

THE MORNING AFTER

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Jim and Tom Sworn In!

Mayor Bill Cahill administered the oath of office to Jim Reis, Ross' new Police Chief, and Tom Vallee, newly appointed acting Fire Chief. A large and jovial crowd packed the standing-room only Ross Town Hall for the swearing-in ceremony yesterday morning, including many firefighters and police officers from Marin communities as far away as Novato.



Fire Chief Tom Vallee and Police Chief Jim Reis try on their new hats.

The crowd of Ross residents, Town staff and Marin fire and police personnel were delighted that two longtime public safety employees had been promoted to the top positions. Chief Jim Reis has been with the Ross Police Department since 1977, and lived in Ross for 24 years while he raised his children. Chief Vallee started with the Town of Ross Fire Department as a volunteer firefighter in 1975 and was promoted through the ranks as he earned both bachelor and master's degrees. The promotions mark the first time since 1982 Ross has had separate police and fire chiefs.



Congratulations to Chief Reis and Chief Vallee!

Council Members Select 08-09 Goals

The Town Council convened for a workshop at Lagunitas Country Club yesterday and the Council selected their Council goals for the 2008-09 fiscal year. Last year the Council initiated adopting five Council goals for the year, with each member responsible for spearheading one goal to fruition. The workshop was open to the public.



The Council discussed 2008-09 goals at a special workshop.

Council member Mike Skall will continue working on emergency preparedness. Recognizing the growing number of town seniors who may be isolated or difficult to reach, the Council agreed to place a special emphasis on preparing seniors for disasters and ensuring aid reaches them in the event of an emergency. The Council brainstormed several ideas to enlist seniors in emergency preparedness programs. Fire Chief Tom Vallee said his goal was to appoint a trained block captain to each neighborhood who would be able to identify seniors who may need extra assistance during disasters. He encourages all seniors to provide the public safety department with contact information to ensure help will arrive when needed.



Council member Chris Martin was tasked with shepherding Town and Ross Valley flood control projects forward, including the reconstruction of the Lagunitas Bridge. Council member Martin will continue to work with the County of Marin and the Army Corps of Engineers to make sure the Unit 4 project, involving the replacement of the fish ladder, moves ahead as quickly as possible. The Council also discussed the importance of developing regulations not just for Ross, but the entire Ross Valley, to minimize stormwater runoff by reducing impervious surfaces, retaining stormwater on site, and ensuring runoff from new development is not deposited directly into drainageways.

Mayor Pro Tempore Rick Strauss will continue to work on the Downtown Plan, which remains on the list of Council goals for a second year, with a goal of completing the plan by fiscal year-end. The Council discussed surveying the downtown area, hiring a traffic engineer, and retaining a consultant to develop ideas explored at last May's downtown visioning event. The plan will be brought back to the community for further discussion and input.

Council member Scot Hunter will lead police and fire department reorganization, goals and succession planning. The Council agreed to establish a "blue ribbon" citizen committee to study fire consolidation and provide recommendations for remodeling or reconstruction of the firehouse and public safety offices.



Finally, Mayor Bill Cahill will oversee an update of job descriptions for Town positions and develop performance review for Town staff. The Council discussed hiring a consultant to review the organization of Town departments and to develop personnel descriptions and employee review processes.

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