

THE MARIN WILDFIRE PREVENTION AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
3:00 p.m. Thursday, September 17, 2020  
Via teleconference due to Coronavirus (COVID-19)  
MINUTES

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

2. Roll Call and Introductions

Directors – In Attendance: Steve Burdo (San Anselmo), Barbara Coler (Fairfax), Kathryn Donohue (Inverness), Tom Finn (Sleepy Hollow Fire), Barry Evergettis (Kentfield Fire), Bruce Goines (Novato Fire), Leah Green (Marinwood), Cathryn Hilliard (Southern Marin Fire), Leighton Hills (Muir Beach), David Kimball (Bollinas Fire District), Sashi McEntee (Mill Valley), Julie McMillan (Ross), Gabe Paulson (Larkspur), Bob Ravasio (Corte Madera), Dennis Rodoni (County of Marin), Mark White (Stinson Beach)

Directors- Absent: Gary Phillips (San Rafael)

Staff in Attendance: Interim Executive Director Jean Bonander, Legal Counsel Megan Acevedo, Marin County Fire Chief Jason Weber, Operations Committee Co-Chair Dan Schwarz

3. Agenda Adjustments

There were no agenda adjustments.

4. Open Time for Public Expression

Mr. Steven Keese stated the Citizens for Wildfire Preparedness continues to be very active and meets via Zoom once or twice a week. He thanked the MWPA for what it has been able to accomplish.

Ms. Barbara Salzman stated the Fire and Environment Resiliency Network (FERN) are also meeting on a regular basis. She would like an update on California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance on the various projects. Chair Goines stated he would contact Ms. Salzman.

Interim Executive Officer Bonander noted that Director Hills joined the meeting.

Director Burdo asked staff to make sure the Zoom meeting videos are posted on the Website as soon as possible.

5. Executive Officer Appointment

President Goines presented a report. Eighty-two candidates were whittled to two and the Board has decided to appoint Mr. Mark Brown as the Executive Officer.

Interim Executive Officer Bonander stated Mr. Brown has a long history in Marin County and will soon be retiring as the Deputy Chief of the County of Marin. He is well versed in wildland fire and administrative services and skills. The scope of work is attached to the employment agreement.

Director Coler referred to Attachment "A", Scope of Work, and suggested adding the following catch-all phrase- "and other duties as needed to meet the goals and objectives of the MWPA or as required by the Board of Directors". She recommended this language in the job description as well. She looks forward to working with Mr. Brown.

President Goines opened the meeting to public comments.

Mr. Steven Keese supported the appointment of Mr. Brown.

Mr. Ron Arlas, former Mayor of Larkspur, stated he was concerned about the proposed compensation. He acknowledged the pension was in the form of a "defined contribution benefit" but he thought there would not be any pension contributions by the MWPA. He also questioned the \$700 allocated for "extra expenses". Proposition "C" promised that this would be a "lean organization". These two benefits should be removed at least for the first year.

Mr. Mark Brown stated he was very excited about the opportunity. His goal is to develop an efficient organization that will increase the safety of the residents of Marin. He promised to "hit the ground running".

President Goines closed the meeting to public comments.

Interim Executive Officer Bonander stated the compensation package was designed to honor that covenant of Measure "C". Defined contribution plans, as opposed to defined benefit plans, are fairly common in executive level packages and are intended to attract the kind of candidates that the Board was seeking. The additional costs are related to vehicles and unanticipated technology.

Director McEntee stated recent legislation (AB 5) prohibits the MWPA from offering this as an independent contractor position. Certain benefits are required for this employee position. The \$700 "cash in lieu" mentioned by Mr. Arlas should be considered part of the salary.

M/s, Burdo/Coler, to authorize President Goines to sign the employment agreement with Mr. Mark Brown to serve as the MWPA Executive Officer with the change recommended by Director Coler.

Ayes: 15 of 15, 100% of population (through a roll call vote)

## 6. Interim Executive Officer's Report

Interim Executive Officer Bonander asked Marin County Fire Chief Jason Weber to give a brief update on what is going on in California. Fire Chief Weber stated there were 25 major fires over 3 million acres. The Woodward Fire in Marin County involved over 5,000 acres and the

crews experienced a problem with resource availability. An incident management team was brought in from the Northern Rockies and the Nevada area. He has received emails and phone calls from throughout the State asking about the formation of the MWPA.

President Goines stated the Type One Incident Command Team, a Federal entity, hired Marin County Fire Inspectors to identify and address risks and consequences in the community. FIRESafe Marin was in the community with chippers and crews doing mitigation work. These are examples of the MWPA “in motion”.

Director McEntee asked Chief Weber about the impacts to habitats from the Woodward Fire and how far the County is behind in fuel reduction work due to COVID-19. Chief Weber stated he did not think the County was behind in terms of the fuel reduction work. Fire is a natural part of the landscape and an important part of the ecosystem. Woodward was a low-intensity fire that did not move at a rapid pace. An environmental assessment along with recommendations will be made in terms of fire line repair work, etc. In many cases the forest comes back healthier.

President Goines stated the Burned Area Environment Restoration (BAER) post-fire environmental restoration efforts will address sediment, trail, water quality issues, etc.

Director Kimball stated the Rocky Mountain team brought in biologists and archeologists and their practices went a long way towards alleviating community concerns.

Interim Executive Officer Bonander reported the Citizen’s Oversight Committee (COC) process is on-going with applications due on Wednesday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5:00 p.m. Staff has received many applications and is pre-sorting them into the geographic and specialized service areas. A subcommittee of the Board will be meeting on Monday September 28<sup>th</sup> to review the applications. The target is to make recommendations to the Board for consideration at the October 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. Staff is working on the issue of environmental review and has asked for Request for Proposal (RFP) templates from some of the member agencies. The target is to bring an RFP for environmental consulting services to the Board on October 17<sup>th</sup>. Staff had some technical challenges with respect to posting the Board Zoom meetings and has a meeting next week to make sure this is done in a more efficient manner. She will be working with newly appointed Executive Officer Brown on his transition to full-time employment.

President Goines asked the Board to submit any edits, additions, suggestions regarding the Transition Plan to Interim Executive Officer Bonander.

President Goines opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

President Goines closed the meeting to public comments.

## 7. Consent Calendar

- a. Approve August 20, 2020 MWPA Board of Directors meeting minutes.

- b. Approve August 13, 2020, August 27, 2020 and September 3, 2020 MWPA Special Meeting Minutes.
- c. Accept Update on Financial and Administrative Support Services.
- d. Authorize President to Consent to Concurrent Representation by Epstein + Holtzapple, the MWPA and the Muir Beach Community Services District.
- e. Adopt Resolution No. 20-07 Concerning Appropriations Limit.

Director McEntee stated she would like to pull Item 7(d) for discussion.

Director Coler thanked Legal Counsel Acevedo on her excellent work on Item 7(e). Legal Counsel Acevedo stated her firm contracted with another law firm for guidance on the Gann Limit issue.

President Goines opened the meeting to public comments.

Mr. Steven Keese asked when the video for the last meeting would be posted. Interim Executive Office Bonander reiterated staff was meeting next week to resolve technical difficulties.

President Goines closed the meeting to public comments.

M/s, Rodoni/Burdo, to approve Consent Calendar Items 7(a), (b), (c), and (e).  
Ayes: 15 of 15, 100% of population (through a roll call vote)

7(d). Authorize President to Consent to Concurrent Representation by Epstein + Holtzapple, the MWPA and the Muir Beach Community Services District.

Legal Counsel Acevedo presented a staff report.

Director McEntee asked Legal Counsel Acevedo what other member agencies are represented by her firm. Legal Counsel Acevedo stated her firm represents the City of San Rafael, Town of San Anselmo, and the Muir Beach Community Services District. Director McEntee asked what the voting share of these three entities would be and whether or not it would be significant. Operations (OPS) Committee Co-Chair Schwarz stated the San Rafael share is 26.5%, the San Anselmo share is 5.08%, and the Muir Beach share is .15%. Director McEntee asked what would happen in the event of a conflict. Legal Counsel Acevedo stated this issue has not come up, but the firm would seek outside counsel for the client that has the most conflict.

M/s, Rodoni/Coler, to approve Consent Calendar Item 7(d).  
Ayes: 15 of 15, 100% of population (through a roll call vote)

- 8. Old Business
  - a. Adopt MWPA ByLaws

Interim Executive Officer Bonander presented a staff report. The Board considered the Draft By-Laws at the last meeting and made a number of revisions including the formation of a standing Finance Committee and Executive Committee. Other revisions included limitations on contract spending and change orders and removal of the section referring to future potential new agency applications. She recommended adoption of the ByLaws.

Director Coler referred to page 46, Section 1, Regular Meetings, and stated the Executive Committee will be discussing this in the future.

President Goines opened the meeting to public comments.

Mr. Bruce Bartel, representing the Marin Citizens for Wildfire Preparedness, stated Brown Act compliance applies to all meetings of the Board. There have been no meeting announcements or agendas posted for the Operations (OPS) Committee for the last three months. Subcommittees of the OPS Committee have been working for several months and should also provide regular meeting notice, agendas, and Zoom information.

President Goines closed the meeting to public comments.

M/s, Burdo/Evergettis, to accept the MWPA ByLaws  
Ayes: 15 of 15, 100% of population (through a roll call vote)

b. Appointment of Board Members to Executive Committee and Finance Committee

Interim Executive Officer Bonander presented the staff report. The Executive Committee is made up of five Directors. The Finance Committee is a seven member committee, comprised of five Directors, plus two members of the Operations Committee. The intent is that there is a geographic spread of Committee members.

President Goines opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

President Goines closed the meeting to public comments.

c. Review and Consider Proposed Initial Range of Executive Committee and Finance Committee Duties and Responsibilities

Interim Executive Officer Bonander presented the staff report. After some research she came up with a range of common responsibilities of an Executive Committee and Finance Committee. She noted this is an informational item and she recommended that each respective committee review the list of duties and responsibilities and come up with a draft document for the Board to consider.

Director Coler stated she liked the way the duties of the Executive Committee are “starting out slow” with more delegation occurring over the years. She referred to the Finance Committee’s

list of responsibilities, the last bullet under “administration and financial policies”, and stated a “gift acceptance policy” would be controlled by the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC). This bullet should be deleted. Interim Executive Officer Bonander stated this section could be restated to include “philanthropic donations”. “Gift” was an incorrect choice of words.

Director Hilliard arrived at the meeting at 4:10 p.m. She supports the comments made by Director Coler. An MWPA Foundation could be set up in the future which could serve as a vehicle for accepting donations.

President Goines stated these draft documents will be brought to the committees for deliberation and subsequent Board action.

President Goines opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

President Goines closed the meeting to public comments.

#### d. Approve FIRESafe Marin Agreement

Interim Executive Officer Bonander presented a staff report. She noted the agreement includes the terms and conditions described in the staff report. Due to the prediction of dry weather into the fall there is an opportunity to continue the Chipper and Vegetative Management Program. This would require an additional allocation of funds in the amount of \$230,000 to continue the program through the end of November. This is a “not to exceed” amount. The total funding agreement with FIRESafe Marin would be \$1,371,283. She noted the terms and conditions were included in the staff report. The agreement will run through June 30, 2021.

Director McMillan asked Operations Committee (OPS) member Shortall to explain why additional amounts were needed and to talk about the success of past Chipper Days. OPS Committee member Shortall stated the original proposal was for the program to go through the end of September. The program costs about \$150,000 per month to run so extending it through October and November would cost about \$300,000. They do have about \$70,000 left over. They continue to receive requests for this service and it is a very popular program.

Director Kimball stated this program is very popular in Bolinas. He supported the co-branding on the trucks. He asked if the \$30,000 budgeted for weather radios was a placeholder or if there was a detailed plan. OPS Committee member Shortall stated he would address this in his report.

Director White stated FIRESafe Marin and the MWPA has a very successful relationship. He supported the additional allocation.

Director Evergettis stated he supported the additional allocation.

Director Rodoni stated the Chipper Program was one of the more valuable and visible programs and he support the request.

Director Ravasio stated this is a very popular program and he supported this request.

President Goines opened the meeting to public comments.

Mr. Steven Keese stated this is a very popular program, second only to the goats!

President Goines closed the meeting to public comments.

M/s, Rodoni/Burdo, to authorize President Goines to sign the agreement with FIRESafe Marin including the additional allocation of funds in the amount of \$230,000 to continue the Chipper Day program through the end of November.

Ayes: 16 of 16, 100% of population (through a roll call vote)

## 9. New Business

### a. MWPA Draft Administrative and Financial Business Plan through December 31, 2020

Interim Executive Officer Bonander presented the staff report. Her revised recommendation is that the Board review and consider but not approve the draft plan. There are innumerable details on the administrative and financial side that need to be coordinated and pulled together. There is still a lot to do in terms of creating a new organization. She reiterated that staff is working on improving communications with the community. She will start working with newly hired Executive Officer Brown right away.

Director McMillan stated the list included in the staff report was a bit daunting and she asked if Interim Executive Officer Bonander could remain involved past the October 31<sup>st</sup> transition date. Having continuity is important.

President Goines agreed and stated he included an edit that says "October 31<sup>st</sup> or beyond as required".

Director McEntee recognized the work performed by Interim Executive Officer Bonander and noted the list contained in her report indicates how much work still needs to be done. She supported the suggestion made by Director McMillan but noted that decision would be up to the Board and Executive Officer Brown. She recommended the Board participate in an Orientation and Strategic Planning Retreat once Executive Officer Brown gets on board.

Director Coler supported keeping Interim Executive Officer Bonander on during the transition. The plan contained in the staff report is something Executive Officer Brown should focus on and help implement.

President Goines opened the meeting to public comments.

Mr. Bruce Vogen, representing the Coalition of Sensible Taxpayers, stated this is an agency with a lot of moving parts and a complex project plan. He would like the agency to start using some type of industrial strength technology such as project-by-project management software. It is important to tie funding sources with tasks or projects when reporting to the public. President Goines stated there have been discussions regarding project management software.

President Goines closed the meeting to public comments.

## 10. Committee Reports

### a. Operations Committee Update- Verbal Report

President Goines noted there were written reports in the Board packet.

Operations (OPS) Committee Chair Weber reported the OPS Committee's primary tasks are the developing the Annual Budget and the Work Plan for adoption by the Board. Both of these were adopted in June. The OPS Committee did not meet in July or August. The subcommittees were task oriented and eventually dissolved. The OPS Committee will be meeting next week and he has asked the Website contractor to make sure that information gets posted. The Work Plan in its entirety will be published along with the status of each project. The OPS Committee will assist the Board in getting Executive Officer Brown up to speed, work with the Technical Advisory Committee on the development of the 2021 Work Plan, and finalize the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Evacuation Plan Study. OPS Committee Co-Chair Schwarz reported he was working with Alliance Insurance Services and is getting proposals to cover errors and omissions for the Board and Workers Compensation for the new Executive Officer. He will shop more aggressively for long-term insurance products or discuss with the Board whether or not to join a Joint Powers Insurance Authority. He will bring the Board a more thorough report next month.

President Goines opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

President Goines closed the meeting to public comments.

### b. FIRESafe Marin Program of Work and Projects Update- Verbal Report

Operations Committee (OPS) member Shortall reported the last Webinar was very successful with 500 people in attendance and 2,500 views on the Website channel. The next Webinar is scheduled for Tuesday, September 29<sup>th</sup>. Community workshops will start in the spring. He briefly discussed the "Get Ready 5<sup>th</sup> Grade" Project. The group continues to create brochures and newsletters and hold monthly meetings. He briefly discussed the NOAA Weather Radio Pilot Project and the Chipper Program.

President Goines thanked Operations (OPS) Committee member Shortall for the great work being done by FIRESafe Marin.



Director McEntee thanked Operations Committee (OPS) member Shortall for his report and stated she would like to discuss the “Get Ready 5<sup>th</sup> Grade” Project with him soon.

President Goines opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

President Goines closed the meeting to public comments.

c. First Draft Evacuation Plan Update

Mr. Todd Lando, representing FIRESafe Marin, presented a status report regarding the development of a coordinated Wildfire Evacuation Route Needs Assessment and a Countywide Coordinated Wildfire Evacuation Plan. Discussions started in 2018 following the Grand Jury Report and the North Bay Fires. Existing plans need to be updated using database information regarding wildfires, population, traffic engineering, etc. He acknowledged that a lot of work has been done on an individual agency level. The CalTrans grant request of \$665,000 was not selected but he thinks there are other funding opportunities. The best approach for the study might be a two-phased approach. He urged the Board to use the existing proposal as a baseline and develop a scope of work and a Request for Proposal (RFP) to get this project moving as quickly as possible.

President Goines stated the two-phase proposal includes the MWPA funding certain aspects of the project with the hope of getting CalTrans funding.

Director McEntee stated the City of Mill Valley has done a lot of work in this area with a focus on the traffic issues. She would be happy to help with getting State Legislators involved.

President Goines opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

President Goines closed the meeting to public comments.

11. Informational Items

Director Finn reported last Thursday he participated in a Webinar sponsored by the University of California Agricultural and Natural Resources Division titled “What to do on the Land and What to Avoid”. He has a link to the Webinar. President Goines stated he also participated in this Webinar which addressed restoration protocols.

12. Board Members Request Future Agenda Items

Director Coler discussed the idea of creating a grant program to pay homeowners for the removal of pyrophitic vegetation or vegetation that needs to be removed to create defensible

space. There are crews available to help with these tasks. She suggested the Operations Committee discuss this at its next meeting.

Director Donahue referred to Director Coler's suggestion and stated what is needed is more resources.

Director White stated education was important in terms of the best type of landscaping to use in these areas.

Director McMillan stated Marin Master Gardeners has a Fire Smart Landscaping Program that works in conjunction with FIRESafe Marin. They offer many educational classes.

Director Rodoni stated all MWPA programs should include "home hardening" elements.

12. Adjournment- President Goines adjourned the meeting at 5:25 p.m. The next meeting would be held on Thursday, October 15, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Toni DeFrancis,  
Recording Secretary