

TUOLUMNE COUNTY FIRE SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

Date/Time: Wednesday, October 22, 2025, at 3:00 pm
Location: ANF Building, 48 Yaney Ave 3rd Floor Committees Room, Sonora, CA 95370
Contact: Office of Emergency Services at oes@co.tuolumne.ca.us (209) 533-6395

Chair

Supervisor Ryan Campbell

Vice Chair

Supervisor Steve Grier

Member Representatives

- Tuolumne County Fire
- Tuolumne County Sheriff
- City of Sonora
- Tuolumne County Fire Chiefs Association
- Public Representatives
 - Scott Fremd
 - Charles Sloan
 - Betsy Hurst-Younger

Advisory Members

- Chicken Ranch Band of Me-Wuk Indians
- Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians
- Tuolumne Fire Safe Council
- USFS Stanislaus

Staff

OES Assistant Director
Dore A. Bietz

2025 Strategic Goals

1. Support recommendations to improve and secure sustainable funding for fire safety.
2. Support increased education and outreach of Fire Safety and Wildfire Preparedness campaigns.
3. Support coordinated fuels reduction projects and secure funding for prioritized fuels management projects.
4. Support advocacy to address fire insurance rate impacts for Tuolumne County residents and businesses.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL – In attendance (Y).

Supervisor Campbell (Y)
Supervisor Grier (Y)
Tuolumne County Fire – BC Mario Torres/Chief Gorham (Y)
Sonora Fire – Chief Carlson (Y)
Tuolumne County Sheriff – David Vasquez (Y)
Public Rep – Charles Sloan (Y)
Public Rep – Betsy Hurst-Younger (Y)
Public Rep – Scott Fremd Y
Tuolumne Fire Chiefs Association – Neil Gamez (A)

Confirm quorum requirements are met (Quorum = 5 members) –
MET w/8

Tuolumne County
Dore Bietz – OES Staff

III. PUBLIC FORUM

The public may speak on any item, not on the agenda. No action may be taken by the Committee.

Public Comment (limited to 3 minutes per person)

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR MEETING 8/27/2025

Motioned by Supervisor Grier, 2nd by Scott Fremd, One abstention
Betsy Hurst-Younger. All in favor

V. PRESENTATIONS

- a. Tuolumne Community Based Fire Resilience Project Presentation

Public Comment (limited to three minutes per person)

VI. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- a. Staff Reports, Updates and Recommendations – Staff discussed the Chinese Camp 6-5 Fire, updated on the Debris Removal process, Insurance issues.

Public Comment (limited to three minutes per person)

VII. DISCUSSION and/or APPROVAL OF

- a. Discussion of vacant Historic Properties and defensible space in either Hazardous vegetation management ordinance or creating ordinance to address. Staff presented request form Historic Preservation Committee on requirements of Defensible space on historic properties. Fire agencies stated it should be covered in 4291 as a “structure”. Chief New suggested looking at “historic properties” exemptions that might be associated with parcels.

Public Comment (limited to 3 minutes per person)

Public stated that we should be investing more in enforcement and Firewise communities. Some suggested that we have a day to educate communities. Others suggested we revisited strategies at the state level to fund enforcement. We as a county should lobby for more funding for enforcement and should be pushing on this issue. Chief Gorham spoke about an incident and those structures that have defensible space versus those that do not. When resources are thin, firefighters are often looking at defensible structures and life safety.

Staff to look at actual language and possible exemptions and to get back to both committees. Bring back on agenda at a future meeting.

VIII. **COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS - none**

Public Comment (limited to 3 minutes per person)

IX. **PARTNER AGENCY UPDATES**

- a. Partner Agency Updates (USFS, Tribes, Fire Safe Council, SWIFT)
 - Tuolumne Fire Safe Council has hired new Executive Director, Albert Alt. CedarRidge is newest Firewise Community brings to 22 total.
 - Chicken Ranch Fire Dept open Aug 6th
 - USFS – Forest Supervisor retiring, Brian McCorry will be acting and then Andy Welsh will be coming back. Pile burning in the Cedar Ridge area currently. Continuing to work on SERAL fuel breaks.

Public Comment (limited to 3 minutes per person)

IX. **ADJOURNMENT**

The Next meeting discussion as it falls day before Thanksgiving.

Unanimous to have a Special mtg on November 18, 2025 and cancel the regular scheduled meeting on November 26, 2025.