

Los Altos Hills County Fire District

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Los Altos Hills County Fire District Board Members, Held on Tuesday, February 19, 2019 Beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the El Monte Fire Station, Foothill College Campus, 12355 El Monte Road, Los Altos Hills, California

President Warren called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1) **Roll Call:** **PRESENT:** Commissioners Carr, Price, Warren, Spreen, Tyson, Vaughn

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: General Manager J. Logan, Fire Chief Tony Bowden, Fire District Attorney Dan Siegel, Fire Consultant Stu Farwell, Financial Consultant Cori Vargas, District Clerk Jeanne Evilsizer

A. Update from District Counsel on Commissioner Vacancies: Fire District Attorney Dan Siegel stated that: at the last meeting I provided an update concerning whether or not there was a quorum of the Los Altos Hills City Council at the January 2019, Los Altos Hills County Fire District Meeting. There is no longer an issue as the City Council of Los Altos Hills took action at its January 31, 2019, meeting. At that meeting Vice Mayor Wu tendered her resignation and the City Council voted unanimously to recommend to Supervisor Simitian that Councilmember Tyson and Mayor Spreen be appointed to the Fire Commission. Supervisor Simitian concurred. As Mayor Spreen's term had not expired no further action was necessary. The reappointment of Councilmember Tyson and Commissioner Melvin Vaughn was placed on the Board of Supervisors agenda by Supervisor Simitian. On February 12, 2019, the Board of Supervisors reappointed Commissioners Tyson and Vaughn. The LAHCFD commission is now comprised of two members from the unincorporated area: Vaughn and Carr, two City Council members, Spreen and Tyson and two residents of the Town of Los Altos Hills, Price and Warren. There is one open seat for a resident of the Town. I thank Supervisor Simitian, his office, County Counsel and especially Steve Mattas, Los Altos Hills' City Attorney, for their help in resolving the quorum question.

2) **Public Comment:** There was no public comment.

3) **Continued from January 15, 2019: Adopt Resolution No. 19-1 of the Board of the Los Altos Hills County Fire District to Proceed with Abatement of Weeds, Brush and Rubbish.** Moe Kumre, Weed Abatement Manager of Santa Clara County, explained the weed abatement program. He stated the property owners on the list must keep their properties free from weeds from April 30-October 31. Names remain on the list for three years; if no infractions, names are removed from list after three years. **Action:** Tyson made a motion to adopt resolution 19-1 of the Board of the Los Altos Hills County Fire District to proceed with abatement of weeds, brush and rubbish; Price seconded the motion. No member of the public spoke during the public hearing. **All in Favor:** Carr, Warren, Tyson, Price, Vaughn and Spreen **Absent:** None **Opposed:** None.

4) CERT Activites and Update. CERT member Larry Carr stated there were 30 recon ham operators in our area currently. He said there is a good training program in place and stressed the importance of ham operators in any type of emergency.

5) Santa Clara County Fire Chief Report: A.) Monthly Report for January, 2019. Chief Bowden said there were four small scale fire events in January: temporary carport fire, two grass fires and one fireplace smoke scare. Average response times were good in January. B.) Fire Season Patrol Staffing: Chief Bowden recommends staff-up based on weather conditions and based on need. He suggested mode staffing based on weather station data and draw down. He explained how staffing is weather and resource dependent. He wants to bring it in alignment with other jurisdictions. He would like to discuss this further; it was suggested to put this item on the agenda for the March 19, 2019 meeting. Commissioner Vaughn and Tyson agreed to work as a subcommittee with General Manager J. Logan.

6) Staff Consultant Reports: A.) Project Updates February 1, 2019 Farwell stated the brush chipping program was beginning in Area 2. An interest in the program had increased due to the recent storms. In the tree program, 480 dead trees had been removed and 71 eucalyptus trees had been removed. Current program should be complete in June. Currently there are 157 new requests for tree work. B.) Tree Program Financial Budget vs Actual: Cori Vargas explained the budget vs actual cumulative graph showing the program currently running under budget.

7) General Manager Report: A.) J. Logan reviewed her General Manager Report dated February 19, 2019. Logan explained the FY2019/2020 Budget Development Process. The budget subcommittee met on January 23 and gave direction to staff. Information was also gathered from the tree subcommittee, Purissima Hills Water District (PHWD) and California Water Service (CWS). Logan mentioned how the budget development is linked to the strategic plan discussing five goals that tie the budget to the 2015-2020 strategic plan. She discussed the expenditure allocations including adding an analyst position. Mentioned were the possible upcoming projects such as the hydrant flow and pipeline resiliency with PHWD and CWS and fuel reduction programs (tree removal, brush chipping). Discussion ensued about hiring an Emergency Services Coordinator (ESC), possibly hiring someone as extra help for the next four months. Also, consideration of making the ESC a District employee, full time, but leaving the option open to work with the Town of Los Altos Hills regarding this position. The Budget Narrative was reviewed and specific areas of interest were displayed in the General Manager Report.

On February 6, 2019 Logan did a presentation at the annual San Antonio Hills meeting where she discussed the District's mission and emergency preparedness programs offered to the community. She also mentioned the upcoming CERT classes being offered the beginning of March at the Los Altos Hills Town Hall. On April 23, 2019 there will be a Wildfire Preparedness meeting at 6:30- 8:00 p.m. at the Town Hall which she recommends people attend. Lastly, there was mention of upcoming Personal Emergency Preparedness (PEP) classes in both Los Altos Hills and Los Altos.

8) Review and Direction by the Board of Commissioners of the Los Altos Hills County Fire District on the Draft FY2019/2020 Budget. A. Agenda Report Summary: J. Logan explained

how the budget subcommittee of Vaughn and Spreen worked with the Financial Consultant, Commission President and General Manager J. Logan to develop the 2019/2020 budget. Explanation was given by Warren that the \$500,000 budgeted last year was for the projects and programs contingency; however we did not know what we would be needing with PHWD or Cal Water pipeline projects. Now the \$500,000 in program contingencies is distributed among different functions for greater flexibility throughout the year (highlighted in blue on the budget sheet). Public member Allan Epstein asked about the added employee, General Analyst, and the additional funds for staffing. Also was the \$3,000,000 budgeted for Fire Service Water Flow Improvements only for PHWD or did it include California Water Service Company? And how was the \$500,000 program contingency amount arrived at? Logan replied the General Analyst was the only new position added to the budget. With respect to the Fire Service Water Flow Improvements Cal Water is generating estimates for us now and we continue to work with PHWD. The \$500,000 projects and programs contingency was arrived at collectively Warren stated. Price commented that the Budget Narrative was a terrific document and very well thought out. Cori Vargas referred to the updated budget she distributed had a miscalculation in the Battalion 74 Services category from 2017 but it had been recalculated. Also she confirmed moving the Emergency Services Coordinator from Contract Services to Salary and Payroll keeping the current \$95,000 budgeted amount. The consensus was to approve the draft budget with the minor changes stated and deliver it to the County tomorrow. Warren thanked the subcommittee for all of their work and suggested to plan to develop the budget throughout the year and begin work on it in the autumn.

9) Review and Direction by Board of Commissioners of the Los Altos Hills County Fire District on Proposal for Financial Audit Services from Vavrinek, Trine, Day & Company.

A. Agenda Summary Report: J. Logan reviewed the agenda summary report and explained she had contacted the new VTD partner Ahmad Gharaibeh to discuss the terms of a proposal. B. Letter of Engagement for Financial Audit Services: VTD submitted a letter of proposal for the years ending June 30, 2019, June 30, 2020 and June 30, 2021. J. Logan explained that the letter of proposal for the annual audit for a three year term had no increase in premium costs for the services. The Commission consensus was to proceed with the letter of engagement and bring it back to the March 19, 2019 meeting.

10.) Adopt Resolution No. 19-4 by the Los Altos Hills County Fire District Confirming License Agreement with DACO Construction, Inc. for Use of District Lot.

A. Agenda Report Summary B. License Agreement C. Resolution 19-4: Resolution of the Los Altos Hills County Fire District Confirming License Agreement with DACO Construction, Inc. for Use of the District Lot. Dan Siegel explained the License Agreement with DACO Construction was for use of the District lot while doing emergency waterline repair work for PHWD. Per the agreement, DACO would pay the District monthly rent for use of the lot and reimburse for any legal fees. A second item of discussion was consideration of giving the President and/or General Manager the authority to approve fire district lot usage in between District meetings. That way it would not be necessary to wait until the next District meeting for approval and using the lot could occur sooner. The consensus was to bring back to the Commission in the form of a future resolution the authority to approve fire district lot usage by the President and/or General Manager in between a District meeting date.

Action: Motion made by Spreen to adopt Resolution No. 19-4 by the Los Altos Hills County Fire District confirming license agreement with DACO Construction, Inc. for use of District lot; Vaughn seconded the motion. **Roll Call Vote: All in Favor:** Carr, Price, Tyson, Warren, Vaughn and Spreen. **Opposed:** None. **Absent:** None

11.) Receive Information on Replacement of Pumper Caps on Selected Fire Hydrants.

A.) Agenda Report Summary: J. Logan explained the request from PHWD to replace approximately two hundred (200) District hydrant pumper caps in order to detect leaks on its water mains. Initially, approximately thirty (30) pumper caps would be replaced with leak detector pumper caps and assuming the pilot project goes well, replacing two hundred (200) pumper caps at no direct cost to the District. Vaughn asked if there were any operational issues? It is important to get feedback from the Chief and his staff regarding this new technology. Carr asked if we could check with other areas where these are in use? It was agreed to do more research and invite PHWD to the March meeting to learn more details and for further evaluation.

12.) Fire Commission Subcommittee Reports.

A. Strategic Plan Subcommittee Update: Price mentioned working on the strategic plan specifically addressing external communications with help of the Town of Los Altos Hills and an interactive website. The subcommittee includes Price, Carr and Spreen currently. The goal is to complete the plan in the five (5) year window through 2020. Siegel and Logan will look into the committee process and report back to the Commission.

B. Hydrant Flow and Pipeline Resiliency Improvement Project Subcommittee Update: Logan contacted Ron Richardson of California Water Service Company regarding the Mora Drive area. He said they would relook at the project and update the numbers/costs. Most of the hydrants and pipelines in this area need improvement. Price confirmed that this area had been reviewed and determined to be an area of need. Vaughn pointed out this is a critical area which backs up to Rancho San Antonio open space. Public member Allan Epstein pointed out that Cal Water had not done flow testing in the Mora Drive area. With respect to PHWD Logan stated that Patrick Walter wanted to talk about the 1250 gallons per minute (GPM) and include the Fire Department personnel in the discussion.

C. Tree Subcommittee Update: Tyson discussed the Tree Subcommittee Report dated February 19, 2019. He said the program is expected to meet the \$2,000,000 budgeted amount. A list of trees on the wait list continues to grow. A new tree removal contract needs to be better defined including strategies related to tree species, tree location or even a focus on trees vs. brush. The committee wants the new program to be done right using the knowledge they now have as well as have guidance from the commission. The Tree Subcommittee recommends the Board consider arborist site reviews on at least some of the wait list properties to better plan and possibly implement tree removal in the next fiscal year. Warren suggested it be looked at as a fuel reduction committee rather than a Tree Subcommittee. Chief Bowden stressed what is the outcome we are trying to achieve? He said the CWPP lays out a good road map for fuel reduction work; the program could align with the CWPP to produce the best outcome for when a fire occurs. Feedback from the Commissioners included: Warren: We need to evaluate the program strategically. Spreen: change the program structurally; what is most valuable for fuel reduction? Include strategic fire prevention. Price: Possibly cost sharing with residents on the tree program or looking into undergrounding of utilities. Logan asked if we have someone who could assess what we have. Chief Bowden said a forester component and a fire behavior analyst

could help. Warren and Spreen said to revive the CWPP subcommittee and look at direction from that document. Public member Allan Epstein felt the District should move forward and evaluate the trees. Farwell said the people on the wait list expect we are going to do the tree work. Chief Bowden said we should refine what we do; doing things better if we can. Tyson said he had heard all sides and was ready to get the Tree subcommittee back together for a meeting.

D. CERT Subcommittee Update: Consensus was to keep the subcommittee active while filling the position. Price wants Commissioner oversight and to work with Logan; Spreen agreed to assist as well.

E. Current Contracts Update: Siegel reminded the Commission that the tree contract and the brush chipping contract expire on June 30, 2019.

13.) Consent Calendar.

A. Approval of Draft Minutes of January 15, 2019 Regular Meeting

B. Receive Period Report 7, January 2019

Action: Motion was made by Price to approve the Consent Calendar as submitted; Vaughn seconded. **All in favor:** Carr, Warren, Tyson, Spreen, Vaughn and Price **Opposed:** None **Absent:** None.

14.) Receive Disbursements for February, 2019: Cori Vargas passed out an update February, 2019 disbursements list.

15.) Commission Member Report:

A. Status Update: District Clerk Evilsizer reported that most Form 700’s had been completed and thanked the Commission for doing so.

B. Los Altos Hills Area Commissioner Vacancy: The District Clerk stated that advertisements for the Commissioner vacancy had been placed in the Palo Alto Daily Post and Los Altos Town Crier. Also, Los Altos Hills Town Hall had put the vacancy on social media and on Nextdoor. The Los Altos Chamber of Commerce was going to put it on their website as well.

Siegel mention training for Sexual Harassment and Ethics Training was being looked into.

Warren mentioned the Los Altos Hills Pathways Run/Walk scheduled for May 11, and encouraged the Commissioners to sign up.

16.) Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 9:12 p.m.

Prepared by,

Jeanne Evilsizer
District Clerk

Approved 3/19/19