

THE MARIN WILDFIRE PREVENTION AUTHORITY  
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Held a meeting:

3:00 p.m. Thursday, May 14, 2020

Via teleconference due to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

1. Call to Order- Chair Weber called the meeting to order at 3:05 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 Dreikoson (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 Input

Ms. Terri Thomas stated the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will play an important role in reviewing the Request for Proposals (RFPs) and projects. The committee could benefit from an interdisciplinary, ecological approach. She asked the group to think about how they are going to monitor success.

Ms. Barbara Salzman, representing the Marin Audubon Society, stated they would like to participate in the environmental evaluations and be made aware of how the MWPA is evaluating the environmental components of projects. This would include tree removals, impacts on birds, etc. She will send the Audubon’s Fire Policy to Chair Weber for distribution.

Carolyn, representing the Marin Chapter of the Native Plants Society, stated they were pleased to see the priorities listed in the ESP Partnership description that was circulated. The JPA appears to envision a TAC that includes a broad representation of backgrounds and points of view. She asked about the process for applying as a non-voting member.

5. Consent Calendar

a. Approval of the April 30, 2020 minutes from the MWPA Operations Committee

M/s, Donnery/Tubbs, to approve the April 30, 2020 MWPA Operations Committee meeting minutes as submitted.

Ayes: All (through a roll call vote)

## 6. Old Business

### a. Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority year one funding/finance options.

Committee member Tubbs stated he, along with Committee members Cusimano, Pomi, and Chinn, comprise the Finance Subcommittee. They are recommending the Operations Committee receive the report and continue to develop some of the items in the report. He stated the subcommittee was asked to explore the following: 1) What is the source of funding prior to collection of Tax Revenue?; 2) How much funding will be available prior to the Tax Revenue stream?; 3) What are the mechanics of acquiring early funding and the disbursement of MWPA funds?; 4) How and who will be responsible for managing these fund?; 5) What does the JPA require with regard to the role of Treasurer?; 6) Are there other administrative needs that should be identified for the Operations Committee? State law allows for the County to provide funding through a transfer process. Each request would come with a 3% interest rate tied to it. The tax disbursements received in December would be credited to the money received from the County. In an effort to mitigate the interest expense the subcommittee reached out to member agencies to determine whether or not they could carry some of the program costs prior to the December disbursement. Some member agencies replied they would not be able to carry any costs. The subcommittee is working on refining the amount of funding needed through the transfer process. The subcommittee also reviewed the JPA documents with regard to the role of the Treasurer. The Treasurer must be from one of the member agencies and has the following responsibilities: 1) Act as auditor of MWPA funds; 2) Provide financial services. The subcommittee is recommending looking at MERA as a model using an in-house Treasurer and financial services agreement. He asked the Operations Committee to task the Finance Subcommittee with developing the financial and accounting support services needs agreements similar to MERA, to develop an administrative supports and services agreement for the MWPA, and to solicit interest from agency members with respect to filing the Treasurer and administrative or Finance Officer needs.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

Chair Weber stated they need to get a Treasure on board relatively soon.

A committee member had a question about agencies self-funding and asked what “self-funding” really means. Committee member Tubbs stated the intent was to get an early read since they do not have enough substantive information yet in terms of cost of projects, etc. This was just an “initial swipe”.

Subcommittee member Pomi stated they were looking at the 20%/20% “buckets” referred to in the report and not any core funds.

Chair Weber reminded the committee that a budget needs to be submitted to the Board before the end of June.

b. Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority Measure C Tax Administration

Chair Weber presented a report. There were two important elements that were time sensitive including having an accurate tax roll submitted to the Tax Collectors Office before August 1<sup>st</sup> and the Senior Exemption component. Assembly Bill 2476 requires notice to property owners with mailing addresses outside of the County. Staff has reviewed several proposals from vendors that provide these services. A recommendation will be presented to the Board next week.

Committee member Tyler reiterated that “time is of the essence” and there are a lot of steps that need to take place.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

A Committee member asked if they would use a third party vendor for these tasks on an annual basis or if this would ultimately be handled by the Executive Officer or a subcommittee of the Operations Committee. Chair Weber stated it would depend on the capacity of the JPA staff and would be determined by the Board.

c. Update on Executive Officer recruitment

Subcommittee member Pomi stated he, along with Committee members Tubbs, Donnery, and Shutz, have been working with an executive recruiter from Nelson Staffing on an announcement for the position. They provided her with expectations regarding a timeline for the process and some priorities for the position. They are looking at a July start date. Negotiations and final approval will be handled by the Board. They have extended the closing date to June 10<sup>th</sup>. He asked for input on the announcement and the next steps.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

Ms. Sarah Minick asked if Nelson Staffing is incorporating a diversity component into the process.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

Subcommittee member Shutz stated the Executive Officer will need to be adept at working with large groups of people and very passionate community members.

Committee member Pomi discussed the potential composition of the interview panel. Chair Weber stated he would be in favor of this subcommittee working with the Board.

- d. Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority 2020 Work Plan
  - i. Template for projects
  - ii Accelerated year one options
  - iii Update on planning around mid-long-term projects
  - iv Direct subcommittee to prepare update for MWPA Board on 5/21/20

Committee member Tyler presented a report. He stated he, along with Committee members Shortall, Shutz, Schwarz, Tubbs, Weber, and Kraukauer, make up the Subcommittee. They have asked for assistance from other fire professionals. They have completed the Executive Summary of the Draft Work Plan and a list of core projects. They recognized early on that the public has an expectation that programs and projects will be implemented soon. They are vetting the programs and projects that came from the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. They came up with a list of projects- location, scope, rationale, environmental level, stakeholders, timelines, and costs. They came up with some guiding principles including the following: 1) Public safety and risk reduction; 2) Effective use of public funds; 3) Coordination and collaboration among agencies; 4) Incentivizing voluntary compliance through education and support; 5) Apply ecologically sound practices; 6) Social and environmental equity. Some projects are “shovel ready” and simply need funding for implementation. These are Phase I projects. Phase II projects could be waiting for public input, need additional environmental review, etc. Phase III projects will take time to build and need additional resources. He briefly discussed a Vegetation Reduction/Evacuation Clearance Project submitted by San Rafael. They would like to be able to direct all the participating agencies to submit programs and plans. They plan to indicate which zone the projects fall in (north, south, central, west) and place them into categories according to the amount of funding that becomes available.

Subcommittee member Tubbs asked for clarity with respect to the submittal expectations and the next steps. Subcommittee member Tyler stated the same template should be used and they need to identify whether the project falls into the core, local control, or hardening evaluations category.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

Mr. Bruce Goins, Novato, stated the JPA mentions that members must certify that tax measure proceeds are used consistent with the purpose of the authority and that expenses result in a higher level of service than would have been otherwise provided. He asked them to address this certification requirement.

Ms. Belle Cole asked how the criteria screening for these initial projects would be accomplished. She asked how what happens at this stage affects the project that would eventually come out of the regular process (when funding becomes available).

Carolyn asked if comments could be made about the template that discussed how the various vegetation types would be treated.

Ms. Barbara Salzman stated she would like to be able to comment about the impact to birds, etc. She asked how the public would be able to accomplish this.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

Subcommittee member Tyler stated the recommendation is to direct all the participating agencies to submit programs and projects, along with the readiness of each, in the recommended format. The Subcommittee would then share these, along with the costs, with the Finance Subcommittee.

e. Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority grant program

Subcommittee member Shortall stated he, along with Committee members Tyler, Weber, and Chinn, comprise the Subcommittee. He noted one of the goals of the JPA is to provide grants to low-income seniors to make homes more fire safe. Eligible activities are straightforward and would include creating defensible space (vegetation management) and home hardening projects. To qualify as a senior the property owner must be 65 years of age or disabled. There are different ways to determine income eligibility. He discussed the Federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) thresholds. The amount of the grant funding would change from year to year but they are recommending an allocation of \$500,000 for grants- \$400,000 for this program, and \$100,000 to deal with properties that are in a hazardous condition. The grants would be awarded through a competitive process (rather than first-come, first served) through the five zones as equitably as possible. The homeowner would be responsible for hiring the contractor. This will be a Pilot Program in the first year and revisited in subsequent years.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

Mr. John Hanson had a comment about selecting and vetting a contractor through the use of the FireSafe Marin Website.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

Committee member Shutz asked about the rationale for the owner-occupied provision. Subcommittee member Shortall stated landlords were in a different situation and the need will be much greater with homeowners.

Chair Weber stated this subcommittee would work closely with the Finance Committee.

7. New Business

a. Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority Website

Chair Weber presented a report. He displayed the beta Website that should go live over the weekend. The purpose of the Website is to provide communication with constituents. He used the Grand Jury's template for transparency. He briefly discussed the contents of the Website which will include the ability to sign up for notifications (meeting agendas, etc.).

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

Ms. Belle Cole asked how she could make suggestions regarding the Website.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

The Committee complimented Chief Weber on the Website.

b. Citizens Oversight Committee

Chair Weber presented the report. He noted the Board would ultimately decide on the make up of this committee. The JPA makes it clear that the committee would be comprised of a member of the public from each of the five geographical areas, a member of a taxpayers' organization, a member of an environmental organization, a member of FireSafe Marin or a similar organization, and a member of a non-partisan civic organization such as the League of Women's Voters. He recommended creating a subcommittee that can look at other highly functioning COC's and make a recommendation to the Board.

Committee member Tyler asked if there were a total of nine members. Chair Weber stated "yes". Committee member Tyler volunteered to serve on the COC committee but asked if he could be released from the Grant Committee and the Tax Measure Committee. Chair Weber said "yes". He asked one City/Town Manager to volunteer. Committee member Donnery volunteered.

Chair Weber stated this Subcommittee would consist of Committee members Tyler, Donnery, and himself.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

c. Operations Committee By-laws

Chair Weber presented a report and noted they will need to form a subcommittee. The by-laws are a guide for the operation of the committee and include a statement of purpose, the meeting dates, a list of officers, how they conduct business, etc. This was not critical and can be handled in the future.

Committee member Dreikoson volunteered to start putting something together. Committee member Pomi also volunteered.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

d. Legal opinion regarding a Committee members affiliation with non-profit FIREsafe Marin

Chair Weber presented a brief report and noted there were two Committee members that serve on the Board of FIREsafe Marin. Legal counsel advised there were no limitations for Committee members and that the Committee as a whole should try to balance fire and administrative expertise. It is incumbent upon a Committee member to be aware of and manage any conflict of interest issues.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

8. Committee Reports

There were no Committee reports.

9. Financial Report

There was no Financial report.

10. Informational Items

There were none.

11. OPS Members Request Future Agenda Items

Chair Weber noted the following future agenda items: 1) Discussion about legal counsel for the JPA; 2) Request from environmental groups regarding participation in environmental analysis; 3) Discussion about clarifying how grant applications will be handled.

12. Adjournment- Chair Weber adjourned the meeting at 4:35 p.m. The next meeting would be held on Thursday, May 28, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Toni DeFrancis, Recording Secretary