

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE
LOS ALTOS HILLS COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2020, BEGINNING AT 7:00 P.M.
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE: <https://lahcfd-org.zoom.us/j/98413570742>; PASSWORD: 422430,
AND TELECONFERENCE: (312) 777-1449 OR
(888) 331-6293 (US TOLL FREE); ACCESS CODE: 641279#**

President Warren called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Remote Meeting Participation: All members of the District's Board of Commissioners, District Staff, District Contractors, and members of the public participated by videoconference or teleconference. To promote social distancing while allowing essential governmental functions to continue, the Governor has temporarily waived portions of the open meetings act and rules pertaining to remote meetings. The meeting was conducted in compliance with the Governor's Executive Order N-25-20 issued on March 12, 2020, and supplemental Executive Order N-29-20 issued on March 17, 2020, allowing for deviation of remote meeting rules required by the Brown Act. The purpose of this is to provide the safest environment for officials, staff, meeting participants and the public while allowing for public participation.

1. Roll Call:

PRESENT: Commissioners Warren, Vaughn, Tyson, Price, Spreen, Carr, Kearney

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Fire Chief Tony Bowden, Assistant Fire Chief Brian Glass, Emergency Services Manager Captain Denise Gluhan (Ret.), General Manager J. Logan, District Counsel Dan Siegel, Special Projects Services Consultant Sarah Henricks, Financial Consultant & District Clerk Cori Vargas

2. Public Comment:

There was no public comment on items not on the agenda.

3. Commission President Remarks:

Commission President Warren thanked the District Staff and Consultants for their continued efforts in keeping the District's meetings and essential governmental functions on track during the public health crisis. He also thanked staff for preparing a timely response to the confidential draft of the County of Santa Clara (County) Management Audit Report findings.

4. Essential Governmental Functions Update:

General Manager Logan stated there were two revisions to the County Public Health Order adopted on March 16 since the April 21 Regular Meeting. An order issued on April 29 relaxed some outdoor activities for the public and outdoor businesses. An order issued on May 18, which supersedes the April 29 order, continues to restrict most activities, travel, government, and business functions to essential needs only. The May 18 order also amends, clarifies and continues certain terms of the prior order to ensure continued social distancing and limit person-to-person contact to prevent the surge of COVID-19 cases in the County and neighboring counties. The primary intent of the order is to ensure County residents continue to Shelter-In-Place.

5. Commission Ad Hoc Management Audit Subcommittee Update:

Logan reported the County's confidential Draft Management Audit Report was received by the District on April 26. The District complied with the Auditors request and County policy, and submitted a response to the County Management Audit Division within 15 business days on May 15. The County mandates the Report remain confidential until released to the Board of Supervisors and made public. Spreen asked if the Final Report will be modified to address and include the District's response, or whether the response will be published as an attachment. Legal Counsel Siegel stated he believed the response will be published as an attachment to the Final Report.

6. Santa Clara County Fire Chief Report:

Assistant Fire Chief Glass reviewed the monthly report for April 2020 and said there were no significant events. He reported there were no incidents of COVID-19 for Santa Clara County Fire Department (SCCFD) personnel to date. Tyson asked for details on a recent grass fire at the Stanford Dish. Chief Glass explained the fire was in the jurisdiction of the Palo Alto Fire Department (PAFD), but SCCFD had provided mutual aid for other emergency calls while PAFD crews fought the wildfire.

Fire Chief Bowden stated Cal-Fire will begin increasing staff on May 25. Cal-Fire anticipates an above average fire season this year due to an over-abundance of fine fuels and grasses in Northern California. He also noted Cal-Fire and fire agencies across the State were facing budget shortfalls and resource availability. Locally the PAFD had been pressed to cut costs which will impact mutual-aid resources for the County.

Kearney asked if there were any plans for non-congregate sheltering to ensure firefighter's safety during large fires. Chief Bowden said the State created guidelines to address the issue including setting up multiple base-camps, off-site logistics, and staggered eating times.

Chief Bowden explained that last year the District had extra fire-season staffing during Red-Flag Warning and Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) days. Since mutual-aid resources from both PAFD and Cal-Fire will be decreased, the District might want to consider increasing extra fire-season staff to include "heightened" fire weather days to be determined on a case-by-case basis. Commissioners were in consensus to increase extra fire-season staffing as requested by the Chief.

Chief Bowden left the teleconference meeting at 7:41 p.m.

7. General Manager Update:

Logan reviewed the General Manager report. She discussed the process of repairing the two damaged fire hydrants at Horseshoe Lane and Zappettini Road, which had water/erosion damage due to the hydrant shutoff valve not operating as designed. The hydrant repairs were delayed because the District does not have a contract with a dedicated geotechnical engineering consultant to help develop a remediation plan. Logan stated a proposal for geotechnical engineering services will be presented to the Commission at the June meeting. Logan also presented a diagram for hydrant retaining walls, and stated the geotechnical engineer will be able to determine whether installation is necessary. Chief Glass noted the distance between the hydrant and retaining wall in the diagram appeared to be too close. Gluhan clarified the retaining wall would border the valve side of the hydrant, not the discharge side.

Special Projects Services Consultant Henricks explained the "OK/Help" signs presented at the April Commission meeting had been updated and a cover-letter with instructions had been drafted with assistance from Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Supervisors, and Commissioners Price and Carr. She noted additional information will be added about residents being contacted via Nixel or Alert SCC for using the cards during CERT training drills or disasters.

Logan stated she anticipated the approved FY2020/2021 Budget submitted to the County's Office of Budget Analysis (OBA) will be reviewed by the County Board of Supervisors on June 23 and utilized during July and August. The Budget Hearing for the Fire Districts is scheduled to occur August 19, with the Final Budget approved by the Board on August 25.

8. Emergency Services Manager Update:

Gluhan reviewed the Emergency Services Manager report and discussed recent remote classes for CERT and Personal Emergency Preparedness (PEP). She mentioned the District's website had a link to the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council (SCCFSC) "Shelter-In-Yard" program, which provides tips and tasks to help residents create defensible space around their homes. She reviewed other meetings she had attended remotely, including weekly Public Information Officer meetings and a Town of Los Altos Hills (Town) Evacuation Planning discussion.

Gluhan stated she and Henricks were working in collaboration with the Town and SCCFD for operational data collection, integration and mapping. A more thorough discussion of this topic will occur at June's meeting. Henricks added the Town offered to provide their base map data to the District, and SCCFD offered access to the County's Intterra GIS system.

Kearney asked if the District will be providing any comments for Midpeninsula Regional Open Space's Environmental Impact Report for their proposed Wildland Fire Resiliency Program. Gluhan responded she had provided comments as a stakeholder when the planning was first initiated.

9. Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Activities and Update:

Gluhan reported CERT members have had weekly check-in teleconference meetings during the past six weeks. They also discussed training and drill collaborations with the Town's Emergency Communications Committee (ECC).

Gluhan stated there had been a delay in ordering emergency vests because CERT members were unable to be fitted for sizing due to the Shelter-In-Place. CERT Supervisor Dave Stewart created a sizing chart to assist CERT members in ordering the correct vest size.

10. Hazardous Fuel Reduction Update:

Logan stated the first month of the Brush Chipping Pilot Program with the SCCFSC was completed in April. The SCCFSC reported there was a large range in bids from chipping contractors, an increase in residents requesting chipping services, and an increase in cancellations possibly due to resident's desire to maintain social distancing. Logan noted a report, including cost metrics and customer evaluations, for the pilot program's first two months will be presented at the June meeting.

Gluhan mentioned the goat grazing contractor arrived April 22 to set up electric fencing and trailers. The goats arrived April 24 and provided fuel-reduction grazing in the Byrne Preserve area for approximately two weeks.

Logan reported the Shaded Fuel Break Program along Page Mill Road will start on June 8. Gluhan stated a few property owners had not signed permission forms for right-of-way encroachment, but this will not delay commencement of the project. She reminded the Commission the Shaded Fuel Break Program will complement the fuel break measures already implemented along Page Mill Road in Palo Alto. Warren asked if signage could be posted to give the public more information about the project; Gluhan said she will work with the project manager from the SCCFSC to get this done.

11. Adopt Resolution 20-16 of the Los Altos Hills County Fire District Authorizing Execution of Amendment No. 2 to Professional Services Agreement with Santa Clara County FireSafe Council for Chipping Services to Extend the Term of the Agreement through December 31, 2020, Increase the Cap for Monthly Expenditures for Chipping Services to \$30,000 and Amend and Expand the Termination Clause:

Logan reported the original agreement with the SCCFSC will terminate on June 30. Due to the success of the pilot chipping program, she recommended extending the agreement through December 31. She noted the Resolution calls for an increase of the monthly expenditure cap to \$30,000 due to greater resident demand for chipping services.

She reminded the Commission the brush chipping program is an integral part of the District's Forward-Looking Community Resiliency plan for hazardous fuel reduction, based upon the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Annex 4 and the District's 2015-2020 Strategic Plan.

Action: Motion by Spreen to adopt the resolution authorizing execution of amendment no. 2 to the professional services agreement with Santa Clara County FireSafe Council for chipping services to extend the term of the agreement through December 31, 2020, increase the cap for monthly expenditures for chipping services to \$30,000 and amend and expand the termination clause; seconded by Tyson.

Roll Call Vote: All in Favor: Warren, Vaughn, Tyson, Price, Spreen, Carr, Kearney.

Opposed: None. **Absent:** None.

MOTION PASSED 7-0

12. Adopt Resolution 20-17 Resolution of the Board of the Los Altos Hills County Fire District Declaring Brush Growing on Certain Described Properties to be a Public Nuisance and Potential Fire Hazard and Setting Hearing for Objections to Proposed Removal:

District Clerk Vargas reviewed the Memorandum Report for setting a hearing for brush abatement. She explained a list of non-compliant properties will be provided by the County Fire Marshal in June. A letter is sent to non-compliant property owners, and a notice is published in the Town Crier to inform the public of the hearing date. Gluhan noted the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) inspections will be resuming under the latest Public Health Order. She would like to see that non-compliant property owners are offered HIZ services and hazardous fuel reduction education.

Action: Motion by Vaughn to adopt the resolution declaring brush growing on certain described properties to be a public nuisance and potential fire hazard and setting hearing for objections to proposed removal; seconded by Price.

Roll Call Vote: All in Favor: Warren, Vaughn, Tyson, Price, Spreen, Carr, Kearney.

Opposed: None. **Absent:** None.

MOTION PASSED 7-0

13. Personnel Update:

Spreen stated a proposal for General Manager spending authorization and policy will be presented to the Commission at the June meeting.

14. 2020-2025 Strategic Plan Update:

Logan reported there were no updates.

15. Financial Consultant Update:

Financial Consultant Vargas stated she had no updates on the status of the District credit cards.

16. Consent Calendar:

Warren asked for a motion to approve “16.A. Approval of Draft Minutes of April 21, 2020 Regular Meeting”, and “16.B. Receive Period Report 10, April 2020”.

Action: Motion by Price to approve the Consent Calendar as submitted; seconded by Vaughn.

Roll Call Vote: All in Favor: Warren, Vaughn, Tyson, Price, Spreen, Carr, Kearney.

Opposed: None. **Absent:** None.

MOTION PASSED 7-0

17. Receive Disbursements for May 2020:

Vargas noted an updated list of disbursements was provided with a new total of \$66,278.23.

18. Commission Member Reports:

Tyson mentioned he had attended the preparation plan meeting for Midpeninsula Regional Open Space’s Wildland Fire Resiliency Program and felt it was important to be aware of the fire suppression efforts in the parks surrounding the District.

19. Adjournment

Warren adjourned the meeting at 8:49 p.m. The next regular meeting will be held via videoconference and teleconference on June 16, 2020.

Prepared by,

Cori Vargas
District Clerk