

THE MARIN WILDFIRE PREVENTION AUTHORITY  
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Held a meeting:

3:00 p.m. Thursday, September 24, 2020

Via teleconference due to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

1. Call to Order- Chair Weber called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Committee Member Attendance: Joe Chinn (Ross), Todd Cusimano (Corte Madera), Eric Dreikosen (Marinwood), Dave Donery (San Anselmo), Jim Fox (Inverness Fire), Chris Gove (Muir Beach Fire), George Kraukauer (Bollinas Fire), Al Piombo (Mill Valley), Mark Pomi (Kentfield Fire), 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)  
Staff Attendance: Interim Executive Officer Jean Bonander, Executive Officer Mark Brown

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. Carolyn Longstreth, representing the California Native Plants Society and the Fire and Environment Resilience Network (FERN), thanked everyone involved with the great work done on the Woodward Fire. She gave a “shout-out” to FIRESafe Marin for the Webinar regarding evacuation orders and warnings. She reported the Goat Grazing Project in the Elliott Nature Preserve in Fairfax was poorly planned. It appears to have caused harm to the environment as opposed to improving wildfire safety. She did not see this project on the MWPA Workplan.

5. Interim Executive Officer’s Report

Interim Executive Officer Bonander reported she has been working with the Board subcommittee on the formation of the Citizen’s Oversight Committee (COC). The application period closed yesterday at 5:00 p.m. There are multiple applicants for all nine seats (five geographic seats and four seats for specific organization areas). The subcommittee will be sorting through the applications and making a recommendation at the October 15, 2020 Board meeting. At the September 17, 2020 meeting the Board adopted its ByLaws and created the Executive Committee and the Finance Committee, two new standing committees. The Executive Committee is comprised of five Board members with geographic representation. The Finance Committee is made up of five Board members with two slots available for

Operations (OPS) Committee members. She stated the OPS Committee should consider making appointments at its next meeting. Both of these standing committees will be subject to the Brown Act. At the September 17th meeting the Board also appointed Mr. Mark Brown as the permanent Executive Officer. The transition process has started and she has been meeting with Executive Officer Brown to try to get the underlying foundation of this organization established. At the September 17<sup>th</sup> Board meeting she presented a Draft Business Plan for the administrative and finance functions thorough the end of December. The intent is to give Executive Officer Brown a structure from which to work on the tasks that are progressing through the system. Terms and conditions were approved by the Board for FIRESafe Marin's programmatic efforts. She will be drafting the agreements for Committee member Shortall's review. Board President Goines has the authority to sign the agreement if all the terms and conditions are met.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

Chair Weber stated the last thirty days have demonstrated the need for what the MWPA is doing. The holistic approach the MWPA is taking towards wildfire prevention is being looked at across the State of California.

## 6. Consent Calendar

- a. Approve June 4, 2020 MWPA Operations Committee meeting minutes

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

M/s, Cusimano/Schutz, to approve the June 4, 2020 MWPA Operations Committee meeting minutes as submitted.

Ayes: 16, 99.7 % of population (through a roll call vote)

## 7. Old Business

- a. 2020 Workplan Update

Chair Weber presented the staff report. The 2020 Workplan consisted of two funding sources- the 60% allocated to the Core programs and the second 20% to wildfire prevention mitigation on the local level. Agencies were asked to compile a list of potential projects with estimate costs. These were ultimately compiled into the 2020 Workplan and adopted by the Board on June 18, 2020. The funding source will not be available from a cash flow perspective until later in the year. Some projects are in the planning phase and awaiting that funding source. Other projects are being funded locally by the agency as a "stop gap". He noted the packet includes

the status of each project. Items in the “planning” phase are going through environmental compliance review, project monitoring or scoping, or looking for bids. For the most part, projects are moving along. A lot of progress has been made in a short period of time. He noted the San Rafael Fire Department has submitted an amendment to the Workplan to add some items.

Committee member Tyler stated it was important to come up with a tool for tracking progress. They will need to come up with a way to fast-forward some of these projects. There will be some additional changes.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

Ms. Barbara Salzman, representing the Marin Audubon Society and FERN, stated she reviewed the list and it would be helpful to have an understanding of the species that are being impacted by some of the projects as well as the acreage. She asked if many of the projects were in the planning phase due to CEQA issues. The Audubon Society and FERN are willing to help in any way possible.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

#### b. FIRESafe Marin Workplan Update

Committee member Shortall presented the report. Things are moving very fast. He discussed some of the changes going on and some projects on the operational side. Next Tuesday’s Webinar will be on Neighborhood Community Organizing and the ESP Project. The group has postponed the community workshops. They have a meeting this week with the Northern California Landscape Contractor Association regarding a certification process through that association. FIRESafe Marin will also be meeting with Home Hardening Contractors. The Educational Planning Committee is meeting tomorrow. The “Get Ready Fifth Grade” Program is on a fast-track and could be coming to the school districts sooner rather than later. Another big area of progress for the group pertains to bilingual materials. They plan to translate the Evacuation Checklist into Spanish and will do some video training in Spanish for the Red Flag Warning Project. There are three projects on the operational side of things. The first is the NOA Weather Radios Pilot Project. The group has a meeting with a vendor tomorrow and the plan is to purchase over twenty-five hundred radios. This will be a challenging project that will need a lot of feedback and monitoring. The group has been meeting with stakeholders to discuss the Red Flag Warning Program. Fire Chiefs would make the determination on when to post the warning signs. There are many options on how they will look and they will all have the same color scheme, wording, and print style. There will be a system of notification through the Office of Emergency Services (OES) and a system of accountability for non-public agencies. The Chipper Program has been very successful with over 1,000 curbside pick-ups. The Board recently approved expanding the program through November. They are almost fully booked! It is not too soon to think about next year and how this program could be integrated with the Inspection Programs. Committee member Tyler stated one way to expand the service is to schedule according to evacuation zones.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

c. MWPA Administrative and Financial Support Update

Committee member Tubbs presented a report. He and his SMFD staff have been meeting regularly with Interim Executive Officer Bonander working through a variety of issues. The Administrative Assistant has taken on the task of producing the Board agendas and packets and will soon do the same for the OPS Committee, the Technical Advisory Committee, and the Citizen's Oversight Committee. The SMFD provides an office and supporting materials for Executive Officer Brown. On Tuesday he and his staff will meet with Interim Executive Officer Bonander, Executive Officer Brown, and Board President Goines to discuss the status of a number of transition items. On the financial side, staff is researching payroll options. Staff has two bids for an auditing firm and is soliciting for a third. He met with Mr. Tim Bush of Marin IT regarding cyber security with respect to the financial systems. He provided the report to the Board. He is meeting with Executive Officer Brown next week to get bank signature cards. He is waiting for receipts from the County of Marin that have already been paid on the MWPA's behalf so they can issue them a check.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

8. New Business

a. Evacuation Plan Study

Mr. Todd Lando, Hazard Mitigation Specialist with the Central Marin Fire Department, gave a report. Mr. Lando stated they submitted a grant application to CalTrans last year for funding in the amount of \$750,000. They were not awarded the grant for a variety of reasons. The grant would have funded a study of evacuation needs including routes, notification systems, how to assist those in the community with functional needs, etc. There was a specific focus on transportation and road infrastructure. He noted they need to create an assessment of the entire evacuation system in the County and a unified plan. There were discussions about the MWPA funding this study if the CalTrans grant did not come through. He stated it was his understanding that the MWPA would form an ad hoc committee to look at this request.

Chief Weber stated the Evacuation Plan Study will be a guiding document that would help prioritize the Workplan for years to come. The study will use census data, demographics, vegetation modeling, fuel modeling, etc. It could serve as a template for other jurisdictions.

Chief Weber stated there were concerns expressed by the public at the last Board meeting about transparency with respect to the ad hoc committees. There are ways to open it up to the public to see the dialogue and debate. He noted whatever comes out of those committees comes back to the OPS Committee and ultimately the Board. The public processes are in place.

Committee Co-Chair Schwarz stated there is an inference that these ad hoc committees are doing something beyond the power given to them by the Board. This is simply not the case. One way to assure the public would be to ask the ad hoc committee to report out on its activities at the OPS Committee and Board meetings.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

Mr. Bruce Bartel stated he brought up the issue of transparency at the Board meeting. It is important for the public to see the process as well as the outcome. These meetings should be announced, open, and viewable. It is important for the public to see what is going on behind the scenes.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

Chair Weber asked for volunteers for an ad hoc committee for the Evacuation Plan Study from the five geographic areas. The following members volunteered: Committee member Tyler (Novato area); Committee member Dreikosen (San Rafael area); Committee member Kraukauer (West Marin); Committee member Tubbs (Southern Marin). Chair Weber stated he would ask Mr. Todd Lando to serve on this ad hoc committee and perhaps members of the Technical Advisory Committee. The ad hoc committee will get assistance from the City Managers when preparing the Request for Proposals (RFP) along with SME's to assist in developing the plan.

b. Preparation for 2021 Program of Work

Committee member Tyler presented the report. He displayed the evacuation zone maps for the Novato Fire District. There are thirty five neighborhoods and five mitigation specialists that will be doing home evaluations, written reports, and defensible space evaluations. They will be responsible for all the grant work and coordination of Chipper Days. The GIS data will be submitted to the chipper contractors. He discussed a specific project that is included in the current Workplan that includes evaluation and assessment, clearing and chipping, CEQA review on the parcels, and a fuel break on the back side of the homes. The plan is to take this on a neighborhood by neighborhood.

Chief Weber stated this was a good example of how to create the processes to develop the 2021 Work Plan. He is asking for the formation of an ad hoc committee that would accomplish this effort.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

Chair Weber asked for volunteers for the ad hoc committee to create the processes to develop the 2021 Work Plan. The following members volunteered: Committee member Tyler (Novato); Committee member Schutz (San Rafael and Marinwood); Committee member Shortall and Committee member Cuisamano (Central Marin and Ross Valley); Committee member Tubbs (Southern Marin); Chief Weber (West Marin). Chief Weber stated this is an opportunity to work with the ESP partners, Citizen's for Wildfire Preparedness, and others.

#### c. Grant Program Options

Chief Weber presented the report. The Board asked the OPS Committee to look grant options. A subcommittee, chaired by Committee member Shortall, had come up with some guidelines. The subcommittee concluded that it would be challenging to run a grant program without staff. The item was tabled. Local agencies have the ability to run their own grant programs. He recommended the MWPA hold off on trying to run a grant program without sufficient staff to do it. It is very labor and time intensive.

Committee member Shortall stated the subcommittee did a lot of work on this and considered a number of options. It really should be a policy discussion for the full Board. He agreed that grant programs were fairly complicated and very labor intensive.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

Chair Weber stated he would formulate a response to the Board based on the work done by the subcommittee and the recommendation that the Board take this up as a policy item. The Board could include this in the next fiscal year.

#### 9. Informational Items

Chief Weber reported a lot of residents are getting inundated with questions from insurance companies and vendors about the use of a retardant/gel formula on his or her house. County Fire Prevention Officers are formulating a response. He stated the home hardening and defensible space measures advocated by the MWPA are much more important than spraying a retardant on vegetation or homes. He encouraged residents to contact his or her local fire agency with any questions.

#### 10. Committee Members Request for Future Agenda Items

Committee member Tubbs asked that the following be placed on an upcoming agenda:  
Selection of two OPS Committee members to the Finance Committee.

Chair Weber stated the OPS Committee had selected the third Thursday of the month as its meeting date. This could be a conflict with the Board of Directors meeting so he will check on this potential conflict and come up with alternative dates. Committee member Dreikosen stated they had talked about meeting in July, October, January, and April (first month of each quarter).

11. Adjournment- Chair Weber adjourned the meeting at 4:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Toni DeFrancis,  
Recording Secretary