



MENLO PARK FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Overview for Potential Board Candidates

ORGANIZATION

Menlo Park Fire Protection District provides fire and emergency service to the Cities of Menlo Park and East Palo Alto, Town of Atherton, and areas of San Mateo County. There are seven stations, one rescue site and one support/training facility. Additionally, the District participates in the San Mateo County automatic aid agreement, and has mutual aid agreements with neighboring county jurisdictions and the State of California. The District is also the home to the Urban Search and Rescue Team – California Task Force 3 – part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security/FEMA's National Disaster Response System.

MISSION STATEMENT

Excellence in Service – we deliver the highest level of emergency service, preparedness, prevention, and education.

HISTORY

On September 16, 1915, a note of order was restored to the community when a group of residents petitioned the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, and the Menlo Park Fire Protection District was formed. The boundaries of the fire district followed lines similar to those drawn for the original incorporation of Menlo Park.

The District's first Fire Chief was Frank P. Roach, a former volunteer. The District's first paid firefighter, Leslie Brown was hired in 1918 on a demanding schedule of 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for very meager wages. The Fire District has grown significantly and stations have been added as communities formed. The District boundaries grew to cover approximately seventeen square miles by the 1940s. Recently, much of the marshland and bay water area has been added to the District's responsibility, making for a total of about 30 square miles. The District will celebrate its centennial anniversary in 2016.

GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

Board of Directors - Five elected officials are charged with providing strategic leadership and direction and fiscal oversight. Directors serve four years terms with elections staggered every two years. Officers of the Board are a president and vice president, are selected in December of each year, and take office the following January.

Responsibilities & Duties: the Board is responsible for ensuring fire administration, protection, and emergency service. Specific responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Providing District leadership and direction
- Establishing District and Board policies
- Hiring and supervising the Fire Chief
- Providing budgetary direction and approval and fiscal responsibility
- Enacting appropriate and necessary ordinances, codes, and regulations which pertain to fire safety and preparedness and emergency service

The Board meets monthly, more often as necessary, to approve warrants, discuss and finalize committee action, pass resolutions and ordinances, and act on any other related business. The Board has three standing committees - Finance, Human Resources, and Strategic Planning -- which usually meet monthly; *ad hoc* committees may also be established from time to time. Two Directors are assigned to each committee. Committees study, explore and discuss related issues and matters and provide reports and recommendations during Board meetings. In addition to committee assignments, the President may task Directors with other responsibilities such as liaison to interact with cities, neighboring jurisdictions, or task forces. The President meets regularly with the Fire Chief.

Directors are encouraged to become familiar with and visit the various fire stations; attend department functions; and understand the history, traditions, and workings of the fire service and Menlo Park Fire Protection District.

Eligibility: Directors must reside within the Fire District and comply with election requirements as established by the County of San Mateo and State of California.

Fire Chief - is selected by and responsible to the Board of Directors and is responsible for overall department administration and operation.

Chief Officers & Management Staff - assist in the department's operation and administration.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

President – Bart Spencer – bartspencer@menlofire.org

Vice President – Peter Ohtaki – petero@menlofire.org

Fire Chief – Harold Schapelhouman – harolds@menlofire.org

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