

THE MARIN WILDFIRE PREVENTION AUTHORITY
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Held a meeting:

3:00 p.m. Thursday, June 4, 2020

Via teleconference due to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

1. Call to Order- Chair Weber called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and welcomed the Fire Chiefs and City/Town Managers.

2. Roll Call

Committee Member Attendance: Joe Chinn (Ross), Todd Cusimano (Corte Madera), Eric Dreikosen (Marinwood), Dave Donnery (San Anselmo), Jim Fox (Inverness Fire), Chris Gove (Muir Beach Fire), George Kraukauer (Bollinas Fire), Al Piombo (Mill Valley Fire), Mark Pomi (Kentfield Fire), Steve Rabb (Marin County Attorney), Jim Schutz (San Rafael), Dan Schwarz (Larkspur), Rich Shortall (Sleepy Hollow Fire District), Kenny Stevens (Stinson Beach Fire), Bill Tyler (Novato Fire), Garrett Toy (Fairfax), Chris Tubbs (Southern Marin Fire), Jason Weber (Marin County Fire)

Chair Weber stated the public will have an opportunity to address the committee by using the “raise your hand” function.

3. Agenda Adjustments

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

4. Open Time for Public Expression

Ms. Teri Thomas stated a new group has been formed called the Fire and Environment Resilience Network (FERN) which consists of a collaboration of three environmental groups- the California Native Plants Society, the Marin Audubon Society, and the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin. The mission is to incorporate natural resource protection and enhancements into the fire prevention program measures. She had three comments to make on the Project Worksheet: 1) Projects should be fleshed out in the Action Project Section including the size of the project, treatments, equipment to be used, etc.; 2) The Compliance Section should include what categorical exemptions are being assigned and if the area will be surveyed for sensitive species; 3) Success criteria should be integrated for both fire protection and natural resources.

5. Consent Calendar

a. Approval of the May 14, 2020 minutes from the MWPA Operations Committee

M/s, Donnery/Dreikosen, to approve the May 14, 2020 MWPA Operations Committee meeting minutes as submitted

Ayes: All (through a roll call vote)

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

6. Old Business

a. Operations Committee By-laws

Committee member Dreikosen stated Committee member Tubbs working with him on the By-laws. They were modeled on documents from several different agencies and include the key sections: 1) Purpose; 2) Organization; 3) Responsibility of the representatives; 4) Meetings; 5) Officers; 6) Subcommittees. They are looking for general feedback and in particular the frequency and location of regular meetings.

Committee member Tubbs stated they were unsure if this committee has the authority to approve or adopt these By-laws or if they need to be approved by the governing board. County Counsel was of the opinion that the Operations (OPS) Committee could have that authority but thought it should go before the governing board.

Committee member Dreikosen stated the Board could give authority to the Operations Committee which would speed up future amendments, etc.

Chair Weber stated they need to discuss the terms of the Chair and Vice Chair- it was originally set to run on a calendar year. However, the Board President and Vice President terms will run on a fiscal year.

Committee member Tubbs stated they decided that the Operations Committee terms would run on a calendar year and the Board would run on a fiscal year to have that overlap. He would support a change in Article 6, under "Officers", that the terms are on a calendar year and not a fiscal year.

A committee member asked if they were making a recommendation that the Board adopt the By-laws for the Operations Committee or if they were asking the Board to create the By-laws for them.

Committee member Tubbs stated County Counsel advised the Operations Committee to take the draft By-laws and forward them to the Board once they are approved by the Operations Committee. Future amendments would be done at the Operations Committee level.

Committee member Tyler asked for a clarification on the difference between a "standing" vs. "ad hoc" subcommittee and the Brown Act requirements. He thought the requirements for an ad hoc subcommittee were less restrictive. They have to make sure they do not exceed a quorum of the OPS Committee. The draft By-laws call for quarterly meetings but he thought they would need to meet more often.

Committee member Tubbs stated they did not identify how the standing or ad hoc committees would run but would look to the OPS Committee or the Board to do that.

Chair Weber stated they currently have ad hoc committees to tackle some of the early work. A more formal standing subcommittee would require an agenda, minutes, etc.

Committee member Dreikosan stated a standing subcommittee is a regular group that has continuing discussions, prepares an agenda and minutes, and holds meetings that are open to the public. Ad hoc subcommittees are required to be composed of less than a quorum and consist of committee members only (no members of the public). They are not subject to the Brown Act.

Chair Weber asked for comments on the draft By-laws that will go to the Board for a recommendation.

Committee member Dreikosan asked if there were any concerns about the quarterly meetings occurring in July, October, January, and April. There were no concerns expressed. Committee member Dreikosan asked if there were concerns about meeting on the third Thursday of the month at 3:00 p.m. There were no concerns expressed. Committee member Dreikosan discussed the possible locations including Novato, San Rafael, Central Marin, and Southern Marin. Chair Weber stated he was not sure the By-law had to include a specific location for the meetings- they could ask County Counsel.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

Mr. Stephen Keese stated they are going to be dealing with a “moving target” in terms of priorities, negotiations, etc. The wording should leave them some flexibility. Article 2, Statement of Purpose, should allow for the OPS Committee to make adjustments since things will be coming at them from all directions including the FireWise groups, etc.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

Chair Weber stated the draft would be sent to the Board for subsequent adoption.

b. Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority year one funding and budget developments

Committee member Tubbs presented the report. He stated the draft Administrative Services Agreement and Financial Support Services Agreement were in the packet. They are recommending that the OPS Committee make comments so the agreements could be forwarded to the Board for approval. They are also recommending that committee members notify the subcommittee as to their agency’s interest in providing the services associated with the agreements.

Chair Weber asked interested individuals to speak up about the Treasurer position as soon as possible. Southern Marin (Committee member Tubbs) has expressed interest.

Chair Weber referred to the Administrative Services Agreement and stated the committee should work with the Executive Officer, once that person is on board, on the best location, staffing model, etc. They need to capitalize on the fiscal side and use existing resources.

Committee member Tubbs stated one of the goals of the subcommittee was to help the agency start up as quickly as possible and address those things that will be coming up quickly relative to invoicing, payments, etc. There are some unanswered questions in terms of payroll with respect to seasonal inspectors, etc. The Executive Officer will be working on these issues with the Board.

Committee member Cusimano stated this is a critical step for the organization. He supports the appointment of Committee member Tubbs as the Treasurer. Chair Weber and another Committee member also supported Committee member Tubbs.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

Chair Weber stated he could prepare a draft agreement for the next meeting naming Southern Marin Fire Agency as the Treasurer and Fiduciary Agent/Administrative Support agent in the interim.

Chair Weber stated a Draft Budget needs to be submitted to the Board at its June 18th meeting. They could hold a Budget Workshop in the Fall to review the progress being made.

c. Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority Measure C Tax Administration

Chair Weber presented a report. MBS has been retained for tax administration services. A postcard notice was sent to seniors about the senior exemption. He clarified that "single-family residences" includes condominiums and townhomes. Requests for the exemption have to be post marked by June 30th. The AB2476 postcards notifying property owners with addresses outside of Marin County are also being sent. MBS will have the tax roll to the County Tax Collector no later than August 7th.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

Mr. Stephen Keese asked how the consultant identified individuals 65 years of age or older. Chair Weber stated they mined the public data- there were 28,000 parcels that received the post card.

Ms. Pat Randolph stated she was confused since the post cards were not addressed similar to tax bills. Property can be held in a trust. Some of the post cards were addressed only to the male resident of the household.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

d. Update on Executive Officer recruitment

Committee member Pomi presented a report. Nelson Staffing has been handling the recruitment process which opened up May 15th and will run through June 10th. They have received over 50 applications and letters of interest and have started the vetting process. They will submit the top eight to ten candidates to the subcommittee along with a list of all applicants. The Board of Directors discussed the interview process at its last meeting and has yet to make a final decision. One of the items discussed by the Board was the length of the term of the contract. This could be a part of the negotiations but the Board was recommending a one to two year term. He asked if the OPS Committee would like the subcommittee to start to develop some of the base foundation of the contract.

Chair Weber stated the subcommittee could work with interested Board members to work on these issues. The position will be categorized as an “at will”, full-time employee for several years but could transition to a part-time position.

Committee member Schwarz supported a severance provision due to the “at will” nature of the position. He noted there was a lot of discussion at the Board meeting about the term of the contract. The contract should be consistent with what is done in the member agencies. Chair Weber agreed.

Committee member Pomi stated the subcommittee will present a draft at the next OPS Committee meeting.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

e. Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority 2020 Work Plan

Committee member Tyler presented a report and gave a PowerPoint presentation. He thanked Ms. Quinn Gardner of San Rafael for maintaining the spreadsheet. He stated the Work Plan spreadsheet tracks all the projects and programs in a number of different ways—area or zone, core projects, and local amounts. He received eighty one different worksheets totaling over \$8.6 million. This amount does not include any of the administrative overhead or the Evacuation Study Plan that was earlier discussed. They will need to come up with another form that would allow more detail and would take the place of the “at a glance” worksheet. Funding categories include: 1) Core programmatic areas (evacuation, notification, vegetation management, grants for public education); 2) Defensible space and home hardening; 3) Local concern. Some of the duplicate worksheet include a program for Chipper Days, which could be funded through FireSafe Marin, and educational materials. He would like to add the Evacuation Plan Study back in with a dollar amount. The environmental/ecological compliance

issues will be the trickiest. All the vegetation management plans need to be California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliant. He briefly discussed the environmental review process and the various CEQA categorical exemptions. There is strong support from the environmental groups who want to make sure projects are done in an ecologically sensitive way. He recommended that whatever group is making final recommendations has representation from each of the four zones.

Chair Weber noted there was a difference between environmental compliance and best practices.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

Committee member Shortall clarified that the FireSafe Marin proposal does not include managing the grant program for low-income and seniors. This is something that the MWPA should manage. He would be happy to serve on the subcommittee. The amount under Public Education should be reduced by \$12,500 and the Red Flag Warning Project should be moved over to Alert and Warning. He discussed avoiding duplication of efforts and stated they have done a lot of planning around Chipper Days.

Chair Weber stated the budget will need to drive the Work Plan in Year One.

Committee member Dreikosen referred to CEQA exemptions and noted this could be tricky given there were different jurisdictions that could take the lead on projects. This is especially true in the open space areas where they will need to work in collaboration.

Committee member White referred to the increase in pricing with respect to the Chipper Day Program and stated he was concerned about the limited resources/personnel for this type of work. The JPA might want to think about purchasing the equipment and doing the work themselves instead of contracting it out. It could be more cost-effective.

Committee member Shortall agreed that they need to discuss the most economical way to provide the Chipper Day Program. They are very popular and valuable to the community.

Committee member Chinn had questions about the Countywide Evacuation Plan and Routes Project. The plan should be sent to all the OPS Committee members since there are refinements that need to be made before it goes to the Board.

Committee member Toy asked about the start date and how to coordinate local Chipper Days. Committee member Shortall stated they are doing pre-planning and they will be up and ready to go soon. The hope is that the Board would approve the plan at its next meeting. The chipping contractors are ready to start at the end of June. They plan to start the program in the Ross Valley and then expand it to the rest of the County.

Committee member White asked if they have a plan for multiple zones or all the zones. Committee member Shortall stated they have a plan for all zones with the first pass being in the FireWise sites. These seventy sites are fairly well distributed throughout the County. The second pass would include two days for each of the seventeen jurisdictions. The only complication is timing. They would start in June and “chip” until the middle of September.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

Chair Weber stated the Finance Subcommittee will continue to work with the Work Plan Subcommittee. He noted 40% of the funds are committed by JPA language- 20% local and 20% defensible space.

Committee member Tyler stated the Work Plan is a “work in progress” and will change depending on the findings of the Finance Subcommittee.

f. Citizens Oversight Committee

Chair Weber presented the report and thanked the Citizens’ for Wildfire Preparedness group for their assistance. The subcommittee has been working on the application process and he noted the draft application will be posted on the MWPA Website. The Board would be making the ultimate selection.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments or questions from the OPS Committee.

7. New Business

There were no items.

8. Committee Reports

There were no reports.

9. Financial Report

There were no reports.

10. Informational Items

- a. Board approved alternates to the Board of Directors, Operations Committee and Technical Advisory Committee

Chair Weber presented a report and asked committee members to send the names of the alternates so he could add them to the email list.

- b. Identify staff person(s) to serve on the Technical Advisory Committee to forward to the Board for appointment

Chair Weber presented a report and asked member agencies to send him those recommended names.

11. OPS Members Request Future Agenda Items

Chair Weber stated the issue of securing counsel was previously discussed and he sent out several bids. He asked for recommendations.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

Mr. Stephen Keese asked committee members to include the name of his or her jurisdiction on the screen when signing in.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

12. Adjournment- Chair Weber adjourned the meeting at 4:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Toni DeFrancis,
Recording Secretary