

THE MARIN WILDFIRE PREVENTION AUTHORITY
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Held a meeting:

3:00 p.m. Thursday, April 30, 2020

Via teleconference due to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

1. Call to Order- Marin County Fire Chief 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 Dreikson (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)

Chief Weber stated Kevin Yeager was behind the scenes running the Webinar. The public will have an opportunity to address the committee by using the “raising your hand” function.

3. Agenda Adjustments

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

4. Open Time for Public Input

Steven and Pamela congratulated the committee and looked forward to future accomplishments.

Mr. Ron Arlas, former Mayor of Larkspur, stated the Citizens for Wildfire Preparedness group is interested in how and when the committee will set up a Citizen’s Advisory Committee.

5. Consent Calendar

There were no Consent Calendar items.

6. Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA) Operations Committee (OPS) Overview- Purpose, formation, roles and responsibilities, voting

Chief Weber thanked the voters of Marin County for bringing this JPA to fruition and briefly discussed the community process which included over 100 public meetings. He thanked the agency members and community leaders for supporting the effort..

Mr. Steven Rabb explained the Operations Committee is an advisory committee to the Board of Directors. The committee is subject to the Brown Act and has a unique voting structure. There is a two-step process required to pass any motion. The first step is that a majority of the quorum present must approve a motion. The second step is based upon the population of the member's jurisdiction- there has to be a majority of "yes" votes on a population basis. Each member of the Operations Committee has a certain population base based on the 2010 Census (which will be updated soon). There must be over 50% of the population representing a "yes" vote as well. This number can change based on who is present in the quorum. Both steps have to be met- a majority of the members and a majority of the population that they represent. Verification will be done through an Excel spreadsheet. This two-step process emphasizes the need for a consensus. A roll call vote (person by person) must be taken when using Zoom.

Chief Weber stated the Operations Committee's purpose is to refine and develop a budget and a Work Plan that will be submitted to the Board for policy level direction. The Technical Advisory Committee will be responsible for "getting into the weeds" of the Work Plan.

Chief Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

Mr. Steve Keys asked about the timetable for coming up with a plan.

Chief Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

Chief Weber stated Mr. Keyes question would be answered later in the meeting.

7. New Business

I. Selection of Chair and Vice Chair of the Operations Committee

Chief Weber presented a brief report.

M/s, Tyler/Schwarz, to appoint Chief Weber to serve as Chair of the Operations Committee and Committee member Schwarz to serve as Vice Chair of the Operations Committee.
Ayes: All (through a roll call vote)

Chief Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

Mr. Steven Keys supported the motion and stated they were excellent choices.

Chief Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

Chair Weber stated terms would carry to December 31st.

II. Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority year one funding options

Chair Weber presented a brief report. There is great interest from the public in moving things forward rapidly. The tax roll will go out in the fall and the first round of funding will be available

the beginning of next year. The offer from the Tax Collector is a Dry Period Funding which is a normal business practice for municipalities. This is a Dry Period Funding piece that is distinguishable from the loan. He recommends the establishment of a subcommittee to review this option. Decisions will be made based on the Work Plan and the associated budget. He recommended the appointment of two City/Town Managers and two Fire Chiefs.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

M/s, Tyler/Schwarz, to appoint Committee members Pomi, Tubbs, Cusimano, and Chinn to serve on the subcommittee.

Ayes: All (through a roll call vote)

III. Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority Measure C Tax Administration

Chair Weber presented a brief report. He stated the firm NBS was hired last fall to give advice on the ballot measure. NBS is used by many municipalities to manage tax data and rolls. The recommendation is to re-engage with NBS to prepare the tax roll for this fall. This work includes making sure the data is accurate, that the tax roll is submitted in a timely manner, that the senior exemption process is established early enough, and that all legal requirements and notifications are made. He recommended they move forward with MBS and negotiate the terms of the agreement.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

M/s, Schwarz/Tyler, to appoint Committee members Tyler and Toy for the Measure C Tax Administration Subcommittee and move forward to negotiate the terms and costs with MBS to prepare the tax roll for this fall.

Ayes: All (through a roll call vote)

IV. Update on Executive Officer Recruitment

Committee member Pomi presented a brief report. The Executive Officer would manage the new JPA and make sure they are following through with timelines and commitments. A job description has been created which includes certain characteristics, qualifications, and skill sets. The MWPA Board of Directors will establish the salary and benefits at a future meeting. A proposed salary range has been created. Nelson Staffing has been retained to perform the recruitment for the JPA through a Direct Hire Search Agreement. The recommendation is to

form a subcommittee consisting of two Fire Chiefs and two City/Town Managers. He volunteered to be the point person with Nelson Staffing.

Committee member Schutz stated the recommendation makes sense as presented. There are a variety of qualified candidates and different compensation packages depending on the top candidates. They should “cast a wide net” and find the best person possible. He volunteered to be on the subcommittee.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

M/s, Schutz/Weber, to appoint Committee members Pomi, Tubbs, Schutz, and Donnery to serve on the subcommittee.

Ayes: All (through a roll call vote)

V. Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority 2020 Work Plan

Committee member Tyler presented a brief report. The program put forward in support of Measure C included the following four core programmatic parts: 1) Evacuation and notification; 2) Vegetation management; 3) Public education; 4) Grants. Other programs include defensible space, home hardening, evaluations and inspections, and agency specific concerns. He recommended establishing a sub-committee to work on all of the elements of the 2020 Work Plan. The draft plan would be brought to the executive group for approval.

Committee member Shortall reported Fire Safe Marin has been providing wildfire protection and prevention training for 29 years. They have managed multiple grants, county-wide Chipper Days, and large-scale fuel reduction projects and grazing programs. Fire Safe Marin has prepared an Action Plan for immediate implementation that includes: 1) Fire prevention and preparedness education; 2) Workshops for community members and landscape professionals; 3) Development and distribution of educational materials; 4) Providing full-time field support for Fire Wise communities; 5) Expansion of the goat and grazing programs for fuel reduction; 6) Creation of a standardized signage program at the community level; 7) Implementation of a pilot program to improve alerts and warnings in limited cell coverage areas. He acknowledged some of these function will be taken over by the MWPA JPA.

Committee member Tyler thanked Committee member Shortall and Fire Safe Marin for their efforts. He noted their programs and projects would fit into the JPA Work Plan. He briefly discussed defensible space evaluations and how agencies could opt in or out of this function.

Chair Weber discussed the Evacuation Study and the submission of a \$750,000 grant application by the County Department of Public Works Grant. This grant funding would significantly leverage the funds needed to accomplish the study. The study is an important first year component since it will help inform the Work Plan over the next ten years.

Committee member Tyler discussed the draft Request for Proposal (RFP) for work projects initially provided by San Rafael Fire Chief Bob Sinnott. He noted this would be a very important subcommittee that should include from four to eight members. He volunteered to be on the subcommittee.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

Committee member Cusimano suggested appointing two City/Town Managers to this subcommittee.

M/s, Cusimano/Chinn, to appoint Committee members Schutz, White, Shortall, Schwarz, Tubbs, Tyler, and Chair Weber to serve on the subcommittee.

Ayes: All (through a roll call vote)

VI. Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority grant program

Chair Weber presented a brief report. He stated they need to establish a framework for a Grant Program under the JPA. The emphasis would be on seniors, low-income, and those with access needs.

Committee member Shortall stated this issue is the most commonly asked question from the public and he supports getting something up and running very soon.

Committee member Tyler stated his agency has had a very successful grant program for a number of years that included access through the Website portal with forms available and a process already in place. He volunteered to assist in this process.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

Chair Weber and Committee members Shortall, Chinn, and Tyler volunteered to serve on this subcommittee.

M/s, Weber/Tyler, to appoint to Chair Weber and Committee members Shortall, Chinn, and Tyler to serve on this subcommittee.

Ayes: All (through a roll call vote)

8. Committee Reports

There were no Committee Reports.

9. Financial Reports

There were no Committee Reports.

10. Informational Items

There were no items.

11. OPS Members Request Future Agenda Items

Chair Weber stated some of the items discussed required action from the OPS Committee relatively soon. Under the JPA they are required to have a budget in place 90 days after certification of the election (July 1st). He recommended they schedule the next Operations Committee for May 14th. The Board could meet on May 21st for a status report. Approval of the budget should occur one month later. A citizen had questions about the Citizens' Oversight Committee and the JPA is clear that the applications are submitted to the Board. Committee member Tyler stated the May 14th meeting should include an agenda item that sets forth a process to collect nominations for each of the represented groups.

Committee member Schwarz stated they should get a legal opinion with respect to Committee members reviewing a draft proposal from a non-profit group that they are involve with. Chair Weber stated they might want to secure a legal opinion from someone other than Mr. Rabb since he is counsel for County Fire and Southern Marin Fire. Committee member Schwarz stated he did not want to slow things down and thought Mr. Rabb was more than qualified.

Chair Weber stated the next Operations Committee meeting would be held on Thursday, May 14th and the Board would meet on Thursday, May 21st. Legal counsel would look at the relationship of a non-profit Boardmember with the JPA.

Committee member Tyler stated he would like to start discussions on the formation of the Citizens' Advisory Committee at the next Operations Committee.

Chair Weber opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Chair Weber closed the meeting to public comments.

Committee member Tyler asked if they should begin discussions about the Technical Advisory Committee at the May 14th meeting. Chair Weber stated this group will be assisted by various environmental partners to help with decisions on the Work Plan. He asked each Committee member to think about members of the community that could serve on this committee. Mr. Rabb noted the appointment of the Technical Advisory Committee was under the auspices of the Board

12. Adjournment- Chair Weber adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m. The next meeting would be held on Thursday, May 14th.

Respectfully submitted,

Toni DeFrancis,
Recording Secretary