

Los Altos Hills County Fire District

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Los Altos Hills County Fire District Board Members, Held on Tuesday, March 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, Deputy Chief/Prevention Julie Linney, Fire District Attorney Dan Siegel, Fire Consultant Stu Farwell, Financial Consultant Cori Vargas, District Clerk Jeanne Evilsizer

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

3) **Welcome Applicants for Commission Vacancy.** Warren outlined the application process and stated it was a two stage process. In addition to the letter of interest to the District, applicants need to also apply at the County of Santa Clara website; the County is always accepting applications whether or not there is an open spot and the County keeps the applications on file. Warren welcomed the applicants present to share their interest in becoming a Commissioner. The following four (4) applicants spoke: Ms. Joan Sherlock, 27261 Sherlock Road, Los Altos Hills; Mr. Terry Kearney, 27361 Moody Road, Los Altos Hills; Mr. Edward Sharp, 26958 Dezahara Way, Los Altos Hills; Mr. Edward Muniyak, 12804 Clausen Court, Los Altos Hills. After the presentations, Dan Siegel stated the Fire District will confirm with Supervisor Simitian's office who was here tonight and forward the letters of interest to Supervisor Simitian's office. He stated that it is the Board of Supervisors who makes the actual appointment to the Fire District Commission.

4) **Pumper Cap Presentation by Purissima Hills Water District.** Patrick Walter, General Manager Purissima Hills Water District, explained that the water district would like to put sensors or nodes into the fire hydrant caps as an early warning system to catch water leaks. Each sensor costs \$1,100. Walter distributed a map to the Commission showing in red the hydrants where they would like to place thirty (30), initially, of these leak detecting nodes. Eventually they would like to place 200 of these sensors throughout the water district. Echologies Technologies Company is the supplier of the leak sensors. San Jose Water Company and East Bay Mudd currently use them. Walter showed where the sensor gets placed in the cast iron hydrant cap. Batteries are replaceable and last approximately five (5) years. Leaks can be detected up to 1,000 feet. The system data analysis and reporting software is entirely web-based. Chief Bowden did not have any concerns regarding the sensor placement. Public member Allan Epstein asked what is causing the leaks in the water mains since there were 22 leaks from July 2018 through December 2018. Walter said the leaks are from the cast iron pipes that are split or

corroded in the adobe soil. When the soil becomes dry or soft it flexes the mains and causes the leaks. Warren said with the Commission consensus a memorandum of understanding (MOU) shall be drawn up between the Purissima Hills Water District and the Los Altos Hills County Fire District and brought back to a future meeting.

5) Commission President Remarks. Warren stated in the past we discussed the same subject several times throughout the agenda. He would like a subject/content based agenda items where all aspects of a subject are discussed just once. He stated it was a good idea to have the memorandum reports for transparency and historical purposes. Warren commented the large packet of business items before the Commission this evening supported the mission of the district with respect to fire prevention, suppression, emergency preparedness and fuel reduction. He gave a brief overview of the agenda.

6) Santa Clara County Fire Chief Report: A. Monthly Report for February, 2019 The Chief reviewed a structure fire on South Fork Lane. There were no injuries, \$40,000 in damages and the fire is still under investigation. He stated some response times were due to traffic delays on freeway 280. Also there had been more Community Education Events held in the District. There was no public comment.

B. Fire Season Patrol Staffing – Chief Bowden explained the idea of “Mode” staffing to increase resources based on predicted weather conditions, Operational Area drawdown in the County and/or other factors on an as-needed basis. He suggested that the current contract to provide additional staffing and a wildland interface engine be amended to reflect staffing practices as they are in other Santa Clara County Fire Department service areas. It would also include delegating authority to the Fire Chief and/or designee (a Deputy Chief) to provide additional staffing in Los Altos Hills when needed (special events in LAH, red flag warnings, inclement weather, etc) Subcommittee members Vaughn and Tyson looked at the Mode Staffing in comparison to the 10 a.m.-7 p.m. staffing that now occurs during the declared “Fire Season”. Vaughn suggested trying the Mode Staffing and doing a monthly evaluation to see if we need to revise it or make a change in direction. There was a consensus to try the Mode method of patrol staffing; Warren stated an amendment to addendum three (third memorandum of agreement) would come from County Fire for our review. There was no public comment.

C. Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP); Annex 4 Chief Bowden stated the CWPP was a starting point. He suggested the Commission look at the document thoroughly and ask questions before adopting; suggest updates or revisions. Carr mentioned the first paragraph mentions the unincorporated area west of town; it should also include unincorporated areas that resided in the east/ south east of Town. Tyson reviewed the CWPP Annex 4 closely and concluded we need to work on it and know what our priorities are and, send a letter to the Town of Los Altos Hills to reinstate the WUI (Wildland Urban Interface) area which they eliminated several years ago. Warren suggested forming a new CWPP subcommittee to study, review and recommend to get the CWPP adopted. Bowden said the Fire Department will help guide the District with respect to the CWPP. There are grant funds available once the CWPP is adopted. The Chief would like to see it adopted by August; he stressed it can be revised/changed/updated after adoption as well. Vaughn, Tyson and Warren volunteered to be on the CWPP subcommittee.

D. State Mandated Inspections: R-1 (Hotel/Motel), R-2 (Apartments), E (Public/Private School Occupancies) Deputy Chief/Prevention Julie Linney explained the fire inspection practices

related to the annual inspection of state regulated occupancies of public and private schools (E occupancies, hotels/motels (R-1 Occupancies) and apartment buildings (R-2 occupancies). The District has four schools which are inspected annually. Linney stated we are compliant with Senate Bill No. 1205.

Resolution 19-8 Resolution of the Los Altos Hills County Fire District Acknowledging Receipt of Report of State Mandated Inspections Completed for Calendar Year 2018. Price made a motion to approve Resolution 19-8 of the Los Altos Hills County Fire District Acknowledging Receipt of Report of State Mandated Inspections Completed for Calendar Year 2018; Vaughn seconded the motion. **Action: All in Favor:** Carr, Spreen, Tyson, Warren, Vaughn and Price. **Opposed:** None **Absent:** None

7) **General Manager Report.** A. Overview of Subcommittee meetings: J. Logan distributed the General Manager Report dated March 19, 2019. She mentioned the four (4) subcommittee meetings that occurred in March and one CERT meeting. Logan mentioned upcoming events such as the Emergency Preparedness exhibit in the fall at the Los Altos History Museum and upcoming Red Cross training in April. Logan mentioned the LAHCFD CERT program is now registered with FEMA. Additional items discussed were: Current CERT class in Los Altos Hills with graduation on March 23, 2019; Wildfire Preparedness Community Meetings in 2019; and, Personal Emergency Preparedness – PEP classes in 2019.

8) **CERT Activities and Update.** Neil Katin mentioned the new class of CERT's graduating in Los Altos Hills on March 23, 2019 had ten (10) members that are Los Altos Hills residents.

9.) **FY2019/20 Tax override Vote.** A. Memorandum Report. District Clerk Jeanne Evilsizer summarized the background on the tax override and referred to Ordinance No. 1 passed in 1981 which imposed a special tax for fire protection and related services. There were no comments from the public.

Action: Establish the tax override rate at \$0.00 for Fiscal year 2019/2020. **Roll Call Vote: All in Favor:** Carr, Price, Tyson, Warren, Vaughn and Spreen. **Opposed:** None. **Absent:** None

10.) Adopt Resolution 19-5 Resolution of the Los Altos Hills County Fire District Adopting the Fiscal Year 2019/20 Budget for the Los Altos Hills County Fire District General Fund.

A.) Memorandum Report: Cori Vargas presented the budget for FY2019/2020. She mentioned the two revisions that were made to the Draft budget and submitted to the County Finance Department on February 20, 2019. Warren thanked the budget committee for their work on the budget and complimented the thorough Budget Narrative document. There were no comments from the public. **Action:** A motion was made by Spreen to approve Resolution No. 19-5 Resolution of the Los Altos Hills County Fire District adopting the Fiscal Year 2019/20 budget for the Los Altos Hills County Fire District general fund; motion was seconded by Tyson. **Roll Call Vote: All in Favor:** Carr, Price, Vaughn, Warren, Tyson and Spreen **Opposed:** None. **Absent:** None.

11.) Adopt Resolution 19-6 – Resolution of the Los Altos Hills County Fire District Authorizing Execution of Professional Services Agreement Between the Los Altos Hills County Fire District and Vavrinek, Trine, Day & Company for Financial Audit Services.

A. Memorandum Report: Siegel summarized the report for audit services and stated VTD has

agreed to provide the same financial audit services over a three-year term with no increase in premium costs for the services. **Action:** A motion was made by Price to approve Resolution 19-6 Resolution of the Los Altos Hills County Fire District Authorizing Execution of Professional Services Agreement Between the Los Altos Hills County Fire District and Vavrinek, Trine, Day & Company for Financial Audit Services; motion was seconded by Spreen. **Roll Call Vote: All in Favor:** Vaughn, Carr, Tyson, Warren, Spreen and Price. **Opposed:** None **Absent:** None.

12.) Adopt Resolution 19-7 Resolution of the Los Altos Hills County Fire District Adopting Policy for Use of District Lot

A. Memorandum Report – J. Logan summarized the use of the District lot for public service projects and stated the term shall not exceed 6 months. Also mentioned was the extension for term of use with DACO Contractors due to weather delaying the project.

Action: Motion was made by Tyson to approve Resolution 19-7 of the Los Altos Hills County Fire District Adopting Policy for Use of the District Lot; Vaughn seconded the motion. **All in favor:** Carr, Warren, Tyson, Spreen, Vaughn and Price **Opposed:** None **Absent:** None. There was no public comment.

13.) Receive Information on Seasonal Goat Services for Fire Fuel Reduction.

A. Memorandum Report – J. Logan discussed the method of vegetation mitigation and fire fuel management with the use of goats. She is reaching out to agencies within the District to determine those public areas that would benefit from fire fuel reduction using the goats. Spreen commented to be cautious in certain areas where restoration is taking place in Byrne Preserve; he would like the coordinator of the restoration to be notified. Allan Epstein, member of the public, asked if the Town of Los Altos Hills gave specific areas where the goats were needed; Logan said it was still under discussion.

14.) Fire Commission Subcommittees and Staff Consultant :

A. Strategic Plan Subcommittee Memorandum Report – Price discussed the five (5) goals summarized on page two of the memorandum report. She stated the subcommittee of she, Carr and Spreen met on March 8 to review and update the progress in accomplishments of the Strategic Plan Goals. The Memorandum Report and the Agenda Report templates were reviewed and agreed upon to be used for presentations in the agenda packets. Also there was consensus from the Board to approve Strategic Plan Goals 2, 4, 5 recommendations outlined as a.,b.,c. Mauri Kearney, member of the public, brought up the fire in Paradise, CA and the lack of communication protocol for evacuation notification. She asked if the District is keeping up with the evacuation technology for notifying residents of a fire. An early detection system could be added to the California Wildfire Protection Plan.

B. Hydrant Flow and Pipeline Resiliency Subcommittee Update – Warren gave background information regarding the findings of the subcommittee. They had recently met with PHWD and found that the data produced regarding the hydrant fire flow in Zone 4 was based on the model created and not the field testing. Subsequent field testing determined fire hydrant flows were better than anticipated. The number of deficient hydrants in Zone 4 have been reduced. J. Logan mentioned a scheduled meeting with Chief Linney at the end of this week to determine if the calibrations by PHWD meet the Fire Department standards. Comments from members of the public: Allan Epstein –majority of funds budgeted for fire flow in PHWD could partially be used

for areas within Cal Water Service. Member of the public Kjell Karlsson stated the importance of resiliency of pipelines in earthquakes and continuing the idea of partnering with PHWD.

C. Fuel Reduction Subcommittee Memorandum Report: Tyson reviewed the detailed memorandum report addressing the new tree removal and brush chipping programs. He suggested going ahead with the arborist evaluations using the existing FY 2018/19 budget. The limits now would be for conifer and eucalyptus trees only with no more than three (3) trees per property and no more than \$8,000 spent per property. The subcommittee recommendation is to approve the new Tree Removal Program; begin arborist evaluations on existing wait- list trees and hold additional requests for tree removal. Additionally, prepare Request for Proposals (RFP) for FY 2019/20 Tree Removal Program. There was consensus by the Commissioners to have the arborist begin looking at the trees on the existing wait list. Also discussed was communicating in writing from the subcommittee to the resident. Members of the public comments included: Neil Katin – think of other options with possible cost sharing. Also give status update to people on list. Allan Epstein: Suggested surveying all trees then put trees out to bid for cost per tree. Kjell Karlsson: look geographically where trees are located; look more at high fire areas. Siegel stated the necessity to amend the arborist contract to make the scope match the new tasks and bring this back to the April 16, 2019 meeting.

Tyson reviewed the brush chipping program, how the program is heavily used by the residents and the service provided has been excellent. The subcommittee proposes continuing the program and using a formal RFP process to select a contractor. The Commission consensus was to proceed with the RFP process for brush chipping for 2019/20.

D. CERT Subcommittee Update – J. Login said the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator position was being looked for under extra help through the Fire Department. The District will look to hire the position after July 1, 2019.

E. Current Contracts – This item was covered previously and will be removed from future agendas.

F. Residential Programs March 1, 2019 Updates – Farwell updated the number of dead trees to 508 as well as removal of 80 eucalyptus trees. He stated there were 171 residents on the waiting list.

Farwell mentioned that Foothill College maintains their own fire hydrants.

15.) Consent Calendar. A. Approval of Draft Minutes of February 19, 2019 Regular Meeting
B. Receive Period Report 8, February 2019 **Action:** Motion was made by Tyson to approve the Consent Calendar as submitted; motion was seconded by Price. **All in Favor:** Carr, Vaughn, Spreen, Warren, Tyson and Price. **Opposed:** None. **Absent:** none.

16.) Receive Disbursements for March 2019: An update list of disbursements was distributed by Cori Vargas.

17.) Commission Member Report. There were no Commission Member reports.

18.) Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 9:20 p.m. The next Regular Meeting is April 16, 2019.

Prepared by,
Jeanne Evilsizer, District Clerk

Approved April 16, 2019