

**SCHELL-VISTA**  
*District*  
**FIRE**  
*est. 1942*

2023-2028

May 2023

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## Message From the Fire Chief

I would like to acknowledge the entire organization for their input and support as we plan our future together. There is a saying that often comes to mind when we are focused as a group, *"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."* This statement is a great reminder to me that we are stronger together!

With consideration of the past and the input of the present, the membership of the Schell-Vista Fire District has taken time in planning our future and developing a shared **Vision** to meet our **Mission** to the communities that we serve through strong core **Values**.

*"To do more for the world that the world does for you, that is success."  
Henry Ford.*

Special appreciation to the following members for their work in our Strategic Goal Setting process:

**Staff:** Assistant Chief Mike Mulas, Battalion Chief Mike Medeiros

**Association Representatives:** Captain Jack Todeschini, Captain Burie Fitzpatrick, Firefighter Robert Castillo

**Labor Representatives:** Captain Matt Gardner, Engineer Chanton EM

**Board of Directors:** President Ernie Loveless, Mindy Neves

**Facilitator:** Dana Hampson

## Session Goals and Guidelines

Chief Ray Mulas shared the following session goals:

- Open and Honest Communications
- Defining Reality, where we are now and what the public expects from us.
- Where we should be heading for the future (18mo., 3yrs.,5 yrs.)
- Maintain and evolve traditions of the department while expanding future needs.
- Define our strengths and weaknesses and how we can enhance any of them.
- Establish goals that support the department's creation of the Mission, Vision, and Value statements.

Guidelines:

The following guidelines were established by the team:

- Honesty
- Transparency
- Engagement
- Accountability
- Don't interrupt.
- Open-minded
- Value each other's opinions
- Confidentiality
- Respectful

April 25, 2023  
8:00a.m. – 2:30p.m.  
(Agenda)

**Meeting Goal:** An opportunity for the District’s Management, Elected Officials, and Union Leadership to review where we are as an organization, determine where we want to go and develop a plan on how we will get there.

Welcome

Goals & Objectives for the Meeting

Meeting Guidelines

2022 Accomplishments/Highlights

Where are we now? SWOT Exercise

Where do we want to go?

Goal Setting

What support is needed to accomplish these goals?

Team Commitments

Talking points to share with staff.

Session Reflections

Next Steps

## 2022 Accomplishments

Chief Ray Mulas and Director Loveless reviewed the following District accomplishments.

- The passing of a tax measure allowing the district to hire 2/0 staffing.
- Creating and maintaining a Firefighter Stipend Program.
- Establishing an equipment replacement schedule.
- Election of the Districts first women on the Board of Directors.
- Installation of Fuel System at Station 1.
- Multiple successful grants for communications.
- Plymovent exhaust systems for both stations.
- Sustaining an all-volunteer agency from 1949-2014.
- 2012, Board went from 3 to 5 members.
- 2014- Hired first permanent employee, a Fire Captain (40 hours).
- 2017- Hired 3 Captains to staff engine 24/7 all while maintaining and valuing volunteers.
- 2018- Passed bond measure to hire 3 Engineers to increase staffing to 2/0.
- 2022- Appointed first female board member.

### The rest of the group added the following accomplishments:

- Equipment purchases by volunteers.
- Fundraising success.
- Volunteer support of the district.
- Keeping volunteers.
- Culture of family.
- Establishing a resident unit and program.
- Transitions from volunteer -> Stipend -> Career personnel.
- All staff started as a volunteer.
- Self-sufficient.
- Strong relationship with Cal-Fire co-operator.

## Where are we now?

Team used the SWOT framework to align on the district's current state.

## Strengths

- Employee growth and advancement opportunity
- Community engagement and relationships
- Fundraising abilities
- Recruitment
- Volunteer sustainability
- Facilities and Equipment
- Mutual aid and auto aid agreements
- Ability to up staff
- Explorer post program
- Forward thinking
- Individuals are respected and have a voice
- Openness, open doors, responsive, available
- Family engagement / inclusion
- Professionalism
- Combination department
- Financially strong and fiscally responsible
- Supportive with equipment
- Self-sustaining
- Flexibility – get it done attitude
- Good relationships:
  - Raceway
  - CalFire
  - Sonoma Fire
  - Counties of Marin, Napa, Solano and Sonoma
  - Region 9

## Weaknesses

- Explorer program enrolment and recruitment
- Becoming more bureaucratic
- Financial transparency (e.g. tax measure)
- Tax fatigue
- Communications on major decisions
- Overworking staff
- Compensation- paid and stipend
- Mechanic resource in-house
- Values and skills training
- Recruitment and retentions (Compensation)
- Diversity
- Training frequency and programming
- Controlling false information
- Career development
- Funding – we can always do more
- Branding
- Communications
- Career development and enhancement (e.g. drivers)
- Vision
- Executive assistance support
- Administrative support
- Technology for volunteers
- Respect- lack of up and down the district

## Opportunities

- Bolster administrative staff to reduce line staff administrative duties
- Improve and more consistent communications
- Utilize technology platforms to reduce administration
- Increase training frequency
- Add staffing – 3/0 Engine
- Community outreach (disaster preparedness, schools, open house)
- Recognize support services (cooks for events etc.)
- Engage youth and retirees
- Recruitment- open house, career days, mini academy for seniors “Fire Camp” summer time
- Branding
- ALS vs. BLS
- Grants
- Review charges/fees/assessments for incremental revenue
- Vertical integration- Promote from within
- Support sales tax measure in county

## Threats

- LAFCO / Consolidation / annexation
- Staffing and retention
- Affordability of volunteer program
- Funding- renews every 4 years
- Succession planning
- Losing traditional and family values and identity with growth and change
- Internal and external conflicts
- State and or County pressure to consolidate
- Infrastructure (e.g. roads, water supply etc.)
- Board succession planning
- Changing district demographics
- JPA requirements
- City annexation of public lands and fiscal impact to district.

## Vision, Mission, and Core Values

The group confirmed and validated Vision, Mission, and Values.

## Vision

*It is the Vision of the Schell-Vista Fire Protection District to provide the highest level of professionalism and service to those in our community.*

## Mission

*The Schell-Vista Fire Protection District is committed to protecting Lives, Property and Natural Resources of our community through responsive and effective Fire Protection and Emergency Services.*

## Values

### **As Members of the Schell-Vista Fire District We Value:**

- Family
- Tradition
- Compassion
- Professionalism
- Honesty
- Accountability
- Loyalty
- Integrity

## Where do we want to go....

After completing the SWOT analysis, the group spend some time articulating the desired future stat of the organization:

- 3/0 Staffing with stipends
- Administrative duties (Division of labor amongst existing Chiefs)
- Pay parity (Establish a list of comparable agencies)
- 2 stipend staff until achieving 3/0 staffing.
- Investment in volunteer program
- Self-controlled growth
- Regular analysis of weaknesses
- Administrative assessment/planning/staffing
- Branding awareness
- Board and Committees succession planning, outreach, and training

## Goal Identification & Prioritization:

The team then identified **near** (0-18 months), **mid** (18 months – 3 years), and **long** terms goals (3-5 years) which were then prioritized by the group resulting in a short list of high-level goals. Below are the full

lists of goals identified by with the number of votes received by the workshop group.

The outcome of the exercise was the ratification of the following **goals**:

- Administrative support roadmap (10 votes)
- Branding (5 votes)
- Bolstering Staffing/recruiting, including 2-0 stipend program (12 votes)
- Board committees – activate and staffed (0 votes)
- Pay parity (10 votes)
- Infrastructure improvement (7 votes)
- Volunteer program investment (5 votes)
- Evaluate ALS program (1.5 votes)
- 3-0 staffing (12 votes)
- Pay parity (10 votes)
- Administrative JPA or staffing (3 votes)
- Regular review of weaknesses (2 votes)
- Board Succession (5 votes)
- Equipment purchase/maintenance & vehicle replacement program (6 votes)
- Facility evaluation- South County {Track location} (10 votes)
- **Long term**
- Full administrative staffing planning (Training officer, 40-hour office technician, 40-hour administrative Battalion Chief)
- Annexation/JPA evaluation

After reviewing the vote count the group agreed upon the following **goals**:

**Near Term Goals** (0-18 months):

- Administrative support roadmap

- Bolster Staffing- 2/0 stipend program and recruiting
- Pay parity / compaction adjustment.
- Facility maintenance program
- Branding / marketing / outreach

#### Mid Term Goals (18 months - 3 years):

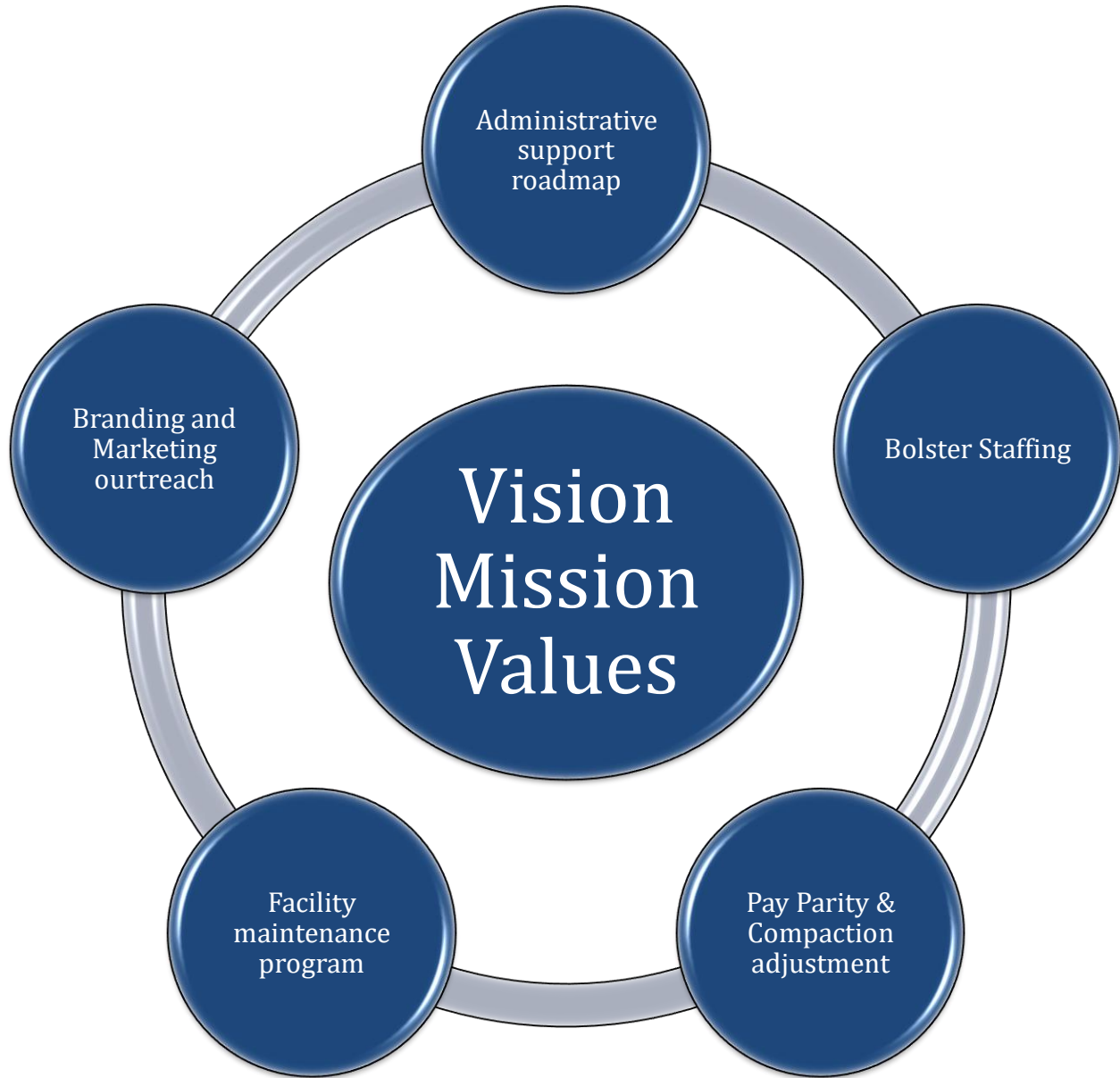
- 3-0 staffing
- Pay parity (if not addressed)
- South County Facility evaluation {Raceway location?}
- Board succession planning
- Long term capital / equipment replacement and maintenance program

#### Long Term Goals (3 – 5 years):

- Full administrative staffing evaluation and planning
- Annexation / JPA evaluation

## **How are we going to get there:**

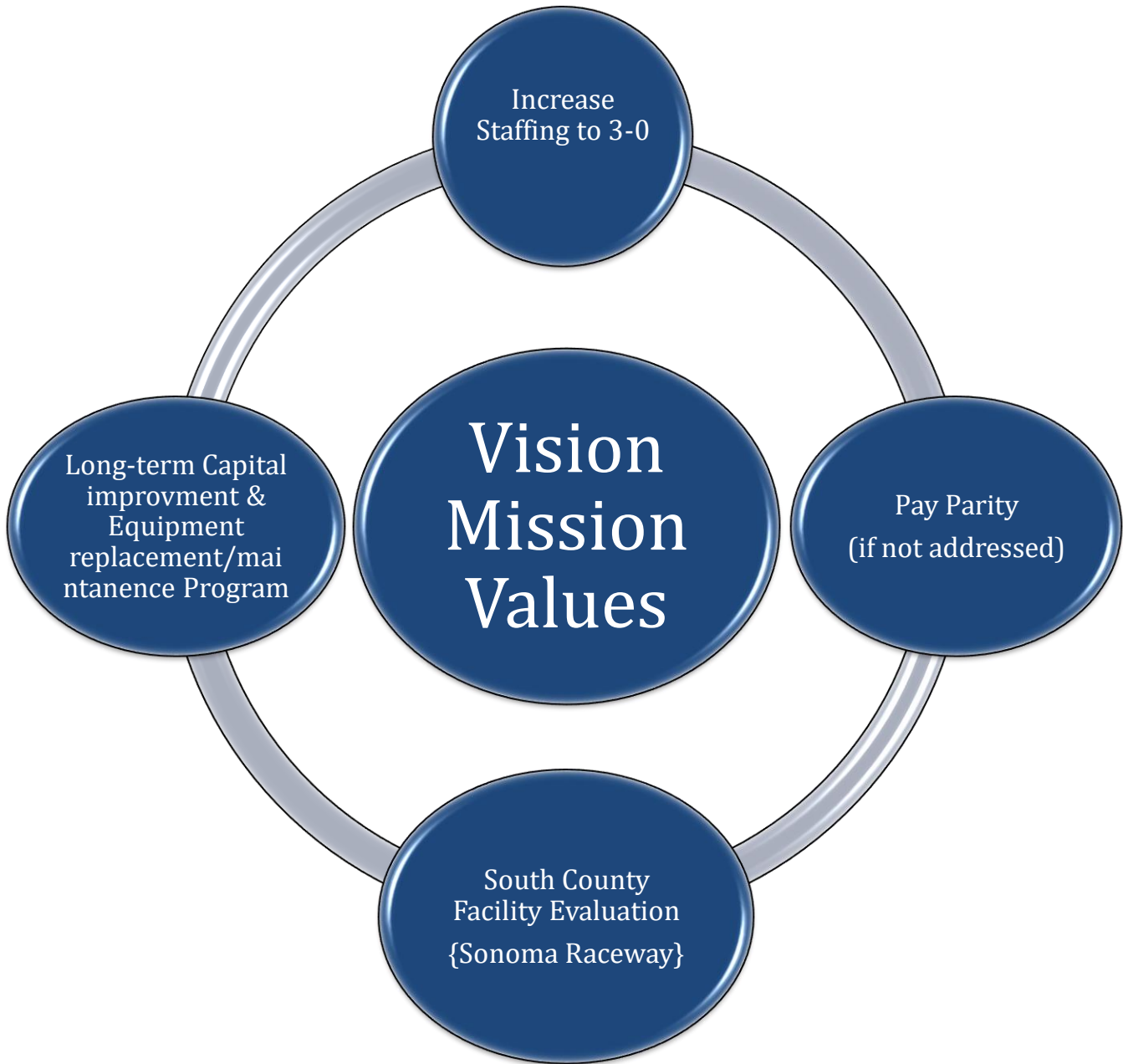
## Near Term Goals (Now- 18 months)



# Near Term Goals Action Plan

<b>Goal 1 - Administrative support roadmap and division of labor (Staff)</b>	
<i>Objective-To reduce administrative impact on duty crews</i>	
<b>Action Items:</b>	<i>completed</i>
Evaluate current administrative duties and conduct a division of labor pole	Matt/Chanton
Talk with current staff to better understand where they feel overwhelmed	
Divide administrative duties under the direction of fire chief	
Restructure organizational chart	
<b>Goal -2 Bolster Staffing</b>	
<i>Objective: Evaluate opportunities to enhance the stipend program to include adding a stipend position until 3-0 is in place.</i>	
<b>Action Items:</b>	<i>completed</i>
Evaluate budget and stipend compensation	B. Kruljac/Fire Chief
Evaluate qualified stipend pool and availability	
Evaluate the need for a full-time firefighter position	
<b>Goal 3 Pay parity &amp; compaction adjustment</b>	
<i>Objective: Improve compensation plan to get parity of comparable where feasible</i>	
<b>Action Items:</b>	<i>completed</i>
Establish comparable agencies and identity compensation differences	B. Kruljac/Fire Chief
Assign Project manager	Galli/Staff
Analyze budget and provide feedback to the board prior to next bargaining period	
<b>Goal 4 Facility maintenance program</b>	
<i>Objective: develop a comprehensive and sustainable annual facilities maintenance program</i>	
<b>Action Items:</b>	<i>completed</i>
Identify a project lead to establish committee (get volunteers involved)	Mindy/Fire Chief
Identify costs & funding	
Implement annual inspections to identify short- and long-term issues	
Establish an annual maintenance calendar by quarter	
<b>Goal 5 - Branding and Marketing outreach</b>	
<i>Objective: deliver targeted messaging to the community bringing awareness to who we are</i>	
<b>Action Items:</b>	<i>completed</i>
Continue community newsletter "A word from your Fire Chief"	E. Loveless/Fire Chief
Host open houses "Coffee with your Fire Department"	Vol. Assoc./1401
Host a Career Day or Fire Camp for All community members	Vol. Assoc./1401
Utilize homeowner groups to bolster outreach	Vol. Assoc./1401

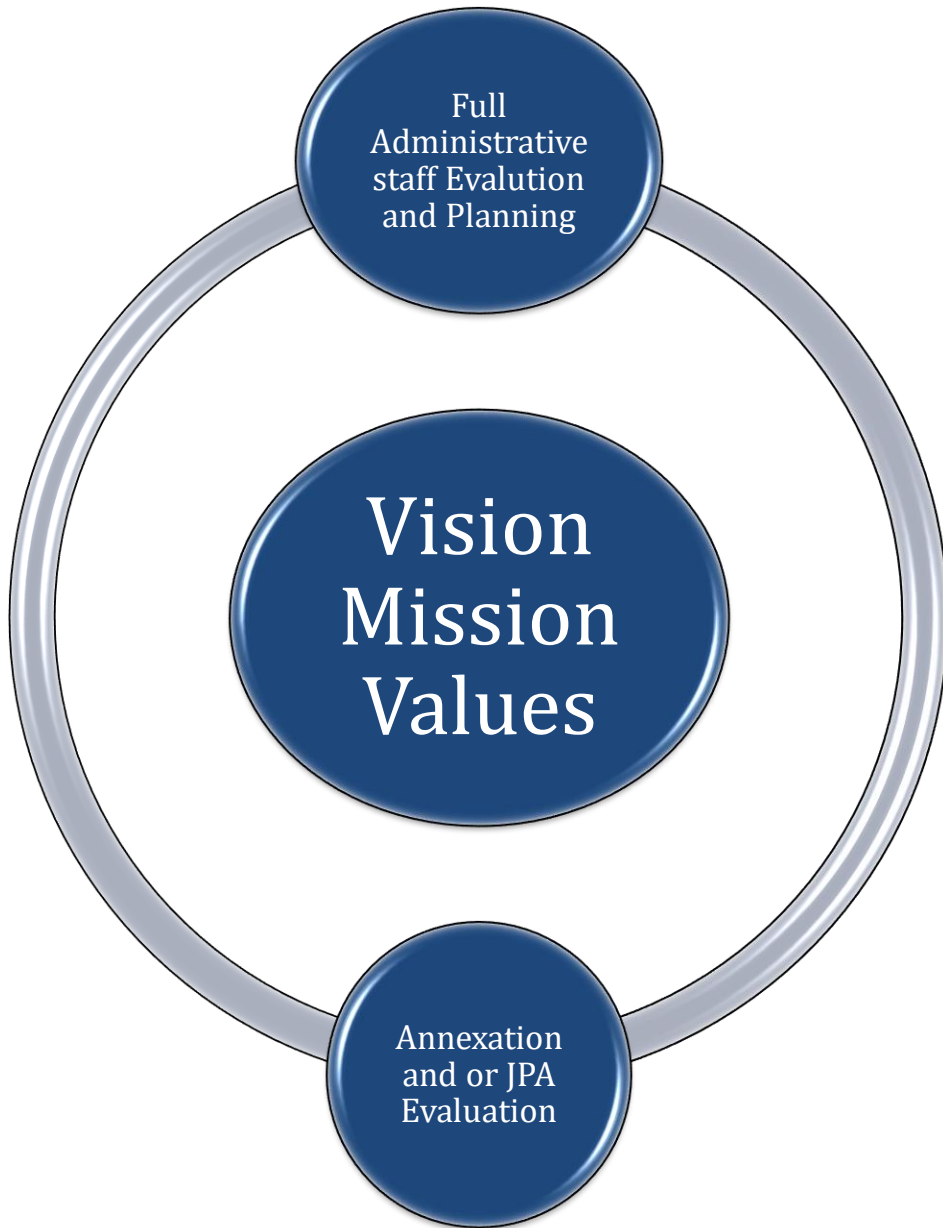
## Medium Term Goals (18 months - 3 years)



## Medium Term Goals Action Plan

<b>Goal 6- Achieve 3-0 Staffing and Enhance Admin Staffing (Clerical/Chief)</b>	
<i>Objective- Establish a fully staffed 3-0 engine company adding a Firefighter position on all 3 shifts</i>	
<b>Action Items:</b>	<i>completed</i>
Consult with board supporting the increases staffing and seeking approval	Fire Chief
Create a job classification for new full-time position of firefighter	Chief Mike/Galli/Medeiros
Create a job announcement and open a recruitment process	Galli/Staff
<b>Goal 7- Pay parity (if this has not already been achieved)</b>	
<i>Objective: Improve compensation of paid staff if it has not been addressed in short term goals</i>	
<b>Action Items:</b>	<i>completed</i>
Review and or develop compensation salary survey	Board/Chief
Establish comparable agencies to develop salary survey	
Assign Project manager	
Continue discussions with board on budget impact	
<b>Goal 8 - South County Facility evaluation {Raceway Station}</b>	
<i>Objective: Determine feasibility of partnering with Raceway on a station location at raceway to better serve the southern part of the district.</i>	
<b>Action Items:</b>	<i>completed</i>
Assign a project lead	Chief Mike
Engage the raceway to determine if this is an option	
Determine the financial impact to include additional staffing and equipment	
Evaluate legal agreements and contracts that may be needed to operate on private property as a district agency.	
Determine needs assessment based on call volume etc.	
<b>Goal 9 - Long-term Capital improvements and equipment replacement/maintenance Program</b>	
<i>Objective: maintain a balanced budget while identifying long term capital improvements as well as annual equipment and facility maintenance and replacement</i>	
<b>Action Items:</b>	<i>completed</i>
Establish rolling 5-year projections on facility needs	Board/Mindy/Chief
Implement annual chief inspections of facilities and equipment to forecast needs	
budget review to determine funding for large improvements	

**Long Term Goals  
(3-5 years)**



Full  
Administrative  
staff Evaluation  
and Planning

Vision  
Mission  
Values

Annexation  
and or JPA  
Evaluation

<b>Goal 10- Full administrative Staffing Evaluation and planning</b>	
<i>Objective- Determine funding and need for a fully Administratively staffed agency.</i>	
<b>Action Items:</b>	<i>completed</i>
Establish a committee to determine funding and needs assessment	Boad/Chief
Determine need for 40-hour administrative assistant	
Determine need for 40-hour Admin Chief	
<b>Goal 11- Annexation and or JPA evaluation</b>	
<i>Objective: Determine a needs assessment on annexation or JPA to assist with administrative needs based on budget balance.</i>	
<b>Action Items:</b>	<i>completed</i>
Identify Needs	Board
ID Funding / budget source	
RFP for project if JPA	
Project manager	
timeline	

## Long Term Goals Action Plan

### What support is needed to accomplish the goals?

After a brief discussion, the group aligned on the following support needed from each other to accomplish the goals:

- Cooperation
- Regular Transparent communication
- One voice

### Team Commitments:

After aligning on goal and asking each other, each team member voiced their commitment to the plan by saying “I commit to the plan”.

**Staff Asks of the Directors:**

- Active engagement
- Communication
- To remain informed
- Committee participation
- Budget reflecting priorities
- Open minded when it comes to the future of the organization prioritizing level of service as #1 objective.
- Decision-making based on Vision, Mission, and Values
- Proactive Board supporting management with goals for the betterment of the district.

**Director Asks of the Staff:**

- Provide accurate information.
- Present options
- Provide pros and cons.
- Reasonable implementation timeframes
- United front on issues once agreed on – ONE VOICE

**Talking Points:**

After concluding the work, the team came up with the following talking points that could be used with staff, directors and other stakeholders until a more detailed summary and the goals are shared with the broader team.

- Codified the Districts Mission, Vision, and Values
- Aligned on near/mid/long term goals, including the following:
  - Administrative support plan
  - Increased staffing
  - Pay parity.

## Next Steps:

The group came up with the following next steps:

- Detail out the goals- Attach names.
- Regular staff check- ins.
- Regular board reports- visual aids where possible
- This group team check-ins every two months.
- Dedicated briefing sessions for the remainder of the board.
- Communications plan