

TFSC Board Meeting

January 27, 2026

Location: 14993 Camage Avenue, Sonora, CA

Approved February 24, 2026

Board members present: Al Alt, Executive Director; Chrystal Aceves, Treasurer; Eileen Carlen; Gary Sanchez, VP; Jerry McGowen; Joe Milani; Karen Caldwell, President.

Members and Guests present: Jeff Cox, CalFire Battalion Chief, Wildfire Preparedness - Unit PIO, Glen Gottschall, Jerry Usrey, Jamie Wolfe.

Call to order: 9:06 AM.

President Updates – Karen Caldwell

Karen reported that she had convened a steering group of key stakeholders on January 22 to begin Phase 2 of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The purpose of the meeting was to establish the process for identifying fuels treatment areas within the six Fire Planning Units (FPUs) of the county established in the 2023 CWPP. The group decided to modify FPU boundaries using PODs (Potential Operational Delineations). The group selected the Groveland FPU, with an adjusted boundary to include Moccasin, as the first unit to conduct a more detailed analysis to identify and prioritize Fuel treatment areas. There was agreement to request participation from the SWIFT collaborative group.

FSC President Karen requested approval from the board to conduct board meetings using a modified Robert's Rules framework, but with a more relaxed, consensus-based decision-making process that promotes flow and open conversation, reflecting her more informal style. After the discussion, Director Sloan agreed but suggested we maintain a recorded vote to ensure transparency on board decisions. There was general agreement that all decisions will be recorded in meeting minutes.

Director Sloan moved to adopt a modified version of Robert's Rules with a consensus-based decision-making model. Director Carlen seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

President Karen also reported that the TFSC will not attend the annual Home and Garden Show this year due to increasing costs. Our former partners, USFS and CAL Fire can no longer pay to participate. We will reassess next year.

Social Media Marketing Training is being offered by the Sonora Area Foundation on February 25. Karen and Al plan to attend. Other interested Board members can attend.

Karen was invited to attend Climate and Fire Institute Meeting will be held at Chicken Ranch on March 17.

CA Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force will be meeting on March 19, 20 at Chicken Ranch Resort. Karen will be attending. Registration is open.

A decision by Tuolumne County to close CalFire Station #56 will occur by July of this year. The announcement led to a discussion on the ramifications of response times and safety impacts in the affected communities. The President suggested TFSC contact the Board of Supervisors with our concerns.

Director Sloan moved that the TFSC send a letter to our Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors to express our concern about the closure of the fire station. Chrystal seconded. All agreed, and the motion carried unanimously. Karen and Jerry McGowan will draft letter.

Several Firewise Community Leaders, including Director Chrystal Aceves attend recent CALFIRE training to conduct Defensible Space Assessments. Assessments are not Enforcement inspections. They are an educational service for home owners. Must have homeowner permission to conduct an assessment.

CalFire Battalion Chief, PIO Jeff Cox, offered clarification that defensible Space assessment reporting will not be used by CalFire for compliance purposes. CALFIRE will use the data for trend analysis and educational purposes only. CalFire is developing an app/tool to compile information to identify potential risk areas and trends, informing future Wildfire Mitigation efforts. Chief Cox expressed his desire to attend as many TFSC and Firewise meetings as possible. He looks forward to being actively engaged with partners.

Treasurer's Report: Chrystal Aceves

Director Aceves reported that the TFSC checking account has 55,980.87, the savings account has 369,088.89, and pending invoices total 235,003.27. and stated the TFSC accountant needs more information, corporate or personal, to complete the 2025 1099 forms due by 01/31/2026.

Executive Director's Report: Al Alt

ED Al Alt provided an Active Project Status Report on TFSC progress.

There was a discussion about minimum pay requirements (e.g., salary, benefits), and reworking budget amendments across all projects to reflect the budgetary impact and potential

implementation. It is unclear at this point whether AB 338, effective 07/01/2026, and these new requirements will apply. Al stated that the process was very time-intensive and that this was the first pass; more budget adjustments may be necessary.

Director Sloan moved to table the issue of minimum wage requirements until we have precise knowledge of the law's requirements. Director Carlen seconded the motion; it carried unanimously.

ED Al Alt stated that he had inspected all active projects with the project managers before providing the status of the active project reports to the board, and that he had attended the Phase 2 CWPP meeting with TFSC President Karen, Treasurer Chrystal Aceves, and VP Gary Sanchez at Black Oak Casino.

The PG&E grant is now available and due in a couple of weeks. President Karen commented that these grants are for hazardous fuel reduction in areas that can affect PG&E infrastructure. (i.e., transition or distribution lines, ingress agrees, etc.) The TFSC board agreed to postpone the grant application due to the short timeframe. The board will hold off this year, with the intention of applying in the next cycle with a shovel-ready project(s). ED, Al Alt, stated that he had drafted the PG&E grant framework and is ready to apply if the board decides to proceed.

ED Al Alt provided an update on the cost of the Microsoft 365 Suite at \$768 per year for the entire board and suggested we purchase licenses for the tools the TFSC can use to conduct business on the same platforms as CalFire and our partners. The TFSC Board will receive email addresses under the FSC domain.

President Caldwell moved to purchase Microsoft 365, Director Carlen seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Open Agenda

President Caldwell opened a discussion on mileage reimbursement for board members conducting TFSC business. Treasurer Chrystal Aceves requested that mileage reimbursements be pre-approved as part of the budget process to ensure transparency and planning. Discussion identified the need to set limits in our procedures. No decision was made

Due to time constraints, we were unable to complete the full agenda. A second Closed meeting was set for February 10, 1:30 @GVCC.

Adjournment 12:26 PM