

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
OF THE CENTRAL FIRE DISTRICT  
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2021-03**

On motion of Director *RADLIFF*  
Duly seconded by Director *ROXCO*  
the following Resolution is adopted.

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CENTRAL FIRE DISTRICT OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY (CENTRAL FIRE DISTRICT) DECLARING THE BOARD'S INTENT TO TRANSITION FROM AT-LARGE TO DISTRICT-BASED ELECTIONS BY NOVEMBER 2022 GENERAL DISTRICT ELECTION PURSUANT TO CALIFORNIA ELECTIONS CODE SECTION 10010.**

**WHEREAS**, the directors of the Central Fire District are currently elected in "at-large" elections by all registered voters of the entire Fire District who choose to vote; and

**WHEREAS**, members of the Board of Directors are elected in November of even-numbered years (November 2020, 2022, 2024, etc.); and

**WHEREAS**, in 2003, the California Voting Rights Act ("CVRA") became law; and

**WHEREAS**, the CVRA, seeks to prevent the disenfranchisement of protected classes of persons, establishes a low bar for recovery of attorney fees for those seeking to force public agencies to convert from at-large to district elections; and

**WHEREAS**, some public agencies sued under the CVRA have paid large sums to resolve such lawsuits; and

**WHEREAS**, the District has yet to receive a demand that the District transition to district elections. However, at the Board's regular meeting on September 15, 2020 a member of the public did discuss this subject under oral communications. This member of the public did suggest that the at-large election system diluted the ability of certain protected classes of persons within the District to elect candidates of their choice, and thereby violates the CVRA; and

**WHEREAS**, the District desires to comply with the CVRA and proactive means to avoid legal risks associated with a CVRA lawsuit; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board has determined that it is in furtherance of the purposes of the CVRA to transition from at-large to district elections; and

**WHEREAS**, under the Federal Voting Rights Act, drawing electoral division boundaries today would be based upon the most current available United States Decennial Census data for 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, the most current information available indicates appropriate United States Decennial Census data for 2020 reasonably necessary to create the new districts will not be available for demographers before September 2021, and

**WHEREAS**, by this Resolution, the Board declares its intent to adopt a resolution pursuant to California Elections Code sections 10010 and 10650 transitioning from at large to district elections with sufficient time before the regular District election to be held in November 2022, and

**WHEREAS**, to meet such schedule, specific steps necessary to facilitate this transition include the following:

1. Prior to drawing a draft map or maps of the proposed boundaries of the divisions, the District shall hold at least two (2) public hearings over a period of no more than thirty (30) days, at which the public will be invited to provide input regarding the composition of the divisions.
2. After all draft maps are drawn, the District shall publish and make available for release at least one draft map and, if members of the Board will be elected in their divisions at different times to provide for staggered terms of office, the potential sequence of the elections shall also be provided.
3. The Board shall also hold at least two (2) additional hearings over a period of no more than thirty (30) days, at which the public shall be invited to provide input regarding the content of the draft map or maps and the proposed sequence of elections, if applicable. The first version of the draft map shall be published at least seven (7) days before consideration at a hearing. If a draft map is revised at or following a hearing, it shall be published and made available to the public for at least seven (7) days before being adopted; and

**WHEREAS**, the District has retained an experienced demographer to assist the District in developing a proposal for a district-based/by-division election system; and

**WHEREAS**, the adoption of a district-based/by-division elections system will not affect the terms of any sitting Director, each of whom will serve out their current term.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CENTRAL FIRE DISTRICT DOES HEREBY RESOLVE:**

**SECTION 1.** The Board hereby resolves to work toward, develop and adopt a resolution to transition to a district-based election system as authorized by California Elections Code Section 10650 for the November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Statewide General Election.

**SECTION 2.** The Board directs staff to work with the District's legal representatives and demographer and other appropriate consultants as needed to provide a detailed analysis of the District's current demographics and any other information or data as needed to prepare a draft map that divides the District's jurisdictional area into voting

divisions in a manner consistent with the intent and purpose of the California Voting Rights Act and the Federal Voting Rights Act.

**SECTION 3.** The District hereby approves the tentative timeline in **Exhibit A**, attached hereto and made a part of this resolution by reference, for conducting a public process to solicit public input and testimony on proposed district-based/by-division electoral maps before adopting any such map.

**SECTION 4.** The timeline in **Exhibit A** may be adjusted by Fire Chief as deemed necessary, provided that such adjustments shall not prevent District from complying with the time frames specified under California Elections Code Section 10010.

**SECTION 5.** The Board directs staff to place information in appropriate public places and on the District's website regarding the proposed transition to a district-based/by-division election system, including maps, notices, agendas, and other information and to establish an appropriate means of communication to inform the public and answer questions.

**SECTION 6.** Severability. The provisions of this Resolution are severable and if any provision of this Resolution is held invalid, that provision shall be severed.

**PASSED and ADOPTED** by the Board of Directors of the Central Fire District, County of Santa Cruz, State of California this 13<sup>th</sup> day of April 2021 by the following vote:

**AYES:** RONCO, RADLIEFF, PARBRO, SCANLON

**NOES:** 0

**ABSENT:** LOCCHESI

**ABSTAIN:** 0

**ATTEST:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John Scanlon, Board Chair

 4/13/21  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Fire Chief John Walbridge, Secretary to the Board

Attachments: Exhibit A

Distribution: File