Sonoma County Fire District Board of Directors
Special Board Agenda
Tuesday August 25, 2026, 2:00 PM
Location: Fire Station 1 - 8200 Old Redwood Hwy. Windsor

The Board meeting agenda and all supporting documents are available for public review at 8200 Old Redwood Highway, Windsor, CA, 24 hours in advance of a scheduled board meeting. Materials related to an item on this Agenda submitted to the Board after distribution of the agenda packet, and not otherwise exempt from disclosure, will be made available for public inspection at the District Office at 8200 Old Redwood Hwy, Windsor, during normal business hours and on the website at www.sonomacountyfd.org. Copies of supplemental materials distributed at the Board meeting will be available for public inspection at the meeting location.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, anyone needing special assistance to participate in this meeting should contact District Executive Assistant Kathy Washington at the District Office at 707-838-1170. Notification 48 hours before the meeting will enable the District to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL
President Klick

Vice President Briare	Secretary/Treasurer Weaver	Director Tognozzi
Director So	Director Hamann	Director Treanor

OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION
(Three-minute time limit)
This is an opportunity for any member of the public to briefly address the District Board on any matter that does not appear on this agenda. Items that appear to warrant a lengthier presentation or Board consideration may be placed on the agenda for discussion at a future meeting.

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS
An opportunity for the Board President to approve adjustments to the current agenda.

DIRECTOR REPORTS
An opportunity for Directors to report on their individual activities related to District business.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT
Chief Busch will report on District administration and operations.

Sonoma County Fire District Board of Directors
Special Board Agenda
Tuesday August 25, 2026, 2:00 PM
Location: Fire Station 1 - 8200 Old Redwood Hwy. Windsor

ACTION ITEMS

PUBLIC HEARING

ORDINANCE 2026-01, AN ORDINANCE OF THE SONOMA COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT AMENDING THE DISTRICTS' SCHEDULE OF FIRE PREVENTION SERVICES FEES

1. **ADOPT ORDINANCE 2026-01**
   The Board will consider adopting Ordinance 2026-01, an Ordinance of the Sonoma County Fire District amending the Districts' schedule of Fire Prevention Services Fees.

   A. OPEN PUBLIC HEARING FOR ORDINANCE 2026-01
   B. CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING
   C. ADOPT ORDINANCE 2026-01

ORDINANCE 2026-02, AN ORDINANCE OF THE SONOMA COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT AMENDING THE DISTRICTS' SCHEDULE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE FEES

2. **ADOPT ORDINANCE 2026-02**
   The Board will consider adopting Ordinance 2026-02, an ordinance of the Sonoma County Fire District amending the Districts' schedule of Emergency Medical Service Fees.

   A. OPEN PUBLIC HEARING FOR ORDINANCE 2026-02
   B. CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING
   C. ADOPT ORDINANCE 2026-02

3. **RESOLUTION 2026-15 A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SONOMA COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT, COUNTY OF SONOMA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, DETERMINING THE TAX RATES TO BE IMPOSED ON ALL REAL PROPERTY WITHIN THE DISTRICT DURING FISCAL YEAR 2026/2027.**
   The Board shall open the item for public hearing and take action upon close of the public comments. The Board will consider approving Resolution 2026-15, determining the tax rates to be imposed on all real property within the District FY 2026/2027.

   A. OPEN PUBLIC HEARING FOR RESOLUTION 2026-15
   B. CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING
   C. ADOPT RESOLUTION 2026-15

Sonoma County Fire District Board of Directors
Special Board Agenda
Tuesday August 25, 2026, 2:00 PM
Location: Fire Station 1 - 8200 Old Redwood Hwy. Windsor

CLOSED SESSION

1. Conference with Real Property Negotiator (Government Code Section 54956.8)
   Property: 4732 Old Redwood Hwy, Santa Rosa, CA 95403
   Agency Negotiator: Chief Busch
   Under Negotiation: Price and terms of payment under negotiation

2. Conference with Real Property Negotiator (Government Code Section 54956.8)
   Property: 16290 5th street, Guerneville, CA 95446
   Agency Negotiator: Chief Busch
   Under Negotiation: Price and terms of payment under negotiation

REPORT OUT ON CLOSED SESSION

ADJOURNMENT

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-01

AN ORDINANCE OF THE SONOMA COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT AMENDING THE DISTRICT SCHEDULE OF FIRE PREVENTION SERVICES FEES

WHEREAS, on July 21, 2020, **t**he Board of Directors ("the Board") of the Sonoma County Fire District of Sonoma County, State of California ("the District") adopted District Ordinance 2020-03, establishing a District schedule of Fire Prevention Services Fees, consistent with Proposition 26 and California Health and Safety Code section 13916 et seq., including an annual inflation adjustment; and

WHEREAS, on December 12, 2023, the District Board adopted District Ordinance 2023-03, to amend the District schedule of Fire Prevention Service Fees, consistent with Proposition 26 and California Health and Safety Code section 13916 et seq., including an annual inflation adjustment; and

WHEREAS, on August 19, 2025, the District Board adopted District Ordinance 2025-03, to amend the District schedule of Fire Prevention Service Fees, consistent with Proposition 26 and California Health and Safety Code section 13916 et seq., including an annual inflation adjustment; and

WHEREAS, the District Board intends this further amendment of the Fire Prevention Services Fees Ordinance to ensure full cost recovery for District services, consistent with Proposition 26 and California Health and Safety Code section 13916 et seq., including an annual inflation adjustment.

NOW THEREFORE, the Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Fire District of Sonoma County, State of California do ordain as follows:

Section I. <u>Purpose and Intent</u>: Pursuant to California Health and Safety Code section 13916 et seq., the District is authorized to charge and collect fees to cover the costs of any service which the District provides or the costs of enforcing any regulation for which the fee is charged. It is the purpose and intent of this Ordinance to establish and impose District-wide fees and issue permits for fire prevention services, including, but not limited to, plan reviews, field inspections for new and remodeled buildings and fire protection systems, based on public safety requirements and community needs.

Section II <u>Fee Schedule</u>: The District hereby adopts the following fee schedule, which is attached as Attachment "A" and incorporated herein by reference: The Sonoma County Fire District Schedule of Fire Prevention Services Fees represents a 2.4% cost of living increase effective September 18, 2025. The fees incorporated herein shall be adjusted annually for inflation. This amended Ordinance shall supersede any prior schedule of fire prevention services fees within the District, including, but not limited to, District Ordinances 2020-03, 2023-03, and 2025-03.

Section III. Limited Amendment: If any section or attachment of this Ordinance or portion thereof is held invalid or unenforceable by any court and such judgment becomes final, then that section may be amended by the District's Board by a majority vote to conform to the judgement of such court, provided such amendment is consistent with purpose and intent of this Ordinance.

Section IV. Effective Date: This Ordinance shall be and the same is hereby declared to be in full force and effect thirty days from and after the date its adoption, and shall be published once, before the expiration of fifteen (15) days after passage of the same, with the name of the Directors voting for and against the same, in The Press Democrat, a newspaper of general circulation published within the County of Sonoma, State of California.

THE FOREGOING DISTRICT ORDINANCE 2026-01 was adopted at a regular meeting of the Board on August 25, 2026, by Director_____________, who moved its adoption, seconded by Director_______________, and ordered adopted by the following vote:

President Klick_______, Vice President Briare_________; Director Treanor _____

Director Hamann ________; Director So _______; Director Tognozzi________;

Secretary Weaver_______

AYES: _____ NOES: _______ ABSENT/NOT VOTING: ______

WHEREUPON, the Chair declared the foregoing Resolution adopted, and **SO ORDERED**.

By: ________________________________
Steve Klick, President of the Board

By: ______________________________________
Kathy Washington, Secretary of the Board

Sonoma County Fire District Board of Directors
Staff Report

Date: August 25, 2026

Topic: Fire Prevention Fee Schedule

Recommendation:

1. Recommend that the Board adopts Resolution # 2026-16 to approve the Fire Prevention Fee Schedule.

Financial Impact:

The adjustment to the Fire Prevention Fee schedule will increase the cost recovery for fire prevention plan review, inspection and permitting services that the district provides.

Background:

The inflation adjustment for the Fire Prevention fees is based on the Bay Area CPI of 3.8%.

Sonoma County Fire District
Fire Prevention Fee Schedule
Effective September 25, 2026

Fee Name	Fee Type	Total Cost Per Unit
LAND USE / ENTITLEMENT APPLICATION REVIEW		
Plan Review - New Residential Structure - SFD	Flat	**$270**
Plan Review - Subdivision	Flat	**$1,353**
Plan Review - Multifamily	Flat	**$1,353**
Plan Review - New Commercial	Flat	**$1,353**
Plan Review - Commercial TI	Flat	**$811**
BUILDING (FIRE / LIFE SAFETY) REVIEW & INSPECTION		
Plan Review & Inspection:		
New Residential Structure	Flat	**$541**
New Commercial Structure	Flat	**$811**
Plan Review - Residential TI	Flat	**$270**
Plan Review - Commercial TI	Flat	**$541**
Municipal Advisory Meetings / Consultations (hourly)	Flat	**$270**
Certificate of Occupancy Inspections	Flat	**$1,081**
Emergency Radio Communication Systems	Flat	**$1,081**
SPRINKLER SYSTEM REVIEW & INSPECTION		
Residential - 13D		
Up to 1,000 square feet	Flat	**$1,081**
Over 1,000 square feet	Flat	**$1,353**
Residential - 13R		
Plan Review - Per Floor Plan	Flat	**$1,960**
Inspection - first 5 units	Flat	**$1,419**
Inspection - each additional unit	Each	**$406**
Residential TI 13D	Flat	**$1,081**
Residential - 13R TI		
Plan Review - Per Floor Plan	Flat	**$270**
Inspection - first 5 units	Flat	**$811**
Inspection - each additional unit	Each	**$135**
Residential Underground	Flat	**$676**

Sonoma County Fire District
Fire Prevention Fee Schedule
Effective September 25, 2026

Commercial 13		
Commercial Plan Review	Flat	**$3,244**
Commercial Underground	Flat	**$1,894**
Commercial TI < 3 heads	Flat	**$135**
Commercial TI 3-10 heads	Flat	**$676**
Commercial TI 11-30 heads	Flat	**$811**
Other Pre-Engineered Systems	Flat	**$2,163**
FIRE ALARM & DETECTION SYSTEMS REVIEW & INSPECTION (# of Devices)		
New or Tenant Improvement:		
1-25	Flat	**$1,081**
25-50	Flat	**$1,487**
50-100	Flat	**$2,231**
100-250	Flat	**$2,704**
250-500	Flat	**$4,596**
500-750	Flat	**$5,881**
750-1,000	Flat	**$6,827**
Over 1,000	Flat	**$7,435**
Panel Replacement	Flat	**$811**
Pre-Engineered system:		
Clean Agent	Flat	**$1,622**
Hood and Duct	Flat	**$1,217**
Other	Flat	**$1,081**
Spray Booth	Flat	**$811**
VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PLAN		
Plan Review:		
Single Family Dwelling	Flat	**$811**
Multi-Family Dwellings	Flat	**$1,487**
Subdivisions (2-5 residences)	Flat	**$1,757**
Subdivisions (6-15 residences)	Flat	**$2,974**
Subdivisions (16+ residences)	Flat	**$4,461**
Commercial Development	Flat	**$1,081**
Vegetation Consultation (hourly)	Hourly	**$270**
Non-Compliant Properties (hourly)	Per Trip	**$541**

Sonoma County Fire District
Fire Prevention Fee Schedule
Effective September 25, 2026

ANNUAL OPERATIONAL FIRE PERMITS		
Aerosol Products	Flat	**$541**
Amusement Buildings (temporary, permanent or mobile as defined in CFC Chapter 2, Section 202) – Seasonal	Flat	**$1,757**
Aviation Facilities	Flat	**$1,622**
Battery System Stationary Storage (capacity more than 50 gallons)	Flat	**$541**
Carbon Dioxide Systems for Beverage Dispensing	Flat	**541**
Cellulose Nitrate Film (in Group A Occupancy)	Flat	**$541**
Combustible Dust-Producing Operations	Flat	**$541**
Combustible Fiber Storage/Handling in excess of 100 cu. ft.	Flat	**$541**
Compressed Gases Storage/Handling, etc. in excess of the amounts listed in CFC Appendix Chapter 1, Table 105.6.9	Flat	**$541**
Cryogenic Fluids (produce, store, transport on site, use, handle or dispense in excess of the amounts listed in CFC Appendix Chapter 1, Table 105.6.10	Flat	**$541**
Cutting & Welding	Flat	**$541**
Dry Cleaning Plants (as described in CFC, Chapter 21)	Flat	**$676**
Electric Fence	Flat	**$541**
Explosives and/or Blasting Agents, Fireworks/Pyrotechnics manufacturing, storage/handling/sale	Flat	**$1,081**
Fireworks/Pyrotechnics (Per hour)	Hourly	**$270**
Fire Hydrants		
Fire Hydrants and Valves (Use other than Fire Suppression purposes)	Flat	**$676**
Hydrant Water flow testing	Flat	**$811**
Private Fire Hydrant System Inspections	Flat	**$676**
Flammable Combustible Liquids - See Appendix Chapter 1, Section 105.6.16 (Items 1-10)	Flat	**$1,014**
Floor Finishing/Surfacing Operations (exceeding 350 sq. ft. and using Class I or Class II liquids)	Flat	**$1,081**
Fruit & Crop Ripening Facilities (use with ethylene gas)	Flat	**$1,081**
Hazardous Materials Storage	Flat	**$1,014**

Sonoma County Fire District
Fire Prevention Fee Schedule
Effective September 25, 2026

High Piled Combustible Storage and Warehousing (Including Idle Wood/Plastic Pallets)	Flat	**$1,014**
Hood and Duct - Non-public assembly occupancies with less than 50 people occupancy and where no other permits are required	Flat	**$541**
Hot Works Operations	Flat	**$541**
Liquefied Petroleum Gases - Store, use, handle, dispense (>125 gallons and <499 gallons)	Flat	**$541**
Lumber Yards & Woodworking Plants (storage and/or processing of lumber exceeding 100,000 board ft.)	Flat	**$1,014**
Magnesium Working (less than 10 lbs.)	Flat	**$1,081**
Medical Gas	Flat	**$1,081**
Miscellaneous Combustible Storage (in excess of 2,500 cu. ft.) (Including Idle Wood/Plastic Pallets)	Flat	**$1,014**
Mobile Food Preparation Vehicles (Food Trucks)	Flat	**$338**
Monitor Sprinklered Buildings that do not require additional fire permits	Flat	**$781**
Motor Vehicle and/or Marine Fuel-dispensing Stations (Includes flammable and combustible liquids: store, use, handle and dispense)	Flat	**$1,081**
Open Flames and Torches	Flat	**$541**
Organic Coatings: Manufacture more than 1 gallon per day	Flat	**$1,081**
Ovens: Industrial, baking, or drying	Flat	**$541**
Pallet Storage: Palletized packing or bin boxes Idle Wood / Plastic / Bin Boxes	Flat	**$541**
Place of Assembly		
Occupant Load 50-300	Flat	**$541**
Occupant Load 301-1,000	Flat	**$676**
Occupant Load over 1,000	Flat	**$1,622**
Plant Extraction Systems	Flat	**$1,622**
Pyroxylin Plastics	Flat	**$1,081**
Refrigeration Equipment (Ammonia, Freon, others)	Flat	**$1,081**
Repair Garage and/or Service Garage (includes Cutting/Welding)	Flat	**$811**
Self-Storage - Mini Storage Facilities (With Private Hydrants and/or Monitored Sprinklers) - Per hour	Hourly	**$270**

Sonoma County Fire District
Fire Prevention Fee Schedule
Effective September 25, 2026

Spraying or Dipping - Flammable and/or Combustible Finishing	Flat	**$811**
Temporary Membrane Structure, Tents & Canopies in excess of 400 sq. ft or canopies of 700 sq.ft.	Flat	**$811**
Vacation Rental - Annual Operational Permit & Inspection	Flat	**$406**
Wood Products Storage: chips, hogged material, lumber or plywood in excess of 200 cu. ft.	Flat	**$541**
OCCUPANCY INSPECTIONS		
High-rise Building Inspections - Per Hour	Hourly	**$270**
Multi-family Dwellings R-1, R-2 Occupancies (hourly)	Hourly	**$406**
State Facilities, State Required Pre-Inspection (Maximum Fee Amount Permitted Under State Health & Safety Code Section 13235):		
25 People or less	Flat	**$541**
26 People or more	Flat	**$541**
State Licensed Care Facility Inspections		
State Licensed Care Facility Annual Inspection 6 or less clients	Flat	**$406**
I-1, I-2, I-3 , I-4, R-2.1, R-3, R-3.1, R-4 Occupancies	Flat	**$1,014**
Special Events		
Special Events - One Time	Flat	**$541**
Special Events - Annual	Flat	**$541**
Propane Permit - One Time (look at size limits)	Flat	**$270**
Propane Permit - Annual	Flat	**$270**
Food Trucks - Commercial Cooking Equipment (Annual)	Flat	**$270**
Food Trucks - No Commercial Cooking Equipment (Annual)	Flat	**$181**
TV / Film Set Inspection (hourly)	Hourly	**$541**
MISCELLANEOUS		
Outside Professional Consulting Services (including attorney)		**Actual Cost**
Fire Hazard Violation (minimum)	Fine	**$541**
Fire Code Violation (minimum)	Fine	**$541**
Fire Investigation (hourly)	Hourly	**$270**
Work without a permit	Fine	**2 times permit**
Pre-Inspection	Flat	**$541**
Resale Inspection	Flat	**$541**

Sonoma County Fire District
Fire Prevention Fee Schedule
Effective September 25, 2026

Pre-Consultation	Flat	**$270**
Emergency Response	Hourly	Current OES Rate Schedule Costs
Engine Standby	Hourly	Current OES Rate Schedule Costs
Staff Standby	Hourly	Current OES Rate Schedule Costs
Fire Watch	Actual Cost	**Actual Cost**
Additional Plan Review - Hourly	Hourly	**$270**
Additional Inspection - Hourly	Hourly	**$270**
Additional Inspection - After Hours	Hourly	**$337**
Force Abatement of Property	Fine	**Actual Cost + 19% Admin**
Facility Use by the public	Flat	**$270**
Maintenance Fee on Burn Trailers	Flat	**$400**
Fire Extinguisher Training		
10 - 25 Employees	Flat	**$391**
26 - 50 Employees	Flat	**$1,041**
51 - 100 Employees	Flat	**$1,303**
100+ Employees	Flat	**$1,563**
False Alarms		
5th Alarm	Fine	**Actual Cost (1^{st}-5^{th})**
Each Subsequent Alarm after 5	Fine	**Actual Cost**

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-02

AN ORDINANCE OF THE SONOMA COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT AMENDING THE DISTRICT SCHEDULE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES FEES

WHEREAS, the Sonoma County Fire District of Sonoma County, State of California (the "District") has the rights, obligations, and authority over prehospital emergency medical services, Advanced and Basic Life Support Services, including ground ambulance services, throughout the entirety of the District territory and appurtenant ambulance service areas, pursuant to California Health and Safety Code section 1797.201; and

WHEREAS, on July 21, 2020, the District Board of Directors ("the Board") adopted District Ordinance 2020-02, establishing a District schedule of Emergency Medical Service Fees, consistent with Proposition 26 and California Health and Safety Code section 13916 et seq., including an annual inflation adjustment; and

WHEREAS, on October 27, 2023, following a competitive procurement process and authorization from the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma ("County"), pursuant to California Health and Safety Code section 1797.224, the County and District executed a "PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE COUNTY OF SONOMA AND SONOMA COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT FOR ADVANCED LIFE SUPPORT GROUND AMBULANCE SERVICES IN COUNTY EXCLUSIVE OPERATING AREA ONE" (the "EOA-1 Contract"), including authorized emergency medical services rates, fees, and charges, as well as procedures for periodic adjustments to rates and charges, to commence service in EOA-1 on January 16, 2024; and

WHEREAS, on December 12, 2023, consistent with the provisions of the EOA-1 Contract, Proposition 26, and California Health and Safety Code section 13916 et seq., the District Board adopted District Ordinance 2023-02, amending Ordinance 2020-02 to reflect fees and charges effective January 16, 2024, including an annual inflation adjustment, throughout the entirety of District territory, appurtenant ambulance service areas, and within EOA-1; and

WHEREAS, on August 19, 2025, consistent with the provisions of the EOA-1 Contract, Proposition 26, and California Health and Safety Code section 13916 et seq., the District Board adopted Ordinance 2025-02, amending Ordinance 2023-02 to apply a 2.4% inflation adjustment to transport and services base rates and other specific charges / medical supplies, and separate adjustments to "Other Services" to reflect the cost of providing these services effective September 18, 2025, throughout the entirety of District territory, appurtenant ambulance service areas, and within EOA-1; and

WHEREAS, as approved by the County and consistent with the provisions of the EOA-1 Contract, Proposition 26, and California Health and Safety Code section 13916 et seq., after consideration at a duly noticed public hearing, the District Board intends this amended Emergency Medical Services Fees Ordinance, District Ordinance 2026-02, to amend District Ordinance 2025-02 to apply a 9.9% adjustment to transport and services base rates and other specific charges / medical supplies, and separate adjustments to "Other Services" to reflect the cost of providing these services, throughout the entirety of District territory, appurtenant ambulance service areas, and within EOA-1.

NOW THEREFORE, the Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Fire District of Sonoma County, State of California do ordain as follows:

Section I. Purpose and Intent: Pursuant to California Health and Safety Code section 13916 et seq., the District is authorized to charge and collect fees to cover the costs of any service which the District provides or the costs of enforcing any regulation for which the fee is charged. It is the purpose and intent of this Ordinance to establish and impose District-wide fees for the delivery of emergency medical services to augment the funding of paramedic/ambulance fire support services and to upgrade facilities to meet community needs.

Section II Fee Schedule: The District hereby adopts the following fee schedule, which is attached as Attachment "A" and incorporated herein by reference: 2026 Sonoma County Fire District Schedule of Emergency Medical Services Fees. The fees incorporated herein shall be adjusted annually for inflation effective each fiscal year. This Ordinance shall supersede any prior schedule of emergency medical services fees within the District, including, but not limited to, District Ordinances 2020-02, 2023-02, and 2025-02.

Section III. Limited Amendment: If any section or attachment of this Ordinance or portion thereof is held invalid or unenforceable by any court and such judgment becomes final, then that section may be amended by the District's Board by a majority vote to conform to the judgement of such court, provided such amendment is consistent with purpose and intent of this Ordinance.

Section IV. Effective Date: This Ordinance shall be and the same is hereby declared to be in full force and effect thirty days from and after the date its adoption, and shall be published once, before the expiration of fifteen (15) days after passage of the same, with the name of the Directors voting for and against the same, in The Press Democrat, a newspaper of general circulation published within the County of Sonoma, State of California.

THE FOREGOING ORDINANCE was adopted at a regular meeting of the Board on August 25, 2026, by Director____________, who moved its adoption, seconded by Director______________, and ordered adopted by the following vote:

President Klick_______; Vice President Briare_________; Director Treanor _____
Director Hamann ________; Director So _______; Director Tognozzi________;
Secretary Weaver_______

AYES: _____ NOES: _______ ABSENT/NOT VOTING:_____

WHEREUPON, the Chair declared the foregoing Resolution adopted, and **SO ORDERED**.

By: ____________________________________
Steve Klick, President of the Board

By: ____________________________________
Kathy Washington, Secretary of the Board

Sonoma County Fire District Board of Directors
Staff Report

Date: August 25, 2026

Topic: Emergency Medical Services Fee Schedule

Recommendation:

1. Recommend that the Board adopts Ordinance # 2026-02 to approve the Emergency Medical Services Fee Schedule.

Financial Impact:

The 9.9% adjustment to the Emergency Medical Services Fee schedule will increase the cost recovery for the delivery of Emergency Medical Services.

Background:

The Fire District's Emergency Medical Services Fee Schedule is applicable to both Emergency Medical Services programs within the Fire District.

The Sonoma County Fire District (SCFD) Emergency Medical Services program provides Advanced Life Support ambulance services with the exclusive right to operate Advanced Life Support emergency ambulance transport services throughout the entirety of the Sonoma County Fire District pursuant to the California Health and Safety Code section 1797.201. This program utilizes District owned ambulances, ALS engines and District paramedic and EMT employees.

In 2023, after presenting the successful proposal in a competitive bid process, the County of Sonoma awarded SCFD the ambulance transport contract for County Exclusive Operating Area No. 1(EOA 1), which overlaps the City of Santa, City of Rohnert Park, parts of the Sonoma Valley Fire District, territory of the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District, as well as SCFD's preexisting section 1797.201 rights ambulance service areas. EOA-1 ambulance operations are an enterprise fund of the SCFD. The service is provided by a public private partnership called Sonoma County Fire District Emergency Medical Services (SCFD-EMS).

District EMS fees are consistent across all areas served by SCFD.

Attachments:
Ordinance 2026-02
Emergency Medical Services Fee Schedule
EOA-1 Fee Request Letter July 2026
SCFD Fee Letter Exhibits 2026

Sonoma County Fire District
Emergency Medical Services Fee Schedule
Effective September 25, 2026

Transport and Services Base Rates	
ALS Transport Base Rate	$3,488.67
BLS Transport Base Rate	$3,208.33
Oxygen	$253.21
Mileage	$78.78 / mile
Treatment, Non-Transport	$618.96

Other Specific Charges / Medical Supplies	
Monitor	$253.21
12 Lead ECG	$208.19
Disposable ALS Supplies	$253.21
Disposable BLS Supplies	$230.70
EZ-IO	$534.55
Pulse Ox	$208.19
IV Supplies	$163.18
King Airway/iGel/Intubation	$343.24
Isolation Precautions	$320.73
Night Charge	$219.45
CPAP	$478.28
Glucagon	$354.49
CSPINE/SMR	$208.19

Other Services	
First Responder/Pre-Stabilization (Only District First Responder, without District transport)	$286.97
ALS Ambulance Standby/Special Event	$272.87/hour
BLS Ambulance Standby/Special Event	$252.21/hour
EMS Supervisor	$221.89/hour
Ambu-BUS	$599.50/hour
EMT Standby/Special Event	$150.22/hour
Paramedic Standby/Special Event	$162.62/hour
UTV/QRV	$41.34/hour

SONOMA COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT

Honesty • Respect • Integrity

02 Jul 2026

Director Nolan Sullivan
Sonoma County Department of Health Services
1450 Administration Avenue, Suite 200
Santa Rosa, CA 95405

Dear Director Sullivan,

In our successful bid to win the contract to serve EOA-1, we made promises[1] to the county, and all who were facing medical emergencies and were suffering through their worst moments.

We promised a prompt and reliable response, by highly trained, well equipped, compassionate Paramedics and EMT's. We kept that promise.

We promised to deploy more ambulances on the streets of EOA-1 than had been deployed before. We kept that promise.

We promised the county a paradigm shift in the way services were delivered — an innovative combination of both a public and private provider, merged into one team with one mission — and the best possible emergency health care possible. We kept that promise.

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[1] Legal scholars will tell us that "contracts" are but a bunch of promises between the parties. We think our promises are more than words on pieces of paper — they are bigger than that. Keeping them defines us, we take them seriously, and we take pride in doing so.

And, consistent with our role as a public provider of emergency services, we promised that our operations would be transparent and subject to outside review. We kept that promise.

In response, the county made a promise to us. Recognizing that costs and needs may go up, in our contract, it said that if we needed a rate increase to maintain our high levels of service, beyond that provided for by the CPI, we could ask for one.[2],[3]

In this, our third year of serving EOA-1, with this letter and the accompanying data and documents, we respectfully apply for that increase.

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[2] Section 10.b.2. A. "In the event that CPI-based rate adjustments do not compensate for the increased costs of providing Contract Services, DISTRICT may request an additional rate increase, which shall be subject to approval by the Authorized Actor to ensure fair and appropriate costs to residents and visitors within EOA-1. The Authorized Actor's decision will be informed by documentation submitted by DISTRICT to substantiate the need for a rate increase. Such documentation may include but is not limited to system statements, audited financial reports, collection rate, and payor mix." We have included a copy of our *Financial Statements and* Independent Auditor's *Report for the Fiscal Year Ended in June 30,2025 (with comparative amounts for fiscal year ended June 30, 2024)*" In Addition, we have included the following spreadsheets to further explain our request: *Cash Flow Projections FY 26-27; Financial Details Actual FY 24-25 adjusted for FY 25-26 and 26-27; Payor Mix Based Revenue Calculations - June 2026;and, Statement of Net Position - Enterprise Fund 6.18.26* .Please see Exhibit #1.

[3] Section 10.2.A allows SCFD-EMS to request an annual inflation adjustment at the level of the Bay Area Consumer Price Index (BACPI). After our first year of operations, that adjustment, was for a 2.6% increase in our fees; however, it was not granted until September 2025, with 3/4's of the year gone; as will be seen in the financial records we provide, that increase from September to December of 2025 resulted in a de minimus increase in revenue.

As of January 2026, the BACPI is 3%. It is worth noting that we do not receive these cost-of-living increases on our entire budget. Instead, we receive them on our transport fee rates. Said another way, we do not receive a dollar return for each dollar billed. Instead, with our payor mix, we receive around 26 cents for every dollar billed. (Our collection rate is fluid; but, in our industry, 26% is an indication of success and diligence.) At best, the 3%, 2026 increase, when multiplied by our collection rate, will yield less than one penny for each dollar billed. ($1 x.03 =$0.03 x.26= .0078); and because we will not receive and implement that increase until late in 2026, we do not expect that increase to have a beneficial impact on our budget.

Therefore, we must rely on 10.2.B. to close the shortfall between our actual budget for 2024/25 to 25 and our projected budget for 2026.

Our Accomplishments

As a public provider of emergency services, our operations are transparent and open to rigorous scrutiny — and we welcome it. That scrutiny makes clear that SCFD-EMS is performing at high levels — levels previously not achieved in this county. We have exceeded all of the standards set forth in our contract. Our success has been recognized in audits and reviews by both the county and outside evaluators.

Here is a summary of our highlights:

- <u>A Prompt and Reliable Response When You Need Us Most — Time to Scene Compliance:</u> When people are suffering their worst moments and dial 9-1-1 for help, every moment that they wait seems like an eternity. We know that. So, we deploy our ambulances to ensure that we get there quickly with highly trained, well equipped, compassionate Paramedics and EMT's. Our contract requires that on 90% of the calls, we reach them within set time standards. We are doing much better than that. Our compliance audits indicate that 97% of the time we are on scene, where needed, within the set time — not the minimum 90% but 97% of the time, a standard not seen before in this county.[4]

- <u>More Ambulances On the Streets Means Better Response Times:</u> We are achieving our high success rates because we have put more ambulances on the streets, every day, than have ever been deployed in EOA-1. It's hard to drive around the area without seeing one of our big, red ambulances either in action or waiting for your call. We promised to run 20[5] ambulances a day and we are keeping that promise. [6]

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[4] The data for 2025, gathered in the *First Watch* software program, used by both the County and SCFD-EMS to measure real-time compliance, shows a compliance rate of 96.95%. Please see Exhibit # 3.

[5] Actually, on any given day, we can deploy more than the minimum number of ambulances. At our EOA-1 Headquarters, we have a number of fully-equipped, ready to roll ambulances to hit the streets should they be required —whether as backups or to cover "surges" in the system. Our supervisory staff are all highly qualified Paramedics and EMT's. When an additional ambulance is needed, they can answer the call. In our response to the RFP, we presented a posting plan that detailed how we would deploy our ambulances over a given 24-hour period. Our actual posting plan is consistent with that promise. Please see Exhibit #'s 4&5.

[6] When we promised to deploy both ALS and BLS ambulances, it was in response to the County's request that we implement a Tiered Response system. So, we pledged to put 16 ALS and 4 BLS ambulances on the streets every day. The county has yet to fully implement the Tiered Response system. In light of that failure, our 97% success rate is all the more striking. Statistics indicate that we are using BLS ambulances far less often than is to be expected in a

- More Ambulances On the Streets Means Keeping Our Promises Without Burdening the Other 9-1-1 Ambulance Providers in the County: In the time before we took over EOA-1, the public and private providers of emergency response ambulances were running a disturbingly high percentage of calls in EOA-1; when called into EOA-1, they had to leave their primary areas of service — often leaving those areas without the emergency coverage their taxpayers pay for and their patients expect. Ambulances from the Sonoma County Fire District's stations as far away as Bodega Bay and Guerneville were being called into EOA-1. And, so were ambulances from the Sonoma Valley and Petaluma Fire departments. In addition, Bell's ambulances, that were supposed to be covering EOA-2, were called to provide coverage when the contracted provider could not. Those heavy burdens are not being placed on our ambulance providing partners anymore. With our robust deployments, we are keeping our promises to cover EOA-1 without unduly relying on "mutual aid" — which is now the exception and not the rule. We are not putting the safety of people in areas outside EOA-1 at risk by forcing their ambulances to come into EOA-1 to alleviate coverage deficiencies. Those departments are grateful for our full coverage and support our efforts.[7]
    - We Are Making "Level 0" a Thing of the Past: What is "Level 0"? It is when there are NO ambulances available to respond to calls in the EOA; it is a time when the next call will likely be covered by a distant ambulance from a non-EOA provider — either one of the adjacent Fire/EMS providers (the Sonoma County Fire District, the Sonoma Valley Fire District, or the City of Petaluma), or the EOA-2 provider, Bell's Ambulance. In the past, on any given day, for long periods of time, EOA -1 was at Level 0; this disrupted the entire ambulance response system by taking ambulances away from the taxpayers who were paying for and relying on them. We are not asking others to do what we promised the county we would do.

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properly deployed Tiered Response system; that also means that we are overusing our ALS ambulances. Statistics indicate that 76.80% of our patients are being transported ALS and but 23.20 are going BLS. The underutilization of the BLS ambulances has put a strain on our ALS operations. Yet, we remain 97% compliant, throughout the EOA, on all calls. We are working with the county to upgrade the Tiered Response system and are confident that we will be successful. Please see SCFD EMS Review Dashboard under "Total Number of Calls" which differentiates between ALS and BLS transports. Please see Exhibit #6.

[7] The letters of support from Bell's Ambulance, the Sonoma Valley Fire District, and the Petaluma Fire Department are in Exhibit #7.

- We promised to provide a robust deployment of both ALS and BLS ambulances and we are keeping that promise. We have rarely, if ever, gone to Level 0 — because most of the time we have BLS ambulances available. If ever we have gone to Level 0, it has been for minutes — while the dispatch system has adjusted — not hours, full shifts or long parts of a day. And, when the call volume is very high, and there are threats of Level 0, we deploy our own Internal Surge Coverage — our highly trained Supervisors and Headquarters staff can take our ever-ready back-up ambulances into the field until the shortage is over. We promised a prompt response and our robust deployment of ambulances and staff is allowing us to keep that promise.

- We Have Created A Stable Workforce That Ensures Better Response Times and Patient Care: When we took over EOA-1, there was only a handful of full-time Paramedics who continued to serve the area. Before we took over the system, it was heavily reliant on part-time providers and travelers. In our first years of operation, we have stabilized the system. We no longer face a "Paramedic shortage"[8] that threatened the system. To build and maintain our robust workforce, we have initiated a program where we are "growing our own" — putting local people through school so that they can serve their friends and neighbors as a part of SCFD-EMS. We have replaced the "travelers" with our own employees. Because of this, unlike providers in the past, we have rarely, if ever, had to "brown out" or take an ambulance off the streets because we could not staff it. On those very rare occasions where an ambulance has been "downed", it was because someone called in sick at the last moment, or got sick while on shift, or had a family emergency — and on those rare occasions, the ambulance was only out of service until we could bring in a replacement crew member; that was usually a matter of minutes, or an hour or so — and not a day or days.

[8] The alleged "Paramedic shortage" was one of the main reasons that the Board of Supervisors moved to a Tiered Response system. The goal was to preserve and use the limited Paramedic ambulances for calls that truly demanded the advanced care Paramedics could provide. Tiered Response recognizes that there are many emergencies that can be properly handled by EMT's; it implements a dispatch system to differentiate between the two types of calls. REDCOM, Sonoma County's dispatch center, is highly trained in the Priority system and is in a place to implement it, fully, to our patients' great advantage. Unfortunately, the County has yet to do so. However, we are working, diligently and productively, to achieve that goal.

- Our successful Paramedic Pathway Program — Creating New Paramedics from Within Our Current Workforce: To eliminate the past threat of the "Paramedic Shortage", we are creating a strong training pipeline; we now have around 30 EMT's in, or finishing, Paramedic school. So far, from the first class to enter our fully supported Pathway Program, 8 have become full-time Paramedic employees with SCFD-EMS. At a time when so many patients are entering our healthcare system through a 9-1-1 calls and transport in the back of an ambulance, we will not stop working hard to ensure that there is a ready supply of well trained, compassionate Paramedics available to fill their needs.

- Strengthening Fire/EMS Response Throughout the County: We recognize the importance that Fire/EMS plays in pre-hospital care. Those agencies are dispatched to almost every emergency medical call in the county; and, in many they are first on scene. To strengthen their response, we have created a path where SCFD-EMS employees promote their careers by adding firefighting skills and joining local fire departments. So far, 12 of our employees have made the move (11 Paramedics and 1 EMT). Does having our employees move to Fire/EMS make things a little more complex for us? Yes. But, it is better for the county and all in need of emergency help. And, that's why we are strongly supporting strengthening this part of the safety net.

- Thinking Outside the Box: Adding Another Group of Highly Trained Paramedics to the County — The Australian Paramedic Recruitment Program: When we took over EOA-1, to immediately bolster a thin incumbent workforce[9], we sponsored 9 Australian Paramedics and employed them in Sonoma County. These were skilled, well-trained Paramedics — committed to serving Sonoma County at a very high level. In Australia, one must get a four year bachelor's degree in Paramedicine. To our benefit, there are limited placements in Australia — so some of their very best graduates seek international positions. We are the beneficiary of these placements. With our support, our Australian Medics secured E-3 visas; they can work here for 2 years; and, their stays can be extended. They hit the ground running and have

[9] In the RFP, we were told that we should employ the incumbent workforce. During the process, we asked the county to tell us how many Paramedics and EMT's were in the current workforce; we wanted to be able to plan ahead. The county responded that it could not tell us because the then current provider would not tell the county. When we bid the system, we bid a model that required 38 Paramedics. It turns out that the incumbent workforce was far smaller than that. Fourteen days into our service period, we had 5 incumbent Paramedics working full time for us. We are proud of the strong workforce we've built in a very short time. Please see Exhibit #8.

served admirably showing technical skill, compassion and commitment to excellence; in fact, one is now serving as a Supervisor and another as a Field Training Officer. Once more, our commitment to service led us to an innovation that serves all who need prompt, reliable pre-hospital care.

- Going the Extra Mile By Deploying Specialty Vehicles: We do not stop with our daily ambulance deployment. In addition to our well-equipped fleet of ambulances, we are providing the following specialty vehicles:
  - Multi-Patient Transport Vehicle (aka the "AMBUBUS") During some of this county's worst moments, emergency responders have needed to move large numbers of patients to care and safety. The AMBUBUS is fully equipped to give those patients a safe space supported by the emergency equipment needed to care for them. In the past, before we took over EOA-1 and had a local headquarters, Medic Ambulance voluntarily brought an AMBUBUS to our county to help out. Now, we have our own, permanently stationed in our county, at our headquarters.
  - Mobile Command Center — During our worst moments, there is no substitute for a state-of-the-art command center. Once more, in the past, before we took over EOA-1, Medic brought one to the county to assist us. Today, we have our own MCC at our headquarters, ready to roll when needed.
  - Supervisor Command Vehicles — we have 5, fully equipped Chevrolet Tahoes; when needed, our highly qualified supervisors, can deploy to scenes to help render care.
  - Bariatric Ambulance — some of us don't fit a normal ambulance gurney — yet we still need to be transported. We have an ambulance specially equipped to load, transport and care for patients who weigh up to 1500 pounds. Do we use this often? No. But, when it is needed it is needed. We are leaving no stone unturned to ensure that whoever has an emergency — we are equipped to provide high level, compassionate care.
  - Utility Task Vehicle/Ambulance — Not every emergency happens in a convenient place — a place where an everyday ambulance can make easy access. Sometimes, access is difficult; it can be rough roads or difficult terrain; or, in urban areas, it can be an area where the event, itself, has blocked normal access. Our agile and sure-footed UTV/Ambulance helps us get to our patients where others cannot. It is designed to transport our crews and patients safely across otherwise inaccessible terrain. Smaller than a

regular ambulance it still carries essential emergency medical equipment and our highly trained responders. Do we use this often? No. But, when it is needed, it is needed. Once more, we will not leave a gap in the safety net that protects us all in our worst moments.

- REACH Helicopter — Some emergencies require care that cannot be provided locally. Some patients need to go to speciality emergency departments; some facilities are located too far away to be reached, in a timely manner, by ground transport; most often, they are specialized centers for kids who need a higher-level care, or patients who are suffering bad burns, or need advanced stroke or cardiac interventions. The SCFD helicopter answers those calls. It is staffed to provide a higher level of care, either two Flights Nurses or a Flight Nurse and a Flight Paramedic (both of which are specialized designations); with our helicopter, we are able to get our patients where they need to go, quickly, while providing the advanced emergency care they need.

- Eco Friendly Logistics Vehicles — to keep our field operations running seamlessly and efficiently, we deploy our electric powered Ford Lightnings. When a call depletes supplies, we go to the ambulance so it need not leave the field to come to us. Small details paint a strong big picture.

Confirmation of Our Accomplishments
As a public provider, we are transparent. Proof of our success and accomplishments can be seen in two more rigorous reviews — one by the county and another by CAAS (the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services); CAAS is an independent, nonprofit, accrediting organization that sets national standards for ambulances and emergency medical services and evaluates systems for quality, safety, and performance. The results of both reviews are in — we are performing at a very high level.

- County Contract Compliance Evaluation[10] Progress Report — Grade "A":
  - We have been participating in a collaborative, comprehensive, 2-year contract audit in which the county assures our compliance in 374 categories. At the end

of the first year, we've been given an informal "Progress Report" with a score of "91.6[11]" which in most places is an "A".

- We are particularly proud of the fact that we received a rating of "• 100% compliance (22/22) with requirements in Section 11, Finance and Administration."[12]

- National Audit — CAAS: We are in the "Top 1% of the Top 1%": "No Deficiencies" — nothing to correct, that is the final finding of the CAAS auditors who poured over our SCFD-EMS operations[13]. That rare finding puts us in the "Top 1% of the Top 1%" of all CAAS affiliated ambulance providers. Our success is no surprise. Medic Ambulance, our partner, has been at the top of all CAAS providers since first joining the organization in 2007.
  - For Medic Ambulance, this commitment is long-standing and proven. Medic Ambulance was the first provider in Northern California to achieve this distinction and now standing as the longest-tenured CAAS-accredited provider in the region. Medic has successfully re-accredited six times with a perfect score and no deficiencies (2010, 2013, 2016, 2019, 2022, and 2025), reinforcing its position in the "1% of the 1%" in EMS. This history demonstrates that excellence at Medic is not episodic or reactive—it is embedded in the organization's identity and sustained through consistent leadership, disciplined systems, and an unwavering commitment to the communities it serves including SCFD-EMS' operations in Sonoma County.[14]

    - Why is this important? Because, being a CAAS-accredited organization means choosing to operate at the highest level of professional excellence in EMS, far beyond minimum licensure or contractual requirements. It reflects a culture of accountability, continuous improvement, and transparency across every function of the organization—clinical care, safety, training,

[11] "Of the 210 requirements in the contract, 8 were found to be non-applicable, resulting in 202 requirements for review in this reporting year. DHS determined that 185 met the requirement, and 18 requirements were determined as not yet met. Giving an overall score of 91.6% (185/202)." Michael Tinoco, Sonoma County DHS Program Planning and Evaluation Analyst Health Policy, Planning and Equity Unit

[12] Email from Michael Tinoco to Chief David Bynum. Please see Exhibit # 9.

[13] Please see the CAAS Audit cover letter and Certificate at Exhibit #14.

[14] In recognition of our accomplishments — Every Medic Ambulance Operation Including SCFD-EMS having NO DEFICIENCIES — the evaluator told us that we were in the "Top 1% of the Top 1%". We plan to stay there.

leadership, and governance. CAAS accreditation requires rigorous self-assessment and independent peer review, ensuring that policies, practices, and outcomes are aligned with nationally recognized best practices and that the organization consistently delivers safe, high-quality service.

- And, Yet One More National Award: *Excellence in EMS Integration:* Our promised paradigm shift, the merger of the best of the public and private provider emergency medical services systems, recently received recognition from the Academy of International Mobile Healthcare Integration[15]:

  - The **Excellence in EMS Integration Award** recognizes organizations that have built impactful partnerships with EMS agencies that measurably enhance patient care, improve outcomes, and reduce healthcare system costs. Award recipients are selected based on demonstrated best practices, measurable data, and system-level approaches that set benchmarks for other EMS systems nationwide.

  - This recognition reflects the strength of the partnership and the collaborative work between Sonoma County Fire District, Medic Ambulance, as partners in care, to advance innovative, patient-centered EMS delivery. Through integrated system design, data-driven performance management, and a shared commitment to continuous improvement, the Sonoma County system continues to demonstrate the characteristics of a high-performance EMS model.

- Four Outside Reviews — Four Similar Conclusions: SCFD-EMS is providing exemplary service at levels beyond those called for in our contracts. When people are suffering their worst medical moments, and call for help, we will be there, promptly, with highly trained, well equipped, compassionate Paramedics and EMT's. That's what we promised to do and that is what we are doing.

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[15] In their own words: "The *Academy of International Mobile Healthcare Integration* (AIMHI) represents high-performance EMS agencies from both the public and private sectors across the U.S. and abroad. By combining evidence-based practices with transparency and close government oversight, AIMHI affiliates provide unsurpassed service excellence and cost efficiency." https://aimhi.mobi/about/ Please see Exhibit #11 for the award letter.

The Fee Increase — By the Numbers:
Here is the Bottom Line Up Front: To maintain and enhance the stellar levels of service we are providing, we need to raise our operations budget by 6%. To collect that 6%, with our Payor Mix and Collection Rate[16], we need to increase our billing rates by 16.36%.

Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Projections	
Projected System Expenses	$42,656,363.00
Projected Ambulance Revenue	$40,199,267.00
Shortfall	*$2,457,096.00*
Percentage Revenue Increase Needed	**6%**

The Shortfall Explained: In this, our third year of operations, we have actual, audited financial data that allows us to accurately project our Revenue and Expenses. Keeping track is a dynamic process — a balance between increasing and decreasing expenses and a transport revenue stream that is fluid and dependent on multiple factors. We all know that we are witnessing a time when the costs of everyday things are going up; they are going up for our ambulance service, too. Knowing that, the county gave us the right to ask for an increase in our transport fee rates to ensure that we maintain, and enhance where possible, our high levels of services. Here are the major areas in which the expenses have gone up:

- REDCOM Dispatch Expenses: After we took over EOA-1, REDCOM, the EMS dispatch system, underwent a fundamental reorganization. Effective October 24, 2024, REDCOM became a JPA funded by it's members who each paid a share proportional to their use of the system. Included in that restructuring was the move of the dispatch employees from the previous provider to the new JPA[17] —

[16] Letter from our billing company, Wittman Enterprises, LLC. Please see Exhibit #2.
[17] The REDCOM JPA is governed by a 7-person board; we hold one seat. The decision to improve the work status of the JPA's employees was made by a unanimous decision of the Board — and was the right decision. However, that did not make the substantial increase in fees paid by us any less unexpected; to maintain the current response system, we need to adjust our transport fees to cover, in part, for that increase. Please see Exhibit #12.

a positive move that increased the budget substantially[18]. SCFD-EMS's share of this budget is approximately 33%; so we are paying around 1/3 of the exponential increase in those dispatch expenses; this increase was unanticipated and, because it occurred after we submitted our bid, it could not be incorporated into our transport rates. REDCOM has notified participating agencies of an additional 4% increase in dispatch fees for fiscal year 2026-2027.

- <u>Repaying the SCFD-EMS Enterprise Fund</u>: As with any new enterprise, the startup funds had to come from somewhere; in our case, they came in the form of dollars paid by SCFD's taxpayers into our Enterprise Fund. In our first year of serving EOA-1, because our expenses were immediate, but our revenues were not, we deferred paying the fund back. Now that we are stable, and our projections based on actual expenses and revenue, it is time to start making those reimbursement payments.

- <u>SCFD-EMS — Salaries and Operating Expenses:</u> After we bid the system and won the contract, but before we took it over, there were unanticipated operating cost increases — some of which changed the system radically. We had to set up and run the system without the ability to raise our rates, and we did; combined, SCFD-EMS had to internalize those costs. The requested fee increase, in this our third year, will allow us and Medic Ambulance, our sub-contractor, a revenue adjustment to compensate for those changes and the financial consequences that flowed from them.
  - <u>Paramedic/EMT Salaries and Benefits:</u> The financial model that we used in our successful bid for EOA-1 contained a competitive salary and benefits package. In the RFP we were told that we were to build upon the package of the current incumbent — and that no incumbent employee, who came to work for us, should take a cut in pay or benefits. That was fine with us. Medic has always been competitive in both. The numbers in our successful bid for EOA-1 were based on the incumbent's package at the time we submitted our bid.
    - That would have been fine but for one thing: Upon losing the contract, and before we took over the EOA, the incumbent provider gave its employees a substantial raise — one that, pursuant to our contract with the County, we

[18] Once more, the previous provider, having lost the EOA contract and having decided to no longer serve as the dispatch center employer, gave substantial raises to the employees — raises that had to be and were matched by the new JPA.

had to match — *without the ability to raise our transport* rates. That created an immediate Shortfall.

- We have carried that unexpected cost for more than two years. We take pride in the wages and benefits we pay our employees. To maintain and enhance those packages, we need to increase our transport fee revenue. This is, perhaps, the largest component in our ultimate Shortfall.

- Maintaining a Contingency/Emergency Reserve Fund: All good enterprises must budget and account for the unexpected. That applies to our ambulance service, too[19], so a Contingency/Reserve fund was included in our bid to secure EOQA-1. In our initial year of operations, 2024-2025, due to the incremental nature of our revenue stream and the immediate need to pay our expenses, we had to defer payments to that fund. Now that we are stable, and our projections based on actual expenses and revenue, it is time to start building that fund.[20]

- The Shortfall in Depth: For those who want to take a deep dive into the process, we have attached extensive financial documentation including our *Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report for the Fiscal Year Ended in June 30, 2025*[21].

Why 16.36%? The Importance of the Payor Mix: As we've seen, we have a projected Shortfall of 6%; to maintain and enhance our services, we need to raise our revenues by that percentage. Why are we asking for a transport fee increase of 16.36%? Why not just 6%? Because we do not get $1.00 reimbursement for every $1.00, we bill. Instead, we get far less — $0.26 back for every $1.00 we bill. And,

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[19] During the first year of Covid, the number of ambulance transports dropped significantly; people were afraid to go to the hospital and opted to stay home. Due to the financial strain, some providers took ambulances off the streets. Those with proper reserve funds were able to maintain their readiness. Fire/EMS prides itself on our 24/7 readiness. Our Contingency/Reserve fund will allow us to fulfill our commitment to those in the EOA who need our services.

[20] Recent events have made the existence of a Contingency fund even more necessary. As a result of the War in Iran, fuel costs are skyrocketing; as a mobile response service, we are facing unforeseen increases in our fuel bills. And, on the other end of the spectrum, we are seeing a substantial threat to our Payor Mix. With the current attacks on the Affordable Care Act, and the diminished funding available to support the healthcare needs of those it covers, we may see our Payor Mix shift, dramatically. Some predictions show that more than 600,000 Californians will lose their marketplace coverage because of the loss of the subsidies. They will fall into the "Uninsured" category of our mix — the least reliable category in our Payor Mix. Whether they can pay or not, we respond to their calls for help and give them the best care we can provide.

[21] The Audit also contains comparative amounts for the Fiscal Year that ended June 30,2024. That document gives depth to our projections. Please see Exhibit #1.

to make the matter more difficult, we do not get the same amount back from every patient; how much we get back depends on our Payor Mix. Said another way, the amount we get back depends on who, or what entity, is paying the bill.

- Some pay a fixed amount. Some nothing. And, some are in between. In the end, the amount we get back depends on how many of our transport patients are in each group.

- That grouping is called our Payor Mix. Payor mixes are specific to a geographic area. In our area, we have a large group older patients on Medicare, and another sizable group dependent on Medicaid; both of those programs reimburse us at a very low fixed rate. We also have a sizable number of uninsured patients who, for the most part do not pay much, if anything, at all.
    - We have no control over our payor mix. Nor should we. We respond to everyone who calls for help — whether they are likely to pay or not. That is how it is and that is how it should be.
        - But, to maintain and enhance the service to all in need of help, we must factor in the likelihood of reimbursement when setting our transport rates. And, that is what we are doing.

- Because of these limitations, to raise our revenues by 6%, we need to raise our transport rates by 16.36%. Let us not mix up the two numbers. One is a matter of service economics. The other a product of National Healthcare Policy and is beyond our control. Both are critical to the service we provide.

- **So what is our Payor mix? And, what are the impacts of the distribution?**[22]

Payor	Percentage of Patients
Medicare	52.8
Medi-Cal	27.3
Commercial Insurance	13.7
Private Pay*	6.2

[22] Payor mixes are dynamic and fluctuate; ours has remained relatively steady over our last two years. The mix in this report is from the period between January 1, 2024 and January 1, 2025. However, as presented above, in the discussion of the Contingency Fund, our Payor mix may become less favorable as more Californians lose their coverage under the Affordable Care Act and move to the Uninsured category.

* "Private Pay" is a word of art in payor mix discussions; actually, the category includes people who have neither Medicare/MediCal nor Commercial Insurance; they have to pay out of their own pockets — and, in reality they are the least likely to be able to pay; our billing company tells us that we get but 5 cents for every dollar billed in this category.

- What is the Impact of that Mix? In the words of Wittman Enterprises, LLC, our billing agency and subject matter expert on the mix:
  - *"Governmental payers (Medicare and Medi-Cal) account for 80.1% of total billable calls. Reimbursement from these programs is established through regulated fee schedules and statutory methodologies. As such, payment amounts are predetermined and are not affected by a provider's established charge rates."*
  - AND, *"Given that the majority of transports are reimbursed at predetermined government rates, adjustments to the Fire District's fee structure will not proportionally translate into overall revenue increases. Financial impact is largely dependent upon the Commercial Insurance transport population, which represents 13.7% of the Fire District's overall mix and is not governed by fixed reimbursement methodologies."*
    - In other words, the fee increase we seek will not have an impact on, or change our reimbursement from, 80% of our patients.
- The Bottom Line on Payor Mix: There are things we can control and things we cannot. We cannot control our Payor Mix and the impact it has on funding our system. Functionally, our ambulance service is the equivalent of "Universal Healthcare"; for many of our patients, we are the entry point into this country's complex and difficult to navigate healthcare system; no matter our patients' status, without questioning their finances, we bring them a prompt response and transport by well trained, well equipped, compassionate Paramedics and EMT's. We can control our patient care. We cannot control how the system pays for it. We cannot control the Payor Mix policies or the inequities it creates for all who try to meet the emergency needs of our patients. All we can do is work within their restrictions. And, that is why, in order to raise our revenues by 6%, we respectfully request a Transport Fee increase of 16.36%.

Final Thoughts:

Rigorous scrutiny makes clear that we are keeping the promises we made to the county.

By bringing about a paradigm shift that merges the best of the public and private service models, we are providing prompt responses, by well equipped, highly trained, compassionate Paramedics and EMT's. To do so, we are deploying more ambulances and advanced resources throughout EOA-1. We are not depending on others to do what we promised to do. Our 97% "time-to-scene" compliance rate is the highest that has been recorded in this county. We have built a stable, professional, local workforce. We no longer talk of a "Paramedic shortage" because our innovative, incentivized, educational programs are filling what was once a gaping hole in the pre-hospital care safety net. Our ambulances and crews are everywhere — ready to serve those who call for help in their worst moments.

Our accomplishments have been recognized by both the county and outside agencies. We received an "A" on the county's contract compliance evaluation progress report. The success of our paradigm shift has just been recognized by our receipt of the Integration Award. And, our CAAS evaluation has put us in the "Top 1% of the Top 1%".

But, we are not through yet. Every day we work to be better.

And, that is why, to allow us to do so, we respectfully request that the country grant us the requested transport fee increase.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ronald L. Busch
Fire Chief
Sonoma County Fire District

Resolution No. 2026-15
Dated: August 25, 2026

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SONOMA COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT, COUNTY OF SONOMA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, DETERMINING THE TAX RATES TO BE IMPOSED ON ALL PARCELS OF REAL PROPERTY WITHIN THE DISTRICT DURING FISCAL YEAR 2026/2027

WHEREAS, Ordinance No. 3540 R of the County of Sonoma, authorizing the Board of Directors of the Windsor Fire Protection District to levy a special tax each year on each parcel of real property within the boundaries of the District, was approved by the voters of the Windsor Fire Protection District in an election held on June 3, 1986; and

WHEREAS, the special tax approved in Ordinance No. 3540 R may be levied at a maximum rate of $45.00 per unit of benefit on each parcel within the boundaries of the District, applied to the maximum number of units of benefit permitted by Ordinance No. 3540 R; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance No. 2006-1 of the Windsor Fire Protection District, authorizing the District to levy an additional special tax, was approved by the voters of the Windsor Fire Protection District in an election held on November 7, 2006; and

WHEREAS, the special tax approved in Ordinance No. 2006-1 may be levied at a maximum rate, subject to adjustment for inflation, of $0.04 to $0.09 per square foot, depending on the parcel use, and/or a flat rate charge of $36.00 for each mobile-home space or each vacant parcel; and

WHEREAS, on April 4, 2019, the Windsor Fire Protection District, the Rincon Valley Fire Protection District, the Bennett Valley Fire Protection District, and the Mountain Volunteer Fire Department were reorganized by approval of the Sonoma County Local Area Formation Commission into the Sonoma County Fire District, including extension of the special taxes approved in Ordinance No. 3540 R and Ordinance No. 2006-1 to all parcels of real property within the boundaries of the Sonoma County Fire District; and

WHEREAS, on June 15, 2020, the Sonoma County Fire District was reorganized again to include the consolidation of the Russian River Fire Protection District by approval of the Sonoma County Local Area Formation Commission, including extension of the special taxes approved in Ordinance No. 3540 R and Ordinance No. 2006-1 to all parcels of real property within the boundaries of the reorganized Sonoma County Fire District; and

WHEREAS, on May 12, 2021, the Sonoma County Fire District was reorganized again to include the consolidation of the Forestville Fire Protection District by approval of the Sonoma County Local Area Formation Commission, including extension of the special taxes approved in Ordinance No. 3540 R and Ordinance No. 2006-1 to all parcels of real property within the boundaries of the reorganized Sonoma County Fire District; and

WHEREAS, on May 11, 2022, the Sonoma County Fire District was reorganized again to include the consolidation of the Bodega Bay Fire Protection District by approval of the Sonoma County Local Area Formation Commission, including extension of the special taxes approved in Ordinance No. 3540 R and Ordinance No. 2006-1 to all parcels of real property within the boundaries of the reorganized Sonoma County Fire District; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance No. 2018-02 of the Rancho Adobe Fire Protection District, authorizing the District to levy a special tax each year on each parcel of real property within the boundaries of the District special tax, was approved by the voters of the Rancho Adobe Fire Protection District in an election held on November 6, 2018; and

WHEREAS, on July 1, 2026, the Sonoma County Fire District was reorganized again to include the consolidation of the Rancho Adobe Fire Protection District and certain areas of County Service Area No. 40 by approval of the Sonoma County Local Area Formation Commission, including continuation of the special taxes approved in Ordinance No. 2018-02 to all parcels of real property in the former territory of the Rancho Adobe Fire Protection District and extension of the special taxes approved in Ordinance No. 3540 R and Ordinance No. 2006-1 to all parcels of real property in the remaining territory within the boundaries of the reorganized Sonoma County Fire District; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance No. 2018-02 permits the special tax to be adjusted annually for inflation by an amount equal to the annual adjustment factor determined pursuant to Section 7902 of the California Government Code, not to exceed 3.0%, thus establishing new limits for Ordinance No. 2018-02 in Fiscal Year 2026/2027 as shown in the following table:

2025-2026 FY	**$351.00**
2026-2027 FY	**$362.00**

WHEREAS, Ordinance No. 2006-1 permits the special tax to be adjusted annually for inflation by an amount equal to the annual adjustment factor determined pursuant to Section 7902 of the California Government Code which was 6.44 % for Fiscal Year 2026/2027, thus establishing new limits for Ordinance 2006-1 as shown in the following table:

2026-27 Rates

Use Code Description	Rate Per APN	Rate Per Space	Charge Base	Cap/Max Limit
Mobile Home Space	N/A	$74.90	FLAT	N/A
Vacant Land	$74.90	N/A	FLAT	N/A
Single Family Residential	$0.0832	N/A	SQFT	$580
Multi-Family Residential	$0.0832	N/A	SQFT	$31,209
Hotel/Motel/Lodging	$0.1040	N/A	SQFT	$31,209
Commercial/Light Industrial	$0.1040	N/A	SQFT	$6,242
Warehouse	$0.1248	N/A	SQFT	$6,242
Heavy Industrial	$0.1873	N/A	SQFT	$6,242

Resolution No. 2026-15
Dated: August 25, 2026

WHEREAS, provisions of Ordinance No. 3540 R, Ordinance No. 2006-1, and Ordinance No. 2018-02 require the Board of Directors of the District hold a public hearing each year to set the amount of each special tax, prior to imposition of the special tax; and is required to establish annually a public hearing date to consider and determine the amount of the special tax to be levied; and

WHEREAS, a duly noticed public hearing on this matter was held by the Board of Directors of the District on August 25, 2026; and

WHEREAS, after due consideration, it is the opinion of the Board of Directors of the District that said taxes are necessary for the proper operation of the District's business and for the provisions of fire protection services, fire prevention , emergency medical services and capital improvements; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Fire District hereby adopts the rates of special taxes for Fiscal Year 2026/2027 and directs the administrative staff to notify the Sonoma County Tax Collector of the rates as adopted and request the same be collected as provided in Ordinance No. 3540 R, Ordinance No. 2006-1, and Ordinance No. 2018-02.

THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION was introduced at a special meeting of the District Board of Directors on August 25, 2026, by Director _______________, who moved its adoption, seconded by Directors __________________, and ordered adopted by the following vote:

President Klick_______, Vice President Briare_________; Director Treanor _____

Director Hamann ________; Director So _______; Director Tognozzi________;

Secretary Weaver_______

AYES: _____ NOES: _______ ABSENT/NOT VOTING: ______

WHEREUPON, the Chair declared the foregoing Resolution adopted, and **SO ORDERED**.

By: ________________________________
Steve Klick, President of the Board

By: ________________________________
Kathy Washington, Secretary of the Board

Sonoma County Fire District Board of Directors
Staff Report

Date: August 25, 2026

Topic: 2026-2027 Special Tax Rates

Recommendation:

1. Recommend that the Board adopts Resolution # 2026-15 to set the tax rates to be imposed on all real property within the District during Fiscal Year 2026-2027.

Financial Impact:

If the Board approves the rates, the special tax assessments are expected to generate $12,311,785.86 in revenue for the 2026-2027 fiscal year.

Background:

The District annually sets the tax rates for the District's special taxes. The special taxes are necessary for the proper operation of the District's business and for the provisions of fire protection services, fire prevention, emergency medical services and capital improvements.

The special taxes levied under Ordinance 3540R are flat rate assessments without inflation adjustments.

The inflation adjustment for the Sonoma County Fire District special tax under Ordinance 2006-1 is 6.44%.

The inflation adjustment for parcels levied under the Ordinance 2018-02 for the areas formally served by Rancho Adobe Fire District allow for a maximum inflation adjustment of 3%. The current Bay Area CPI is 3.8%, and therefore staff recommends the 3% maximum inflation adjustment to these rates.

There are 68,053 taxable parcels in the District for the 2026-2027 fiscal year.

The proposed tax assessments for each parcel have been made available on the District's website at www.sonomacountyfd.org for the Board of Director's and the public's review.

Sonoma County FD is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Special Board Meeting

Time: Aug 25, 2026 02:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88189213578?pwd=BrztQs4tB6CJAe1Wwa1hPggPsLS9rk.1

Meeting ID: 881 8921 3578

Passcode: 641929

One tap mobile

+16694449171,,88189213578#,,,,*641929# US

+16699006833,,88189213578#,,,,*641929# US (San Jose)

Join by SIP

• 88189213578@zoomcrc.com

Join instructions

https://us06web.zoom.us/meetings/88189213578/invitations?signature=1eh2wVJ31deK8R5aLgzvZxJ-VKyCVPHbto5Fau-8Geg