

TUOLUMNE COUNTY FIRE SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

Date/Time: Wednesday, February 25th, 2026, 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

Voting 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

2026 Strategic Goals

- Expand education and outreach of Wildfire Preparedness to under informed within Tuolumne County.
- Develop recommendations for enforcing existing vegetation ordinance in Tuolumne County.
- Influence decision makers and expand partnerships to advocate for insurance relief in Tuolumne County.
- Develop recommendations to BOS on Red Flag Ordinance.
- Develop relationships with partners and media to expand our reach to promote successes.
- Support recommendations to improve and secure sustainable funding for fire safety.

I. CALL TO ORDER at 3:03pm

II. ROLL CALL – In attendance (Y)

Voting Members Present
Supervisor Campbell (Y)
Supervisor Grier (Y)
Tuolumne County Fire – Chief Gorham (Y)
Sonora Fire – Chief Gregory (Y)
Tuolumne County Sheriff – (Y) Neil Evans
Public Rep – Charles Sloan (Y)
Public Rep – Betsy Hurst-Younger (Y)
Public Rep – Scott Fremd (Excused)
Tuolumne Fire Chiefs Association – Neil Gamez (Absent)

Advisory Members Present:
Chicken Ranch Fire – Chief New
USFS - Becca Johnson

Tuolumne County Staff – Dore

Confirm quorum requirements are met (Quorum = 7 members)

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 1/27/2026

Motion by Grier, seconded by Chuck All in favor.

V. PRESENTATIONS - None

Public Comment (limited to three minutes per person)

VI. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- a. Staff Reports, Updates and Recommendations
Staff updated committee about the following:
Meeting with Cal OES Fire – Discussion about who should be at the technical meeting with CAL OES FIRE Branch.
Chinese Camp Clean-up – Properties being returned this week, meeting deadline that we are done before March 2, 2026
Local State of Emergency – Issued 2/23 and BOS ratifying Thursday 2/26. Will incorporate costs of recent storms and PGE Canal/potential water delivery issue. Looking ahead put on the agenda presentation on the Flume.
Pinecrest Parking – Recommended from Natural Resources Committee. Was heard at recent BOS but did not get enough

support and staff directed to bring back later date. Fire Safety and Evacuation Readiness is main concern and think this committee should weigh in. Supervisors Grier would like to have an adhoc committee.

Low Impact Camping – [Assembly Bill 518](#) (2025–2026), signed by Governor Newsom, authorizes California counties to permit "low-impact camping areas" (LICAs) on private land, exempting them from certain state-level, high-cost commercial campground regulations. This legislation aims to increase affordable, small-scale camping options and reduce pressure on public lands, allowing local governments to regulate these sites. Board will be considering this and Sean Hembree of the CAOs' office (Natural Resources/Water) is working to prep info before presentations to BOS.

Committee members asked about recommendations to Supervisors of what fees or regulations we would recommend. Discussion also was brought up about AirBNB and other rentals to pay into the costs of law/fire. Recommended that this come back to the committee when presented to the BOS for Fire Safety considerations.

Supervisor Campbell asked fees for hipcamp, low cost camping, AIRBNB, to be on next agenda. Chief New asked that we add language about checking current businesses. Fee for fire safety, one fee for business license that will affect fire safety. Supervisor Campbell spoke about difference of business license for City versus County. County is required to standard of only cost recovery. Label it fire/life safety inspections. Discussion over fees and where the fees go to.

Public Comment (limited to three minutes per person) – no public comments.

VII. **DISCUSSION and/or APPROVAL OF**

- a. Budget discussion and recommendations to Board of Supervisors on Fire and vegetation management ordinance enforcement.

Discussion on funding for Vegetation Management Ordinance Inspectors - Chief Gorham spoke to about 1 FTE \$101,760 or splitting it into (2) .5 FTE positions.

Discussion of coordination with code compliance and cost sharing.

- 2 part-time April 1- Dec 31st – part time \$101,760
- 2 FTE , half vegetation management ordinance, half fire (building) inspector \$202,520

Public Comment (limited to 3 minutes per person)

Public comment spoke about difference between county and Cal Fire, inspections. Difference between 1.8 million fire station versus paying for \$101,760 for 1 FTE equivalent.

S Grier motions, Supervisor Campbell seconds that committee recommends to the BOS that the county fully fund 2 FTE Fire Inspectors to address inspections including hazardous vegetation management ordinance and other duties as assigned for fire inspections.

VIII. **COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS**

a. ***Member Report outs***

Committee spoke of housing real estate and insurance

Public Comment (limited to 3 minutes per person)

IX. **PARTNER AGENCY UPDATES – change to beginning of agenda**

a. Partner Agency Updates

USFS – continuing with pile burning, met with Cal Fire and good neighbor, looking ahead for burning.

Tribes – Chicken Rancheria Fire received a LISTOS grant that has community preparedness trainings. Hands only CPR and disaster Preparedness. Dates on mymotherlode.

Fire Safe Council – Bighill project is complete.

Public Comment (limited to 3 minutes per person)

IX. **ADJOURNMENT at 4:38 pm**

The Next meeting will be March 25th, 2026.

