

MEETING OF THE

**East Bay Wildfire Coalition of Governments (EBWC)
Monday, September 23, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. PDT**

**El Cerrito City Hall, Council Chambers
10890 San Pablo Ave, El Cerrito, CA 94530**

MINUTES of 9/23/24 Meeting

Meeting was called to order at 10:07 a.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Members Present

1. Alameda County: Supervisor Elisa Márquez
2. Contra Costa County: Supervisor John Gioia
3. City of Berkeley: Vice Mayor Susan Wengraf (Chair)
4. City of El Cerrito: Councilmember Paul Fadelli
5. City of Oakland: Councilmember Janani Ramachandran (Vice Chair)
6. City of Richmond: Councilmember Soheila Bana (Alternate)
7. City of Pinole: Mayor Maureen Toms
8. Rodeo-Hercules FPD: Board Vice Chair Marie Bowman

2. APPROVE DRAFT MINUTES of MEETING OF JULY 8, 2024

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ACTION: Motion to approve the minutes by Gioia, seconded by Ramachandran

VOTE: 8-0-0

3. APPROVE NEW MEMBER

- a. City of Hercules (Councilmember Alex Walker-Griffin)

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ACTION: Motion by Chair Wengraf, seconded by Toms: *Recognizing the ratification of the memorandum of understanding for coordination of wildfire prevention activities to protect the East Bay Hills and Alameda and Contra Costa Counties by its governing body, and in the absence of a fiscal agent, the participating agencies hereby welcome the City of Hercules, represented by*

Councilmember Alex Walker-Griffin, to be recognized as an official participating agency.

VOTE: 8-0-0

4. INTRODUCE REGIONAL ADVISERS

The Chair introduced the new Regional Advisors:

- a. UC Berkeley, represented by Marc Fisher, Vice Chancellor of Administration.
Also attending from UC Berkeley: Amy Chen, Campus Fire Marshal; Rubén Lizardo, Director of Local Government and Community Relations; Lt. Nicholas "Nic" Hernandez, UCPD
- b. Lawrence Berkeley National Labs, represented by Michael Brandt, Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Lab Director of Operations.
- c. East Bay Regional Parks District, represented by Aileen Theile, Fire Chief.
- d. East Bay Municipal Utility District, represented by Scott Hill, Manager of Watershed and Recreation.

5. STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

- a. Briefing by Niccolo de Luca, VP, Townsend Public Affairs

Niccolo de Luca stated that the EBWC, could be extremely effective and powerful in Sacramento.

Thirteen of 900 bills were related to wildfire mitigation or fire safety. Niccolo suggested EBWC think about what it wants from the state.

The number one issue regarding wildfire safety is insurance. Insurance Commissioner Lara recently stated his goals:

1. Making sure insurance doesn't get cancelled after a fire
2. Addressing the rates
3. Keeping insurance companies in California

From a legislative perspective, Nicolo recommended focusing in two areas:

1. Legislatively, what can be done and what are our overall goals?
2. Work with Insurance Commissioner Lara and his office to make changes or support his recommendations.

Niccolo stated that EBWC is a powerful coalition whose communication would be effective. He encouraged the group to send a strong communication to the Insurance Commissioner, highlighting the region's needs.

Funding: If this group needs funding, now is a good time for EBWC to submit a funding request letter to “our delegation, the Governor, and to leadership on what specific funding needs could be.”

Discussion highlights:

- Yes, wildfire safety bills are focused more on rural parts of state.
- SB-504 (Dodd), is still pending (funding opportunities for local gov re: defensible space).
- SB-571 (Allen) was vetoed (ingress and egress route recommendations report).
- Points for letter to Insurance Commissioner? Strengths of this group: Learned a lot from the 1991 fire and made a lot of good local government and planning decisions in response. You’ve been on the forefront, one of the first to do that. You have engaged constituents. A coalition letter with 15 -20 organizations (cities, counties, municipalities, special districts, utility groups, agencies) is very powerful. Explain to the Commissioner that you are taking regional approach, crossing county lines, etc. You have a collective sense of policy experience. “Honorable Commissioner”, here are the 3-5 recommendations we’d like to work with you on. Keep points clear and simple, not much detail because the goal is to start a working partnership with his office where details would be built out.
- Budget: CalFire gets most of the funding. How to make funding trickle down to local jurisdictions?
- One-pager: Niccolo recommends EBWC create a one-pager (white paper) sooner than later to help with working on legislation. Boil down an ask to a simple one page. Some legislature offices have bills ready to go and could add our asks to them. Niccolo would shop the one-pager with the delegation and others.

4. AD HOC COMMITTEE PROPOSAL: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

a. Presentation of proposed strategic framework (Chair Wengraf)

Chair Wengraf read the proposed mission statement. EBWC members recommended changes and agreed on the following slightly revised mission statement:

“The East Bay Wildfire Coalition of Governments (EBWC) is a regional consortium of elected officials representing cities, counties and fire districts committed to safeguarding our communities and natural landscapes in the East Bay Hills. We champion proactive, science-based and data-driven approaches to mitigating, through preparedness, community engagement, education, and collaboration, the increasing threat of wildfires due to the climate crisis.”

Chair Wengraf presented the proposed Strategic Focus for EBWC: 1. Home Hardening 2. Vegetation Management. Coalition members gave input on the

wording. The Chair proposed members send written comments on the draft so it can be revised before the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Three comments on the Mission Statement. Seven comments on the Strategic Framework.

ACTION: The Strategic Framework will be sent out to EBWC members for their feedback. The Ad-Hoc Committee on Strategic Planning will review and revise the document accordingly for consideration at the next meeting.

5. AD HOC COMMITTEE PROPOSAL: FEE STRUCTURE OPTIONS

- a. Update on finances | fee structure options (Lisa Jacobs)

After Lisa Jacobs reported on EBWC's financial situation, she reviewed two Fee Structure Options for EBWC member cities and counties to consider, noting that the vote has to be unanimous. Members discussed the fees.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Four public comments.

ACTION: There was consensus to return at the next meeting with a 2-year budget proposal, based on the reduced rate fees.

6. FUTURE MEETINGS AND AGENDA ITEMS

- Future Meetings: Oct. 21st at 1pm. November meeting date TBD.
- Agenda Items: Strategic Framework; Fee Structure; 2-minute presentation/discussion from Matt Kelly re: CCTA's contract to develop evacuation routes (Fadelli); EBRPD presentation on their wildfire mitigation program (Gioia); presentation on recent vegetation study (Bana)

7. NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

8. MEMBER COMMENTS

Vice Chair, Councilmember Ramachandran announced an informational town hall this evening on Oakland's newly proposed ballot measure, Measure MM, a Wildfire Special Tax.

Councilmember Fadelli is on the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA); they were awarded a major contract to develop routes for evacuations. He's asked Matt Kelly to give a 2-minute discussion at the next meeting.

Councilmember Soheila Bana announced a new permanent Richmond Fire Chief and an open house at Station 65 on Sunday, October 6 from noon to 3:00 p.m.

Rodeo-Hercules FPD Board Vice Chair Marie Bowman invited everyone to the Rodeo-Hercules Open House on October 12th from 11-3 p.m.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m. until the meeting of October 21st, 1:00 pm