

Lane Fire Authority / Santa Clara Fire

Board Operating Agreement

For the purpose of enhancing teamwork among members of the board, between the board(s) and the administration, we, the members of the Lane Fire Authority & Santa Clara Fire Board Senior Leadership Team (board(s) and chief) do hereby publicly commit ourselves collectively and individually to the following operating protocol:

1. **The Vision comes first:** We strive to provide the highest level of services that improve the quality of life, health, and safety of all we meet.
2. **Don't spring surprises** on other board members or the chief. Surprises to the board or the chief will be the exception, not the rule. There should be no surprises at a board meeting. We agree to ask the board chair(s) or the chief to place an item on the agenda prior to the distribution of the board documents instead of bringing it up unexpectedly at the meeting. It is also acceptable to ask at a regularly scheduled meeting to have an item placed on the next month's agenda.
3. **Communication** between staff and the board is encouraged as long as it follows board policy. The senior leadership team recognizes that "good," "timely", "open", and "constant" communication regarding fire district issues is extremely important. We will strive to anticipate issues which may become important or are sensitive to our fire district(s) and district(s) stakeholders.
4. **Follow the chain of command:** The last stop, not the first, will be the board. We agree to follow the chain of command and insist that others do also. While the board is eager to listen to its constituents and staff, each inquiry is to be referred to the person who can properly and expeditiously address the issue. Board requests that will likely require considerable time or have political implications are to be directed to the chief. All personnel complaints and criticisms received by the board or its individual members will be directed to the chief.
5. **Own the collective decision-making process:** Support decisions of the majority after honoring the right of individual members to express opposing viewpoints and vote their convictions. We will support the majority decision(s).
6. **Exemplify the governance role:** Focus on policy making, planning and evaluation, rather than day-to-day operations. The leadership team (board(s) and chief) will support the policies our district currently has in place. We will continue to annually study and review policies for effectiveness and appropriately engage key stakeholders in the development or deletion of policies and policy revisions. We will maintain and apply district policies consistently while being cognizant of and recognizing the potential uniqueness of any given situation.
7. **Utilize CEO input:** The chief is the executive officer of the senior leadership team and should make recommendations, proposals or suggestions on most matters that come before the board.
8. **Board acts only as a body:** Individual board members do not have authority. Only the board as a whole has authority. We agree that an individual board member will not take unilateral action. The board chair(s) will communicate the position(s) of the board on controversial issues.

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9. **Meeting protocol:** Conduct at a board meeting is very important. We desire to have a legacy of a well-functioning, effective board. We agree to avoid words and actions that create a negative impression on an individual, the board or the district(s). We will be open-minded and willing to "deeply listen" to all speakers/presenters. We agree that we can disagree and will do so using common courtesy and respect for others. We will not react to impromptu complaints on the spot, but will assure any individual(s) that the fire district will follow up.
10. **Avoid marathon board meetings:** To be efficient and effective, long board meetings must be avoided. Points are to be made in as few words as possible; speeches at board meetings will be minimal. If a board member believes s/he doesn't have enough information or has questions, either the chief or board chair is to be contacted before the meeting.
11. **Practice efficient decision-making:** Board meetings are for decision-making, action and votes, not endless discussion. We agree to move to the question when discussion is repetitive.
12. **Speak to agenda issues:** The board will not play to the audience. We agree to speak to the issues on the agenda and attend to our fellow board members. Facts and information needed from the administration will be referred to the chief.
13. **Executive/closed sessions** will be held only for appropriate subjects. Executive sessions will be held only when specific needs arise. Board members will be extremely sensitive to the legal ramifications of their meetings and comments.
14. **Voting:** Board members will commit to voting for or against all actions proposed to the board and in rare situations, an abstention is acceptable.
15. **Meeting Attendance:** It is important that we have a quorum to be able to conduct the business of the district(s). If you anticipate being absent from a meeting, please notify the board(s) chair and/or a chief at your earliest convenience. Board members may be contacted by the chief and/or board chair(s) individually to ensure that a quorum will be present at the next scheduled meeting.

Date: August 19th, 2025

Lane Fire Authority Board Chair: _____

Santa Clara Fire Board Chair: _____

Chief Signature: _____