment and retention, duty officers in Bonny Doon 24/7, proactive fire prevention, community-based service, and the purchasing of appropriate fire apparatus for Bonny Doon's geography. If there is an Amador station in Bonny Doon or a Bonny Doon Fire District, the volunteers will still have to be present in any of the scenarios. A new volunteer cannot be asked to wait 1.5 years to do what they volunteered to do. They will not wait. A volunteer has to be treated better since most of them have full-time jobs. It helps to have training classes on weekends and evenings. The fire districts in San Lorenzo Valley have been able to do this and that is why they are successful.

He wants the opportunity to vote on their own fire protection.

Donna Zetterquist has lived in Bonny Doon for 28 years. She has heard that it is unreasonable for Bonny Doon to expect County Fire to transfer its Bonny Doon fire protection assets to a new fire district for one dollar. She disagrees because of the history of those assets and the donated land. The fire stations were built by the people of Bonny Doon and turned over to the County to be leased back for one dollar. The fire trucks were purchased with Bonny Doon taxes. It is common practice for public agencies and other service organizations

to transfer assets to another agency that will take over the responsibility of providing that service for a nominal fee of one dollar. What is unreasonable and outrageous is to expect Bonny Doon to pay anywhere near market value for assets that they have already largely paid for.

Kate Springmeyer is a resident of Bonny Doon, a Friend of Bonny Doon Fire, and a member of the Bonny Doon Fire and Rescue Auxiliary. At the September 22<sup>nd</sup> public hearing, a vote was taken by the LAFCO Commissioners to implement a resolution disapproving the Bonny Doon Fire proposal. At the October 1<sup>st</sup> meeting, the resolution was postponed even though there was a quorum of LAFCO Commissioners and alternates present who could have voted on the resolution. Bonny Doon Fire and Rescue filed a timely request for a reconsideration on October 17<sup>th</sup> which presented new information that had either not been included in Mr. McCormick's report to the Commissioners or was a result of events that took place at or after the September LAFCO hearing.

At the November LAFCO meeting, members voted to accept the resolution of disapproval prior to hearing the request of reconsideration from Bonny Doon Fire and Rescue. She wonders why the Commission would not have reviewed the new information submitted along with the Bonny Doon Fire and Rescue's request first and engaged the members of the Bonny Doon community in order to discuss these issues and collaborate with Bonny Doon in a positive way to look at the alternatives or contingencies to pass the district proposal.

Steve Homan, a Bonny Doon resident for 32 years, reads Chuck Anderson's editorial from the Press Banner titled "LAFCO gets second chance with Bonny Doon Fire". He thinks Mr. Anderson is a wise and thoughtful editor who has the best interests of his subscribers at heart. The Press Banner is sent weekly to the residents of Scotts Valley, San Lorenzo Valley, and Bonny Doon.

"We continue to stand behind the majority of Bonny Doon residents who seek to upgrade the fire protection by forming an independent district and taxing themselves to finance its operations. On Monday, LAFCO will hear Bonny Doon's appeal of the Commission's 4-3 turndown in September and we urge the Commission to reverse its stand.

One vote could make the difference and it could come from any of the earlier 'no' voters. Yes, it is still true that a Bonny Doon withdrawl would be a blow to County Fire's finances. But County Fire has serious financial problems nevertheless. The County ought to undertake a major overhaul of that agency and the fire service countywide anyway."

He thanks Mr. Anderson for the above editorial.

California Government Code Section 56325 instructs LAFCO Commissioners to exercise independent judgment on behalf of the interests of residents, property owners, and the public as a whole. Local government appointees represent the public and not solely the interests of the appointing authority. This is their priority mission as mandated by State law as LAFCO Commissioners. Clearly, many members of the public in Bonny Doon are desirous of the opportunity to vote on forming a fire district, selecting board members, and setting an initial tax rate under Proposition 218. The public and the remaining CSA 48 area wants their level of fire protection to be maintained as well. No community is asking for a lower level of service or for lower fire taxes. Bonny Doon is requesting an opportunity to vote on increasing its own tax funding to improve its own fire protection. Bonny Doon wants the chance to vote on whether to fund and maintain what Zayante, Felton, Ben Lomond, Boulder Creek, Branciforte, and Pajaro Valley fire districts already have, and to improve fire protection at local expense. They need the independent judgment of at least four Commissioners to allow this election to occur.

Since the County Board of Supervisors purposely underfunds the County Fire CSA 48 from available Proposition 172 State funds, and since Bonny Doon taxes subsidize a significant portion of County Fire's activities outside of the Bonny Doon community, this creates a defacto situation where the present underfunding scheme that there must always be a deficit in rural fire protection service somewhere. Sadly for decades, this deficit has been manifested in the Bonny Doon area.

Russ Beatty and his wife Jane have lived on Empire Grade for 11 years. He is a professor at UC Berkeley in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning. After the Oakland fire, he became involved in fire behavior research, gave lectures, and wrote papers on the design and planning for fire safety.

He thinks this issue has been buried in an avalanche of numbers. Money is always a problem but never the real problem.

There is a complexity of various plant communities on Ben Lomond Mountain, including two of the most fire-prone vegetation types in California: the Ponderosa Pine and the Knob Cone Pine. These overmature trees are underlain by a dense understory of chaparral. There is no large fire in memory that he knows about except for the Martin Fire. There is a natural cycle of fire in these plant communities of anywhere from 15 to 25 years if left to natural factors. With the density of residences and the increasing number of residences in the Bonny Doon area, it becomes a very urgent issue with respect to the likelihood

of fires. It is not a question of if but when another Martin-type fire or larger fire will happen.

He moved to Bonny Doon in 1997, when there was an El Nino year of 120 inches of rain. He measures the rain at his property on Ben Lomond Mountain with professional rain gauges. Last year, there was 45 inches of rain or two-thirds of the normal 60 inches. This year (2008) there is nine inches. About 20 inches would be normal by this time of year. There are shifting inconsistent fire seasons with an expected fire season in May and June. The mature vegetation with the dry and dense understory is more volatile than ever. This condition requires a rapid response. The conditions are severe and worsening. They need a 24/7 manned fire station in Bonny Doon. They want their own fire district. The volunteer firefighters know the back roads better than anyone. They need their fire station staffed by their own people. There is no need to diminish fire protection anywhere else to get their own fire district.

Andy Andreason has lived in Bonny Doon for 44 years. He has had two structure fires. One was a 911 call. He worked for CDF for 24 years. He fought many structure fires and vegetative fires throughout California. He supports LAFCO's decision even though it seems he is in the minority.

Mary Forbes has lived in Bonny Doon for 20 years. She has watched Bonny Doon Fire and Rescue work on their proposal to increase the level of emergency service through a locally controlled and locally taxed fire district. History has demonstrated that people of this democracy have fought and died for the right to vote on how they are taxed. She implores the Commission to let them exercise their democratic right to vote on this proposal.

Christine Echavia, who lives at 4209 Smith Grade Road, attended the September LAFCO meeting. Recently, she was awakened at 2:00 a.m. by a frantic neighbor on the phone who was saying that her house was on fire. She opened up her front door and was confronted by a wall of flames. She felt the intense heat from barely 200 yards away. She raced to awaken her elderly family member to evacuate. She dialed 911 and told them about the structure fire. She was transferred to CAL FIRE and she had to repeat the information again. Time was wasting. She found a neighbor and they met at the end of their road to transfer her senior father to safety. She drove back to her house and noticed the flames were higher. She heard her neighbor screaming. She called her partner at her work, who happens to be on duty as a firefighter over the hill, that the neighbor's house was on fire and she needed to come home. This fire incident happened to her one week ago. She thanks every firefighter who responded that night.

The Commissioners' decision has a direct impact on her and the people she

cares for. As a former law enforcement officer in the Bay Area, she is aware of response time. Response time saves lives and property. The current structure and protocol of fire and emergency response is not working. Bonny Doon residents are ready and prepared to have full-time fire personnel in their community. Her family and neighbors are not expendable. Their losses should not be considered collateral damage.

Elaine Conley lives in Bonny Doon. Her great grandparents bought their property in 1891. She has six grandchildren living across the street. Bonny Doon Fire and Rescue has come on many occasions, for mostly medical reasons, to help her mother, father, and herself, and she thanks them all. 1,200 people from Bonny Doon have been involved with this issue for more than two years. They thought they were involved in a process that would reflect good faith and not be arbitrary. They thought this process would at least produce a set of specific concerns that the County, LAFCO, and Bonny Doon could resolve. She does not think the recommendation to conduct a public hearing and vote to disapprove the reconsideration request reflects a joint effort to resolve any issue with Bonny Doon. Bonny Doon Fire has been bailing out the County and caring for Bonny Doon residents for years. She hopes the Commission is considering the issue with an open mind and without prejudice.

Kristen Raugust, a Swanton-Davenport resident for 40-years, supports LAFCO's decision that was made in September. The Bonny Doon residents need better fire protection. He encourages CAL FIRE to move a full-time station to Bonny Doon. LAFCO's responsibility is to the county as a whole entity.

Sharon Smith, the principal/superintendent of Pacific School District in Davenport has lived on Last Chance Road for 38 years. The response time to her house for services is 30 minutes from the Big Creek station. There seems to be a lack of confidence with CAL FIRE from the Bonny Doon residents. Bonny Doon does need to have better services provided to them. CAL FIRE's offer to move a station to Bonny Doon is a solution. She does not understand why the Bonny Doon residents lack confidence in CAL FIRE. She saw many signs thanking Cal Fire after the Martin Fire.

She is concerned about the evidence that there would be a station closed or a reduction in services if Bonny Doon created their own fire district. She runs a school district. For \$400,000 to be pulled out of a budget is going to result in a reduction in staffing or services and that will affect the rest of the people in the district. Davenport and the North Coast have less residences, but they do have 9,200 cars that pass through Davenport every day, according to 2006 traffic data collected by the County. That amount of traffic increases the requirement for a good rescue response time. She appreciates LAFCO's decision at the

September hearing. She has not heard any other real changes why that decision should be reconsidered.

Dennis Mason, a retired CDF firefighter who started his career at the Alma fire station in 1967, has lived in Bonny Doon for almost 20 years. He is one of the Bonny Doon volunteer fire captains. If a CAL FIRE engine was moved up to Bonny Doon, it would not be controlled by Chief Ferreira. The engine is controlled by the State of California at the operational center in Redding. Whether it is winter or summer, that engine is not guaranteed to stay in Bonny Doon, even though the County is paying for it. That engine could go to Monterey County or anywhere in the State. Sometimes, when CAL FIRE's drawdown gets to the point where there are not any extra engines, they do not move up and cover. Just because a CAL FIRE engine may move to Bonny Doon to solve the problem, the engine may not stay there.

Luisa Orlando has lived in Davenport for 18 years. She has been a volunteer firefighter for 12 years. She is speaking on behalf of the volunteer fire team in Davenport. They support County Fire's recommendation to put a full-time station in Bonny Doon.

If the engine did leave Bonny Doon, she questions when a station has been uncovered. When the Big Creek station is called out of County, Davenport moves to cover Big Creek. During the Martin Fire, when Davenport could not cover their station because they were helping in Bonny Doon, Loma Prieta covered their station. When she first joined the fire team 12 years ago, there were many personality conflicts between the volunteers and CAL FIRE. Many of those conflicts have disappeared. The volunteers and CAL FIRE now work as a team.

The Bonny Doon volunteer fire team is an excellent fire team and they are very well-trained and well-regarded throughout the County and in the volunteer community.

Jonathan Wittwer has lived in Bonny Doon for 25 years. He was in the County Counsel's office up until 12 years ago, but he continues to represent governmental agencies. He respects all of the positions at stake here and understands that it is a difficult decision. He has personal experience with two incidences where the Bonny Doon volunteers got their first, and significantly in advance of anyone else. For government to work well, energy needs to be used by the whole government. There has to be a way for this issue to advance. Otherwise, people will feel the government is not working for them. He would be willing to pay extra for a while to help a transition occur. There has to be a way to come together even though it may be difficult. People are willing to

vote for taxes and that does not happen very often. Mediation may not have been explored enough. People will vote for fire protection and emergency service. His mother-in-law fell and broke her hip. Bonny Doon Fire was there first on Thanksgiving Day. He feels how emotional people are about this issue and why they are willing to fight for it.

Suzanne Morrow, a therapist in Bonny Doon for 24 years and also a minister, thinks the last breath of a loved one is a sacred time. Her friend Leslie died about a month ago. She came home from a potluck, and all of a sudden, she could not breathe. She called her neighbor who called 911 twice. Her last breath was spent in an ambulance that was dispatched from Boulder Creek. It took .5 hour for the ambulance to get to her. She wrote a letter to the local paper wondering if it would have made a difference if they had a direct line for people to be there within minutes. Leslie was 59 years old. She left 21 and 26 year-old daughters behind. Given these times, community is going to become more and more important. She thinks Bonny Doon is a fiercely independent community with no market or post office. This community is asking the Commission to consider the importance of the response time of their loved ones and life itself.

Nancy McAllister says there are some impediments to fire service in Bonny Doon that are not addressed by putting an Amador station in Bonny Doon. Bonny Doon currently is not called out for mutual aid, and the volunteers would like to be. The volunteer training schedule is dependent upon CAL FIRE and the training schedule could be made better. Service and training could be improved by allowing Bonny Doon to provide mutual aid and train with the other communities in the area. Currently, Bonny Doon volunteers are not able to utilize their training and hours for career-track fire service. Recruitment and retention would be made better with the formation of a fire district. It cannot be made better with an Amador station. Bonny Doon has the highest rate of volunteerism in the County. She thinks they should be given a chance to service their own. The cost estimates of an Amador station are somewhat more but roughly equivalent to the loss of revenue to County Fire, should Bonny Doon's revenue move out of CSA 48. It costs much higher to get a Schedule A station such as the one in Pajaro Dunes where there is an engine there all the time. The proposed fix at the September LAFCO meeting would likely cause a service reduction across other areas of CSA 48. They do not want that. They urge the Commission to figure out another way. There is a likely reduction of volunteerism if an Amador station is placed in Bonny Doon. This is noted throughout history across the State in other areas. An engine at an Amador station as part of CAL FIRE would likely be pulled during other major events across the State. That would not improve their service. They have presented a viable way to improve their service. She asks the Commission to give them a

chance to vote on it. She does not see how an Amador station is proposed to be in any way superior to forming a Bonny Doon Fire District. The one dollar precedence for a transfer of assets is used elsewhere across the State for fire district formation. Given the history in Bonny Doon, it seems reasonable. She pleads for a reasonable negotiation.

Lonny Schwartz, a Bonny Doon resident since 1997, has the same goal as the people of Bonny Doon who want their own fire district. He wants better emergency response. However, LAFCO has a process and law to follow. He thinks the Commission has done that previously and he has not heard anything that changes that. The last budget he saw for the fire district was \$653,000. Not included in that is the \$3.7 million. His number is \$4.1 million and that was in some of the documents. Add that to the \$653,000 and it is a much bigger number.

He thinks, in these tough economic times, they should look at consolidating all of the County functions, which includes consolidating some of the districts rather than creating new ones.

There are emotional issues about Amador stations and he cannot dispute that because he is not a fire person. He is into finance. The current contract with the County is less than \$2 million for four stations, which is less than \$500,000 to get an Amador station in Bonny Doon. He urges the Commission to consider the facts and not the emotions.

Ken Gilbert is a Bonny Doon resident who started working with the Bonny Doon volunteers in 1972 as a member with CAL FIRE. He was on staff in 1975 and 1976 for two winters that covered the Martin Road area in Bonny Doon. He thought they did a good job. Having a CAL FIRE engine on the hill in 1975 and 1976 gave a good response. That is what Bonny Doon wants now.

He agrees with LAFCO's decision to disapprove a new fire district. Because of the economy, cities going bankrupt, and money being tight, he would like to see an Amador station or the CAL FIRE station from Felton moved up to Martin Road and the volunteers work alongside CAL FIRE.

Some of the people from Bonny Doon have called the Amador station a seasonal station. If they have never visited Corralitos or Loma Prieta stations, it is worth taking a tour to meet the professional firefighters and see how they work with the volunteers. When the engine from Corralitos responds to Pajaro Valley for a structure fire, for example, the volunteers cover their station and may be the second or third engine in. It works well.

The Bonny Doon Amador station would not be seasonal. The log book shows that when a Corralitos station leaves to go to a fire in Redding or wherever, they are covered behind by another CAL FIRE engine. There might only be a week or two out of 52 weeks when the engine is gone. That would be a lot better than what exists now. They do not have an engine available to them 24/7. If there was a CAL FIRE engine up on the hill, that is one more engine and two more firefighters on the hill, in addition to the volunteers.

Ted Benhari has been a Bonny Doon resident for 35 years. He is a member of the Bonny Doon Fire District Formation Committee. His neighbors have given excellent and eloquent arguments as well as emotional arguments about why Bonny Doon should be given the opportunity to vote on whether to support this new fire district. He hopes the Commission will support them.

At the very least, he thinks the Commission should postpone their negative decision until there is adequate information that is needed. Much of the information is still missing or inadequate. It is important to find out how much the County will charge the new district for the equipment. He recommends giving them time to work that out and come up with a number. This will help to determine if the budget proposed is adequate and fair. It is also important to find out what the real amount of money that County Fire will lose without the CSA 48 funds from Bonny Doon. It costs more than \$65,000 to fund Bonny Doon. He wonders what the true loss for County Fire is. Until that is known to a near certainty, it would be difficult to make an informed and wise decision.

He heard that the consultant who helped prepare the LAFCO staff study was not that familiar with North Coast fire issues. He suggests directing Mr. McCormick to hire a new consultant who is familiar with those issues to complete the information in a more detailed manner. Then it would be the appropriate time to make a decision on this very important matter, which is crucial to Bonny Doon and the rest of the County.

Paul Gabriel states that his parents moved to Bonny Doon in 1961 when the Bonny Doon Schoolhouse was just one room. When he went to school, it was two rooms. He worked in San Lorenzo Valley as a tow truck driver when Felton Fire had to use compressed air bottles and a chisel to cut people out of wrecked cars. Bonny Doon has grown to where it is time to have their own fire district.

Ilana King has lived in Bonny Doon for a couple years. She works in the fiscal industry and has built budgets for an organization that ran on \$2.5 million per year. She is accustomed to looking for holes, unseen costs, and whether everything is accounted for. She appreciates Mr. McCormick's work. Often, when building budgets, it is hard to nail it down to the dollar. One just makes

good estimates. She thinks there should be additional savings over the \$65,000 for County Fire if the County does not have to provide services to Bonny Doon. She wonders if there is a bigger hole and a bigger savings for the County. That figure should be factored in. That estimate might be crucial. There are emotions, a spirit of cooperation, and a spirit of community but it is about dollars too. She thinks the spirit of community in Bonny Doon is amazing. She is impressed how the people come out when they believe in something.

After the most recent election, she thinks it is a spirit to encourage in this country. She thinks they should be given the right to try to tax themselves, to step up and take care of their needs in Bonny Doon.

Steve Auten is a resource manager for Cal Poly's Swanton Pacific Ranch. They operate 3,800 acres in Santa Cruz County. 3,200 acres of that is on the North Coast, just north of Davenport, where they provide extensive educational opportunities to a multitude of different students as well as the public. The Big Creek station has been on Cal Poly property for many years. They continue to support their existence on their property. With the amount of people who visit their ranch, they do not support any loss of services in that area.

The Forest Resource and Assessment Program is a CAL FIRE program. Looking at the different counties with regard to urbanization into forest land, out of all the counties in California, Santa Cruz has the highest urbanization in the forest land environment of anyone at 57 percent.

There are grounds for the County, Bonny Doon, and LAFCO to get together, maybe mediate, arbitrate, and continue to discuss and move forward with a proposal that provides a service that Bonny Doon needs. It would be wise to seek some funding sources, even during a difficult budget time, to move forward and balance the services that are needed.

Commissioner Roger Anderson says with the funding problems in the 911 center, he wonders how the Bonny Doon Fire District helps the present situation. He understands the dispatch may be direct, but if there is a problem with the basic 911 system, it is less clear to him exactly how it will help.

If this proposal goes through, he wonders what kind of a measurable or quantitative improvement will there be in medical response. A number of people talked about medical response. He wonders how much better it will be over what is presently done.

He questions how this fire district will help training. A number of people talked about mutual aid in terms of training. There are items in the document from

the Friends of Bonny Doon about volunteer-friendly training. He wants to know what that means.

He wants some clarification about the statement that CAL FIRE engines are controlled by the State of California. He is curious about what the standards are that redirect the engines, when it happens, and what has to happen first.

Mr. McCormick points out that in the original staff report from September on page 13 and pages 90 through 98, they address some of the dispatch issues in County Fire. If it is a problem for Bonny Doon, it is a problem for the other 21,000 people who receive fire protection services from County Fire.

The proposal for Bonny Doon would take CAL FIRE out of the dispatch loop and would result in a direct dispatch. It will probably help. Under the existing status quo, there is a pre-alert that occurs as quickly as any other department gets in the County. The final CAL FIRE dispatch follows the pre-alert. In response to some problems that were identified this summer, County Fire has established a task force to look at their options for improving their dispatch procedures. There are a couple options. The representatives from the dispatch centers and the fire users are working on a joint task force that has a quick turnaround to report back to the Board of Supervisors on opportunities to make the 911 dispatch work better for all of County Fire.

Whether it is the Bonny Doon proposal or a CAL FIRE station in Bonny Doon, the level of service in terms of medical training of who is responding would be approximately the same. In both cases, the great improvement is reducing the response time. Any increase in staffing in Bonny Doon is good whether it is a Bonny Doon fire district or a CAL FIRE station. The benefit would be the reduction in response time.

There has been a lot of testimony that volunteer firefighters really are professional firefighters, they are just not paid. They have to go through the same training and keep up their training. It requires many hours. CAL FIRE trains a lot of people in California. They have their system. If there were a Bonny Doon fire district, there would be more flexibility in training. They could pay their firefighters to go to Campbell to participate in a training. It would come with some costs. They would have more flexibility as a district. They currently have to fit within the CAL FIRE training program.

Chief Ferreira says there are a few funding mechanisms that agencies use when they enter into cooperative agreements with CAL FIRE. The Pajaro Valley Fire District, Pajaro Dunes, and the San Mateo County Fire Department in Pescadero use Schedule A. The contracting agency pays to have a fire engine there 24

hours per day and 7 days per week. It is not part of CAL FIRE's wildland response system. It is similar to the City of Santa Cruz' fire department except there are State employees.

The second funding mechanism is those resources that are funded by the State and paid for by every taxpayer through the State General Fund. It is for wildland fire engines, air tankers, hand crews, and bulldozers, similar to what was used at the Martin Fire, the Summit Fire, and the Trabing Fire.

The third funding mechanism is called Amador. The State pays the full funds for the fire engine during fire season and another agency, such as the County of Santa Cruz, pays for two of the three people on that engine during the winter. The State provides the other person at no charge because they are State employees that have to do something in the winter.

He was Dennis Mason's firefighter in 1973 in Morgan Hill. Now, he controls where these fire engines go. He decides which engines go out of county. Out of the 12 engines he has, on any given day if there is a large wildland fire somewhere, he chooses which engines in Santa Cruz or San Mateo County stay staffed. Because of CAL FIRE's commitment to the County of Santa Cruz and their support of CAL FIRE through the Amador program during the winter, it is his standard that the Amador stations (Corralitos, Burrell, Saratoga Summit, and Big Creek) stay staffed. There are situations where he may only have one or two engines left. It could take several hours for engines from other parts of the State to cover those stations. They would staff the County engines. They pay the volunteers in the County or they bring employees in on overtime to staff those engines so at least those four fire stations are covered.

There is no guarantee for any agency that it will be staffed 24/7. The City of Watsonville, for example, could be on an incident and receive a simultaneous call so they are not available. They cannot afford to have an engine on every corner in California. There is not always immediate backup for simultaneous calls.

Commissioner Begun asks Chief Ferreira if he asked to get more funding from the County.

Chief Ferriera replies that for Santa Cruz County Fire Department, the citizens of CSA 48 pay about six cents out of every dollar in property tax. This compares to about 13 cents, 15 cents, or 21 cents in other fire districts. Six cents out of every taxpayer dollar goes towards the fire fund. Additionally, the property owners in the service area pay \$121 per year for a normal house on top of that.

Commissioner Begun asks if he asked the Board of Supervisors for more money, but got bigger cuts than normal in most counties.

Chief Ferreira answers that this is a special district as a service area. Because of Proposition 13, counties had to grapple with how to keep the sheriff, hospitals, emergency services, communications, and libraries funded. They came up with a mechanism where they allocated, based upon what an agency's current draw from that single taxpayer dollar was. At that time, County Fire's draw was only six cents. There is not a mechanism in this County to increase that amount without taking it away from some other part of county government.

Mr. McCormick says that 91 percent of the population in this County is either in a fire protection district or a city fire department. The County is the defacto provider of emergency services for the other nine percent, which is County Fire. The County has segregated the accounts. The County does not put any county general fund money into County Fire. For example, a resident of the Central Fire Protection District would not want the County General Fund funding someone else's fire service since they are already providing their own. The 24,000 people in County Fire have had a segregated account and that account pays for all the services they receive.

Commissioner Campos adds that it breaks down to six or seven percent. The Aptos area pays 13 cents. Pajaro Valley gets 11 cents. Proposition 13 penalized the County because they were fiscally prudent. Bonny Doon was also fiscally prudent. When comparing to other areas like Los Angeles or Pismo Beach, this County is way under the average.

Chief Ferreira says San Mateo County has Schedule A, paramedics, and 3-person engine companies. That is how it was the day Proposition 13 was voted for.

Commissioner Campos responds to a woman who said that CAL FIRE had come to the Board of Supervisors to ask for more money to put in a station. He does not think that happened.

Chief Ferreira says the Supervisors set the level of service. That is what he develops a budget for. Every March, they bring that budget to the Supervisors. Unless the Board has directed them to add people or services, then what is presented is the same number of people and if there has been any change in salaries or any other provisions.

Commissioner Campos says if there is a vote to increase services for fire, it would have to be a countywide vote.

Chief Ferreira clarifies that it would have to be a vote of the population of the County Service Area 48.

He makes a correction to earlier testimony. The proposal to provide the fifth engine company in Bonny Doon does not include any increase of 20 firefighters. It is reallocating the 20 firefighters that are already assigned during the winter. Instead of having some engine companies as 3-persons and some at 2-persons, which is a change made because of a decrease in revenues 1.5 years ago, they are talking about going to five 2-person engine companies with a commitment from the County that over a period of time, they would get back to 3-person engine companies.

Commissioner Campos shares Corralitos with Supervisor Pirie. They have had discussions with Chief Ferreira and the Watsonville Fire Department to get a partnership working that includes sharing training. They have to overcome egos because everyone has their turf.

Commissioner Jim Anderson asks if it is an issue that it has to be only recognized CAL FIRE training or is it because of the fees involved in some of the training.

Chief Ferreira says the issue is that there is training that is mandated by the State, not CAL FIRE, and there is federally-mandated training when it comes to the incident command system and management systems. There are many elements of training. They attempt to utilize other resources besides CAL FIRE's to provide that training. He thinks their training spends more time with the volunteer companies than the paid companies because their paid firefighters are there all day long. That is the huge difference between the career firefighter and the volunteer, but they still have to be trained to the same standard. As a volunteer firefighter, they go into the same burning building or dangerous environment as a paid firefighter. It takes a lot of time to be trained. 18 months could be a little longer than anticipated. He knows of one volunteer that was trained in 9 months. It depends on the availability of the trainee. They cannot give the same class 15 times. They try to include all six volunteer companies in the County along with the volunteers in San Mateo County to maximize the training efforts.

Commissioner Jim Anderson asks if trainees could find training from elsewhere besides CAL FIRE.

Chief Ferreira says yes and the County would pay for it.

Commissioner Jim Anderson says Felton goes through the same thing with scheduling issues and it takes time.

Mr. McCormick says Chief Ferreira correctly characterized CAL FIRE's relationship with County Fire. CAL FIRE is an a la carte service provider. CAL FIRE has a price schedule with a menu. The locals come to CAL FIRE if they are contracting with them, and the locals direct what level of service they get. In the San Mateo-Santa Cruz ranger unit, they have fire departments with urban paramedic service, where the community can afford it.

The current way the County the pays for the service is through a single unified contract with all of the departments within the geographic areas of CSA 48. When LAFCCO's recommendations were sent to the Board of Supervisors, one of the proposals put forward to them was the option of the County zoning CSA 48 so that each response area has their own ability to ask for enhancements above the basic level of service the County can afford. Then they could have their own separate Proposition 218 election.

One of the concepts of establishing a Bonny Doon CAL FIRE station at little or no cost to the County or the Bonny Doon residents is that if a station were built, there is an opportunity for Bonny Doon to pay more than the other CAL FIRE communities. They can go to the County, go through the County Fire Department Advisory Commission, and present a higher level of service that they would be willing to pay for, and then they could vote on it.

Commissioner Campos asks if it would be similar to Pajaro Dunes.

Mr. McCormick answers yes. Pajaro Dunes pays much more than any options for Bonny Doon. Pajaro Dunes has a dedicated station that does not roll to any other community outside of Watsonville on mutual aid.

Commissioner Campos says this can be worked out by working with different entities. He wants to enhance the service in his district and include Corralitos even though it is not in his district. He hopes people gain as a whole. The emergency calls outnumber the fire calls. 80 to 90 percent of the calls in his area are medical. A paramedic is needed in Watsonville City. He is figuring out how to put paramedics in Pajaro Valley Fire so they can help Corralitos. When the Corralitos station is called away from the area down south, the surrounding stations are able to cover each other. There is no lack of support.

This decision will cost money and the people of Bonny Doon are willing to pay for it. It could be decided on a ballot.

Supervisor Coonerty worked to make moving a station from Felton to Bonny

Doon possible.

Mr. Scully says it is about response time. It is about getting the McDermott station staffed. If it is staffed with CAL FIRE, the response time is reduced significantly. If it is staffed by a fire district, it is also reduced significantly with a couple caveats. One is recruitment retention. The second engine due has to be staffed by volunteers. A fire district supports their volunteers. County Fire supports their volunteers the best they can, but a fire district does a much better job similar to San Lorenzo Valley, which is a very successful system.

They are asking, with their proposal that could be amended, to go their citizens and raise their taxes.

The County will have to pay for an Amador station if that happens. It is not yet a proposal to the Supervisors, but it has been proposed by the County Fire Department Advisory Commission. The September 9<sup>th</sup> document on page 85 shows the \$250,000 figure. It will apparently cost the County \$250,000 more than they are currently paying to CAL FIRE to get the 5<sup>th</sup> Amador station. \$250,000 is the figure he has usually heard that would be the loss to County Fire. County Fire will lose either way, and they will have to come up with the money. The Bonny Doon proposal says they will take care of the money themselves. They will take that burden from the County.

Trainees can go elsewhere, such as Monterey, to take classes. These volunteers have jobs. The model they are following models after the San Lorenzo Valley volunteers. They have classes in their facility. They want classes in their facility too. They want to give their volunteers a shorter time to train by having their own training program that is based upon their needs.

Commissioner Coonerty wants clarification from Chief Ferreira regarding the \$250,000 cost if an engine is moved to the McDermott station.

Chief Ferreira replies that CAL FIRE attempted to develop scenarios. He is talking about five two-person companies. They are also talking about a scenario to keep the same level of service, and that is what was intending to go to the Board of Supervisors. That may be the disparity in the numbers.

Kathleen Lineberry says they worked with three or four different scenarios. One of them was to reduce staffing across the board and go to two-person engine companies at five stations. That would increase the budget that is currently available for that program by approximately \$160,000.

Commissioner Coonerty asks if this is seasonal or year-round.

Ms. Lineberry answers that this cost covers the Amador period of seven months. The engine would be in Bonny Doon all year. The engine would be there for 12 months, but the local funding cost would cover winter staffing. They looked at sustainability and they can sustain that program for approximately three to four years, before having to make some increase in revenue.

Commissioner Coonerty asks if that is done, would there be any increase in costs.

Ms. Lineberry answers there is a fund balance they would take the money from. They went through a scenario of how long the money would last and they came up with a three to four year plan as the funding is now, with no change in funding.

Commissioner Coonerty says Commissioner Pirie is not here and he is the LAFCO alternate. He is taking her place. He did not participate in the vote at the September hearing. He will be voting at this hearing.

He says this is a very difficult decision. From the staff report, CAL FIRE, the citizens of Bonny Doon, and Mr. Scully and his proposal, he thinks the issues are well-defined. These issues are difficult to solve. Public safety is an essential service.

The public service that is provided by the volunteers is extraordinary and at the highest level. They devote a lot of time and it takes a lot of time to qualify as volunteer firefighter. They are at a very professional level. They are willing to put their life at risk for their neighbors.

This proposal has taken several years to prepare and it has been an exhaustive process. The proponents have done a good job putting the proposal together. He does not have any problems with the budget proposed. If the proposal goes forward, he is sure they will work on the budget to define the costs. That would be taken to the voters to approve it. The budget, as it stands now, is credible.

There has been a lot of testimony about the transfer of assets from the County. There has not been a conclusion reached. He is confident that this is not a serious impediment. At some point, there will be a conclusion which will be somewhere between \$1 and the County figure. It will be realistic and it may come by way of mediation. It would have to be defined before the actual vote would go to the residents of Bonny Doon.

He has been a Supervisor for two years. Over the last three or four years, there

has been a number of issues that affect the decision. One is that before Governor Davis left office, the State gave an increase in wages and benefits to CAL FIRE firefighters. He thinks it is well-deserved and reasonable. But it meant that the contract that the County carries with them was going to bear increased costs. Because of the increased costs, the County then went out to seek approval from the voters to maintain the same amount of service by increasing the CSA 48 fee. The measure was defeated. Even though it was not going to provide additional service, more money was needed just to maintain the current level of service. The costs keep increasing. Everyone is facing incredible challenges of trying to maintain current financial stability in the face of increased costs or the reduction of money coming in.

The disparity exists between Bonny Doon being able to form a separate district and the impact to the rest of CSA 48. This is why he has a difficult time supporting this separate fire district. It is a budget item that cannot go away. One cannot take an annual cost that will continually come annually in the future and hope to solve it by not buying an engine in one year.

He thinks it is unfair to characterize it that the Big Creek station will close down. He does not know how the Board of Supervisors will handle that sort of impact. The fact is that the financial impact is real and the dollars are not there. The complaints of the Bonny Doon citizens are very real. Their protection is being addressed by CAL FIRE and hopefully will be addressed by the Board of Supervisors because they have to take action for County Fire.

He realizes it is a disappointment to him and to many in Bonny Doon that he cannot find a way to support this proposal. He agrees with staff's recommendation.

Commissioner Jim Anderson says he is a Felton Fire Commissioner. They attempt to train as many people in-house as they can, but it still requires they go elsewhere sometimes for EMT training, for example. It is laborious. He does not think anyone can train everyone in-house. If one can get training done faster, they can take their own initiative.

He questions the proposed budget. The voters would have to decide what kind of money they want to pay for the fire district. Felton Fire attempts to have a paid firefighter and a chief everyday using the same scenario. There are several paid firefighters that volunteer. They do not pay them benefits but they pay them hourly. There are some days they cannot find anyone to cover the station. The population is much greater in Felton than Bonny Doon.

Felton Fire had an engine out of town for five or six weeks on a strike team. If

someone is participating in a strike team format, there will be engines gone with some of the more flexible volunteers covering.

They have had paid firefighters over the years. CAL FIRE employees seem to think they are a little more skilled than volunteers. They come across different with the volunteers understanding that volunteers are required to do the same job as paid firefighters. They have to recognize participation for what it is.

Felton Chief Rickabaugh signed a budget statement because of the conversation he had with the Bonny Doon proponents. He signed the statement because it looked like the budget covered the basis. It was a form letter that said it covered the basis. It is not something he would stake his reputation on that it covered everything and was a perfect scenario.

He finds it hard to support the proposal due to the budget constraints.

Commissioner Begun says the issue is not whether to make Bonny Doon a separate fire district. The issue is how to give Bonny Doon the same level of service that the rest of rural Santa Cruz County enjoys.

Commissioner Barrett says not much has changed since the initial meeting in September. He still supports the right of the Bonny Doon people to vote on their future. He has seen a lot of movement since the September meeting about moving a CAL FIRE truck up to Bonny Doon. It is good to see the Supervisors step up to try to make this work. There are other options Bonny Doon residents can do as far as encumbering their wallets to improve their services.

The bottom line for him is response time. The bottom line is having some medical capabilities on those trucks. The best way to get there is in debate now. He thinks there should be as much support as possible throughout the whole county.

From a LAFCO standpoint, the way to do it is to consolidate and make larger, but he is a firm believer in local control and local involvement. The more local it is, the more involvement there will be. This has been demonstrated by the Bonny Doon residents. He supports Bonny Doon in this process.

Chairperson Rapoza still has concerns about the budget. He agrees with Mr. Coonerty that those concerns are minor in detail compared to the asset transfer issue. He has heard the County voice movement to get better service to Bonny Doon. He would be concerned if the County was successful in placing an engine up in Bonny Doon and the volunteers were discouraged. He thinks it is not the

time to make new fire departments. It may be the time to look at consolidating some fire departments. It is a difficult decision. If Bonny Doon is not satisfied with the movement that has been made a year from now, they can refile this petition. If that happened, and inadequate steps had been made by the people who have the authority to do it, this Commission might act entirely different.

**ACTION**

Motion: Campos Second: J. Anderson	To approve staff's recommendations to deny the reconsideration.  The motion passes with Commissioners Barrett and Begun saying NO.
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**RESOLUTIONS OF APPRECIATION FOR CLIFF BARRETT AND EMILY REILLY**

**ACTION**

Motion: Campos Second: Begun	To approve Resolution Nos. 2008-12 and 2008-13.  The motion carries with a unanimous voice vote.
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Alternate Reilly thinks being on LAFCO has been fascinating, yet complicated, and endlessly interesting. It has been a pleasure to get to know the Commissioners. She has enjoyed seeing how the City of Santa Cruz fits into what goes on within LAFCO.

Commissioner Barrett says it has been a pleasure to serve on LAFCO. It has been enlightening, but he is looking toward a full retirement and a new life with no more public hearings and no more committee meetings.

**ACTION**

Motion: Campos Second: Begun	To adjourn.  The motion carries with a unanimous voice vote.
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Meeting adjourns at 1:16 p.m. The next scheduled regular meeting is Wednesday, January 7, 2009 at 9:30 a.m.

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CHAIRPERSON, JAMES W. RAPOZA

Attest:

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Patrick M. McCormick, Executive Officer