



SOUTHERN MARIN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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Southern Marin Fire Protection District Emergency & Disaster Preparedness Meeting Tuesday, June 9, 2020 – 07:30 am – Headquarters

Director Peter Fleming – Chair

Director Tom Perazzo

Alternate: Director Cristine DeBerry

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: 07:46 A.M.

In Attendance: Director Fleming (by Zoom Meeting), Director DeBerry, Director Perazzo, Chief Welch, Chief Hilliard, Clerk of the Board Mariya Weinberg.

Absent: none

OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION:

No public present in person or online.

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS:

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

May 12, 2020 Emergency & Disaster Preparedness Committee Minutes.

There was no quorum present of during the May 12, 2020 meeting. Therefore, the minutes from that meeting are taken as informational notes only, and are not to be approved. Directory Perazzo clarified this matter for the Committee.

ACTION ITEMS:

Confirmed that there were none.

REPORTS AND INFORMATION

7 a. Division Chief/Fire Marshall Report – Measure U

Chief Hilliard's report covered highlights of projects performed under the Measure U initiative this year. SMFD hired the Vegetation Management Inspector Jesse Figoni in July of last year. At the end of July, we started to make significant progress in vegetation field reduction projects. First, SMFD had to organize this new Measure U vegetation management program, hire staff, and then we could start the vegetation management projects.

Chief Hilliard pointed out that this puts accomplishments of the past year in great perspective, considering the additional organization effort of the program start up. We focused on projects that could benefit community right away, such as the chipper program and informing community of its availability. We also developed a program for defensible space inspections, with the Fire Inspector Marshall Nau developing inspection process utilizing available technology.

Also, we talked to the City of Sausalito, DPW, Tam Valley, Homestead Valley and Strawberry, which are areas impacted by dense vegetation, about what beneficial programs could be implemented quickly. One resulting project was Cypress Ridge in Sausalito, which is a perfect location for a fire break, and which is close to multi-family home area. A lot of vegetation was cleared out. The report in the meeting packet highlights a few of the big clearing projects.

We also have worked on fire road maintenance and defensible space, with Fire Prevention working in conjunction with Operations. Battalion Chiefs Matt Bouchard and Scott Barnes drove a lot of the fire roads in the district, looking for overgrown areas that would negatively impact firefighting. Appropriate maintenance of fire roads and vegetation clearing was then performed.

For the past 10+ years, the district had areas where vegetation could be cut and stacked in piles, but could not be removed, due to access issues. We could only hope that at some point we could do a controlled burn to clear it out. This affected Marinview and Tam Valley areas. With measure U funding, and assistance of Marin County Fire Department (the Tam fire crew), a lot of these piles were successfully burned. Note that controlled burns are difficult to do in Southern Marin district, as local residents are easily able to request that a burn should be extinguished for reasons like health issues. Key component to successful burn projects was community education about importance of these projects to public safety and notification about burn events. 16+ debris piles in the areas were removed, reducing risk of wildfire travelling from Tennessee Valley Road over the hill to Marinview housing area.

Chief Hilliard also spoke about the status of our fuel reduction efforts. Per Fire Inspector Figoni, between last July and end of this July, we estimate that five hundred thousand tons of vegetation will be removed. Considering the initial program set up efforts, this is a huge accomplishment, so the Measure U funding has been put to great use. Next year we look forward to using both Measure U and Measure C funding, projecting removal of seven to eight hundred thousand tons of vegetation, to reduce wildfires. Please see Measure U financial chart in the meeting packet to highlight expenditures, which equate to tons of vegetation being removed. The chipper program shows that \$55k was spent. One day of chipper program is \$1,400 - \$1,800, with 5-8 streets taken care of per day. Paved roads cost more, since we pay for crews cutting vegetation. This year we have done a great job with utilizing Measure U funds with vegetation removal and increasing safety, increasing public support. Chief Hilliard thanked the Board for helping with the funding.

Chief Hilliard answered Director DeBerry's question as to whether Measure U is on the same funding as our budget, and is it also July-June? Chief Hilliard stated that Measure U budget is same, July-June, and it is part of the \$3 Million dollar budget increase this coming year.

7 b. Division Chief/Fire Marshall Report – Measure C

Chief Hilliard provided the committee with a Measure C status update, with regard to county-wide Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA). President Hilliard is on the committee for

the MWPA. The committee and the infrastructure are still being put together, and there are a lot of ongoing changes. MWPA asked SMFD to inform them if we have any suggestions for quick-start aka “shovel-ready” programs. Note that when Measure C was adopted, City Managers suggested that funds should not be held unused within the first year, while programs are getting up and running. If any local organizations can use the money right away, need to disburse.

Therefore, see several quick start programs outlined in the meeting packet, that can be funded right away. Funding comes from three categories: core functions funding for year one, defensible space inspectors, and local mitigation projects. Local mitigation project funding is guaranteed, which is about \$400k annually. We are looking at the possibility of hiring up to 4 defensible space inspectors, which would do enhanced inspections as compared to engine companies’ type of inspections. Local mitigation projects constitute the expansion of what we are doing now; larger area, more chippers, roadway widening, fuel breaks and hazard reductions.

Chief Hilliard emphasized his and Chief Tubbs’s interest in emergency evacuation notification aspect of Measure C. The Chiefs propose that measure C fund some, if not all, of ELRAD (Emergency Long Range Acoustical Devices) for our district, which Mill Valley already has installed. The devices are a combination of siren and specific evacuation voice instructions. We have put in for core functions funding for ELRAD, and also put it in for local mitigation. Per Chief Tubbs, it is being reviewed by Operations Committee for Measure C. If Measure C won’t fund ELRAD, SMFD has back up plans for the funding. If we use all of local mitigation funding and core function funding for ELRAD, we would still be able to do vegetation removal through Measure U this year.

Chief Hilliard answered a question from Director Perazzo about the hi-lo sirens currently in use by the Sausalito Police Department, and as to whether they have a voice announcement component. Chief Hilliard stated that, while it does have PA voice capability, it’s not a mobile system. Chief Hilliard also clarified for Director Perazzo about hiring safety inspectors – if we fund them as independent contractors, we estimate that we can get up to 4 inspectors for SMFD, and 2 for MVFD. Chief Hilliard noted that the funding has not been completely confirmed yet.

Director Fleming asked, if measure C does not fund ELRAD this year, would we be including it in our budget from general funds? Chief Hilliard said we might do a phase in, possibly under Measure U funding, for which we have about \$130k this year, since we are done with start-up costs. Chief Peterson then clarified that we don’t actually have funding for ELRAD this year, if Measure C does not fund it.

Director DeBerry asked when we might expect to hear if Measure C would fund ELRAD? Chief Hilliard believes that next meeting for Operations group is next week, so we would expect to hear from Chief Tubbs about their decision afterwards.

7 c. Report from Deputy Fire Chief Operations and Training

This was a verbal report from Chief Welch, concerning the Emergency Preparedness Commission Summit. We hosted EPC teams from all over the Southern Marin area, including Tiburon, SMFD, Sausalito, floating homes, Tam Valley, district and city employees. The main discussion was to share best practices from various areas, and discussing this in the light of the current COVID-19 situation. We discussed the public safety power shutoffs, with Lynn Walsh from City of Mill Valley providing an overview as to what we are anticipating, and how we

would make adjustments based on COVID-19 in our community support centers that are scheduled to be open throughout the area during these types of events.

The Summit also discussed the fire season, and how we anticipate doing shelters. Also, community outreach during COVID-19, which communities sharing practices on how they are supporting access and functional needs. Dr. Cromwell talked about disaster preparedness and disaster psychology. There were about 33 participants at the peak of the summit.

Director Perazzo added that there were some unofficial meetings on these types of subjects in the last few years. During the current Summit, Director Perazzo covered COVID-19 issues, including covering what other communities were doing. Some committees were activating their CERT resources and neighborhood resource groups. Everyone at the Summit was interested in developing neighborhood resource groups, potentially including existing CERT captains, and also with the additional abbreviated CERT training for the groups. The groups also discussed shared services, and working with neighboring groups on CERT. We hope that out of COVID-19 shelter-in-place situation more neighborhood groups will emerge. So individual disaster preparedness committees can start promoting in Central Marin, which has a City employee that manages this program. Tom manages the group in the City of Tiburon. Sausalito, however, does not have a CERT or neighborhood resource group. Great meeting, hopefully to be repeated on quarterly basis.

There were no follow-up questions.

CLOSED SESSION

There was no closed session at this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

Adjourned at 8:18 AM.