

Capitola OKs talks with fire district

Meetings with Capitola Fire District board of directors to discuss a city takeover were approved by the Capitola City Council last night.

Capitola fire director Wayne Fontes asked the council to appoint two of its members to meet with Fontes and Fire Director Gene Warren to "work out the details of merging out forces."

Fontes said the fire district, which has rejected a merger with the Central fire district, will present its "shopping list" and work out details of a fall election.

Fontes talked of a district- and city-wide election, which could involve city annexation of the Opal Cliffs area, and a Capitola takeover of portions of the Central Fire District now inside the city boundaries, including a major portion of the Capitola Mall.

The council instructed City Manager Steve Burrell and

Councilman Dennis Beltram to meet with Fontes and Warren.

Beltram questioned what a committee of city and district representatives could accomplish. "If it is going to put to an election," he said, "then it seems premature for a committee."

"We want a response to our proposals," Fontes told the council.

Burrell said that if an election is going to be held in November, a decision must be made in the next four to six weeks.

Councilwoman Stephanie Harlan questioned placing the issue on the same ballot as the election of new directors for the fire district — wondering if it might not be superfluous to consider both at the same time.

But Councilman Bob Bucher said an election would end the fire board's vacillation over merging with Central or becoming a city department.