

# Capitola fire plan calls for expansion

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CAPITOLA — The secret proposal to "save" the Capitola Fire Department calls for continued operation as an independent district and the building of a second fire station on Jade Street.

Capitola Fire District Director Eugene Warren told the board at a meeting Monday night he had a proposal, but refused to discuss it publicly or with the press. He announced the proposal when he voted against a plan to jointly operate the department by the district and the city of Capitola.

Warren doesn't discuss how the district can finance the building of a second station in his proposal, a copy of which The Sentinel has obtained.

His letter to fellow directors says only he is "hopeful" a long-term, low-interest loan could be obtained.

Financial problems, common to all fire districts, is the main reason the fire district is trying to reorganize.

Capitola City Councilman Michael Routh, who served with fire district representatives on a committee which recommended joint administration of the department, described Warren's plan as "pie in the sky."

Warren cast the deciding 3-2 vote to disapprove the joint administration agreement, which would have governed the fire district with two City Council members, two fire district directors and a fifth member to be chosen by those four.

Warren indicated at Monday's meeting that his "no" vote could change by next month's meeting. He said he simply did not want to close the door on his plan.

He refused to reveal his plan at or after the meeting, saying someone who he wouldn't identify had asked him not to discuss it. Copies were given to other directors, who voted to put it on next month's agenda.

Essentially, Warren's plan calls for the district to build a second fire station, using volunteer labor, on property it owns on Jade Street, east of 41st Avenue, less than two miles from the current downtown station.

The proposal also calls for the re-establishment of an assistant chief's position, to be filled by promoting a captain. A fireman would be promoted to fill the captain's vacancy and a new fireman would be hired.

Warren indicates in his proposal which members of the department he believes should fill those positions.  
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## Santa Cruz man seriously burned in fire.

SANTA CRUZ — Firefighters work to extinguish a house fire Wednesday night which seriously burned a Santa Cruz man. The Darwin Street blaze was reported shortly after 8 p.m., and when firefighters arrived at the house, they found Dan Outlaw, 27, suffering from second- and third degree burns. For story, see Page A4.

Pete Amos/Sentinel



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subject.

## Capitola fire plan

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That is contrary to the department's selection process by testing and interview and mentioning names, according to Fire Board Chairman Wayne Fontes, was the reason for not making the proposal public.

Warren suggests that two stations could be manned, with a lieutenant's position to be created as a supervisor for the crew at the new station.

The proposal indicates a total of five paid firefighters could man each shift at the two stations, with the possibility of a sixth, a sleep-in volunteer, at one of the stations at night.

With that manpower, Warren says in his proposal, "I feel we are looking at being able to respond with four engines to a major structure fire." "Looking at this concept, I can see a much better attitude hopefully coming from the men as they would have an incentive to work for promotions."

Warren said he preferred his proposal to either joint administration of the department by the district and the city or another option of joining in the Central County Fire Agency.

The fire district participated in consolidation talks with Live Oak and Soquel Fire districts in 1981, but decided not to join its neighbors in the new agency.

Warren said in his letter to fellow directors that he wouldn't vote for joining either the city or the Central County Fire Agency "as it seems to be the general feeling of both agencies that we are

incapable of managing our own fire district." Warren wrote he believes that assessment to be incorrect.

Councilman Routh said before Monday's scheduled vote by the board that he expected the fire directors to "continue to do nothing . . . vacillate, wondering which way to go."

At Tuesday's City Council meeting, he described the board's suggestion that the city hold an election to ratify the city-district agreement as a "waste of taxpayers' money." He said it was "just another indication the fire district doesn't have the backbone to make a decision."

At one point, Routh suggested the city rescind its offer to help administer the fire department. Councilman Bob Bucher, who also helped draft the proposed city-district agreement, concurred.

City Manager Steve Burrell pointed out, however, that agreement is only valid if and when the fire board passes it. Since it appears there is not the majority vote for the agreement, the council need not take action to rescind its offer.

Councilmen ultimately agreed not to rescind the offer, but Routh made it clear that the city does not intend to finance an election even if the board wants one.

"I don't think we're going to see anything until the public becomes educated on what they're (the fire board) doing," he said. "Directors have to get hit over the head with a two-by-four to wake up and realize they need some money to operate and they need some management over there."