

# Aptos-La Selva fire board gets going with changes

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Aptos and La Selva Beach fire directors, members of the new Aptos-La Selva Fire Joint Powers Authority, began organizing their new agency last week.

Though a creature of two existing fire districts, the agency must start from the beginning with such things as applications for federal and state tax identification numbers, insurance and retirement-plan matters, and a new budget.

The JPA board started its meeting by electing Richard Duchscher of Aptos as chairman and Burly Burlison of La Selva Beach as vice chairman. The other board members are Stewart Davis and Walter Jordan of Aptos and Joanne Dlott of La Selva Beach.

Aptos fire district secretary

Louise Barker was appointed secretary to the new board.

Aptos Fire Chief Al Forbes submitted a preliminary budget of \$2,292,644 for the agency, calling for the hiring of seven new firefighters to help man the La Selva Beach station around the clock.

Three of the new employees will be firefighters drawn from the ranks of the La Selva volunteers. Forbes told the directors last week that nine volunteers have submitted applications. A screening panel will narrow the list down to seven candidates from which Forbes can make his selection.

The other four will be experienced paramedics, who will augment the existing paramedic force.

Forbes said more than 100 applications have been received by the district. Questionnaires have been sent out to 70 of the applicants, he said.

When those are returned, a screening panel will select the 14 best qualified candidates, and from that field a board will conduct interviews and give Forbes a list of eight, from which he can hire four.

Duty rosters showing how three stations will be manned have already been prepared.

Forbes told the board that Ray Bensen will be promoted to

ments, the federal law sets the work week at 53 hours for a seven-day period or certain multiples in that proportion so that in the case of the local department, firefighters can work no more than 204 hours in any 27-day period. Any work over that limit, Forbes told the directors, must be paid for at 1½ times the hourly rate. Forbes is projecting that it will

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fire captain to fill a position created by the merger.

The budget includes a new \$30,000 category for "Fair Labor Standards Act overtime," required by a Feb. 19 U.S. Supreme Court decision that makes state and local agencies subject to the same overtime rules as private industry. In the case of fire depart-

cost about 3 percent of the \$1 million salary budget to meet the federal law.

There's also a \$5,000 item in the budget for emergency overtime and \$85,000 for constant manning — a practice whereby firefighters are called in on their days off to cover vacancies created by others out sick or taking vacations.

Board members also decided the JPA will continue providing fire protection to residents in the northern Larkin Valley and San Andreas Road areas through Jan. 1, 1986.

The La Selva Beach fire district directors had voted two months ago to cancel a \$6,000-a-year contract with the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors to provide fire protection, and to abandon its plans to annex those areas.

Since then, Forbes told the directors, meetings have been held between district and county officials about the cancellation.

"I'm not sure that this area is worth keeping," Forbes said, "but they (county officials) need some more time to work things out.

"It might not be advantageous to us," he added, "but it might help the JPA (image) to not dump them on their ears."

Board chairman Duchscher said he'd go along with a six-month extension of the contract, to Jan. 1. The rest of the board voted unanimously to

extend it.

Board members tentatively approved the budget and set a public hearing on it for July 2. Applications for continued coverage of district employees under the state Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) and for state and federal tax identification numbers and State Disability Insurance coverage were routinely approved by the JPA directors.

When the Aptos and La Selva Beach departments are merged July 1, all of the employees will be covered under one retirement-system contract. Aptos employees are covered under a more liberal retirement plan than the two full-time La Selva Beach employees, Fire Chief Al Kinslow and Captain Pat DeSimone. According Forbes, retirement benefits for Aptos personnel cannot be reduced without first negotiating with the firefighters' association, leaving the JPA board with the option only of raising the La Selva Beach retirement benefits to the Aptos level.

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