

MEETING OF THE

**East Bay Wildfire Coalition of Governments (EBWC)
Monday, October 21, 2024
1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.**

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

TELECONFERENCE LOCATION - 24301 Southland Drive, Suite 101, Hayward, CA 94545

DRAFT MINUTES

Meeting was called to order at 1:08 PM

1. ROLL CALL

Members Present

Alameda County: Supervisor Elisa Márquez
Contra Costa County: Supervisor John Gioia
City of Berkeley: Vice Mayor Susan Wengraf (Chair)
City of El Cerrito: Councilmember Paul Fadelli
City of Hercules: Councilmember Chris Kelley (Alternate)
City of Pinole: Mayor Maureen Toms
Rodeo-Hercules FPD: Board Vice Chair Marie Bowman

Members Absent

City of Oakland: Councilmember Janani Ramachandran
City of Richmond: Councilmember Gayle McLaughlin

Fire Chiefs Present

Alameda County (Chief William McDonald)
Contra Costa County (Assistant Chief Chris Bachman *sitting in for* Chief Lewis Broschard)
East Bay Regional Park District (Chief Aileen Theile & Assistant Chief Khari Helae)
CAL FIRE (Division Chief Ed Orre)
City of Berkeley (Chief David Sprague)
City of Oakland (Chief Damon Covington)
City of Piedmont (Chief Dave Brannigan)

Technical Advisory Members

Alliance of Fire Safe Councils (Jon Kaufman, Henry DeNero)

East Bay Municipal Utility District (Scott Hill)
East Bay Regional Park District (Chief Aileen Theile)
Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (Mike Torkelson)
Diablo Fire Safe Council (Holly Million)
Sierra Club (Norman LaForce)

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA MATTERS

Jon Kaufman representing the Alliance of FireSafe Councils: This month, AFSC will secure a proposal for a Vegetation Management Plan created collaboratively by: Ascent, The Estuary Institute and Tukman Geospatial. The AFSC will forward the plan to EBWC for consideration. If EBWC approves the proposal, it would enable the EBWC to move ahead with vegetation management programs without the need to gain CEQA compliance.

Gary Frost representing Make El Cerrito Fire Safe: At 9/23/24 EBWC meeting presenter Niccolo De Luca suggested he write a draft letter to Insurance Commissioner Lara to come up with ideas for how to keep insurance rates under control. Gary recommended that the group follow-up with Niccolo accordingly.

Matt Kelly representing Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA): Caltrans awarded CCTA a grant to prepare an emergency evacuation plan for Contra Costa County. CCTA will create a plan with wildfire, earthquake, and Tsunami in mind. They will focus, among other things, on a county wide smart signals program so key signals will be coordinated during an evacuation. CCTA is doing outreach to share the information to groups such as EBWC while the \$1.7M grant is pending. Once the grant is finalized, CCTA will be reaching out to EBWC as a stakeholder.

Kelly Hammargren requested that the next meeting be set up for live transcription and offered her help, if needed, to get it set up.

3. APPROVE MINUTES FROM MEETING OF SEPT 23, 2024

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ACTION: Mayor Toms made the motion to approve the minutes and Supervisor Gioia seconded it.

VOTE: Ayes - 7; Noes - 0; Abstain - 0; Absent – 2
Alameda County: Supervisor Elisa Márquez - AYE
Contra Costa County: Supervisor John Gioia - AYE
City of Berkeley: Vice Mayor Susan Wengraf - AYE
City of El Cerrito: Councilmember Paul Fadelli - AYE

City of Hercules: Councilmember Chris Kelley - AYE
City of Pinole: Mayor Maureen Toms - AYE
Rodeo-Hercules FPD: Board Vice Chair Marie Bowman - AYE

4. FISCAL AGENT: REVIEW AND TAKE ACTION

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ACTION: Chair Wengraf proposed the following motion and Mayor Toms seconded it:

The EBWC designates Contra Costa County as its Fiscal Agent, subject to approval by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and the Contra Costa Fire Protection District which will be responsible for performing the duties of EBWC Fiscal Agent: (i) serve as the EBWC treasurer and (ii) enter into contracts on behalf of the EBWC. The EBWC will establish a process for reimbursing the Fiscal Agent for its actual costs and expenses accrued in performing its duties under the MOU, including for staff time based on then-current hourly rates of compensation.

VOTE: Ayes - 7; Noes - 0; Abstain - 0; Absent – 2

Alameda County: Supervisor Elisa Márquez - AYE
Contra Costa County: Supervisor John Gioia - AYE
City of Berkeley: Vice Mayor Susan Wengraf - AYE
City of El Cerrito: Councilmember Paul Fadelli - AYE
City of Hercules: Councilmember Chris Kelley - AYE
City of Pinole: Mayor Maureen Toms - AYE
Rodeo-Hercules FPD: Board Vice Chair Marie Bowman - AYE

5. 2-YEAR BUDGET: REVIEW AND TAKE ACTION

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ACTION: Supervisor Márquez made the following motion and FPD Board Vice Chair Marie Bowman seconded it:

Adopt the East Bay Wildfire Coalition 2-year operating budget starting in FY 2025 for Year-1 and Year-2 in FY 2026, with Year-1 operating budget at \$75,000 and Year-2 at \$100,000.

VOTE: Ayes - 7; Noes - 0; Abstain - 0; Absent – 2

Alameda County: Supervisor Elisa Márquez - AYE
Contra Costa County: Supervisor John Gioia - AYE
City of Berkeley: Vice Mayor Susan Wengraf - AYE

City of El Cerrito: Councilmember Paul Fadelli - AYE
City of Hercules: Councilmember Chris Kelley - AYE
City of Pinole: Mayor Maureen Toms - AYE
Rodeo-Hercules FPD: Board Vice Chair Marie Bowman - AYE

6. FEE STRUCTURE: REVIEW AND TAKE ACTION

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jim Dolgonas, Make El Cerrito Fire Safe, suggested that Regional Advisors make a financial contribution.

ACTION: Supervisor Gioia moved the following motion and Councilmember Kelley seconded it:

Motion to recommend the proposed fee structure and direct each member to discuss it with their respective agencies and return with approval or further input, by the January 2025 meeting.

Note: Per advice from EBWC's attorney, the motion's approval is contingent on the Chair receiving written confirmation from Councilmember McLaughlin and Councilmember Ramachandran, that they agree to the proposed dues. That correspondence should be included in the minutes.

VOTE: Ayes - 7; Noes - 0; Abstain - 0; Absent - 2

Alameda County: Supervisor Elisa Márquez - AYE
Contra Costa County: Supervisor John Gioia - AYE
City of Berkeley: Vice Mayor Susan Wengraf - AYE
City of El Cerrito: Councilmember Paul Fadelli - AYE
City of Hercules: Councilmember Chris Kelley - AYE
City of Pinole: Mayor Maureen Toms - AYE
Rodeo-Hercules FPD: Board Vice Chair Marie Bowman - AYE

7. PRESENTATION: FUELS MANAGEMENT IN ALAMEDA AND CONTRA COSTA COUNTIES (Mark Tukman, Tukman Geospatial)

Tukman Geospatial has developed data sets and new tools for Contra Costa and Alameda Counties, including wildfire hazard modeling, risk to structure modeling, and the best available maps, drilling down even to the parcel level, in order to support jurisdictions to strategically manage vegetation to reduce wildfire threat. Funders include EBRPD, CAL FIRE and the State Coastal Conservancy.

The PowerPoint can be found on EBWC's website: <https://eastbaywildfire.org/> under Meetings / Meeting 4: October 21, 2024. It includes links to maps and data sets for GIS users and non-GIS users as well.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Five public comments.

The full presentation and remarks from the public can be viewed via the meeting recording, found on EBWC's website: <https://eastbaywildfire.org/> under meetings. The presentation starts at 42:00.

8. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: REVIEW AND TAKE ACTION

PUBLIC COMMENT: 2 comments

ACTION: Mayor Toms moved to approve the following mission statement as edited and shown on the screen and Councilmember Kelley seconded it:

Recognizing that wildfire does not respect jurisdictional boundaries, 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 support proactive, science-based, ecologically sound and data-driven approaches to resiliency. Through preparedness, community engagement, education, and collaboration, we support mitigating the increasing threat of catastrophic wildfires due to the climate crisis.

VOTE: Ayes - 7; Noes - 0; Abstain - 0; Absent – 2

Alameda County: Supervisor Elisa Márquez - AYE

Contra Costa County: Supervisor John Gioia - AYE

City of Berkeley: Vice Mayor Susan Wengraf - AYE

City of El Cerrito: Councilmember Paul Fadelli - AYE

City of Hercules: Councilmember Chris Kelley - AYE

City of Pinole: Mayor Maureen Toms - AYE

Rodeo-Hercules FPD: Board Vice Chair Marie Bowman – AYE

ACTION: Mayor Toms moved to approve the following Initial Focus and Interest Areas with the modifications made and FPD Board Vice Chair Bowman seconded it:

INITIAL FOCUS

Home hardening

- Education: Create community engagement program to inform property

owners, and decision-makers, about the value of home hardening and defensible space including “zone zero”

- Legislation: Support adoption of state, county and local ordinances to promote consistent region-wide risk reduction measures in wildfire hazard zones
- Funding: Promote and support a regional assistance program for qualified homeowners to help establish ember-resistant zones within five feet of structures, or “zone zero”

Vegetation Management

- Funding: Promote implementation of best practices for various vegetative types, raise funds for situational analyses, plans for a CEQA-compliant, ecologically-sound, region-wide vegetation management plan
- Project management: Apply for grants, distribute funding and support activities

INTEREST AREAS

1. Strengthen local building & fire codes and adherence
2. Promote the implementation of ecologically sound, science-driven vegetation management priorities
3. Support evacuation & response programs
4. Secure new funding for regional priorities
5. Advocate for local and state legislation

VOTE: Ayes - 7; Noes - 0; Abstain - 0; Absent – 2

Alameda County: Supervisor Elisa Márquez - AYE

Contra Costa County: Supervisor John Gioia - AYE

City of Berkeley: Vice Mayor Susan Wengraf - AYE

City of El Cerrito: Councilmember Paul Fadelli - AYE

City of Hercules: Councilmember Chris Kelley - AYE

City of Pinole: Mayor Maureen Toms - AYE

Rodeo-Hercules FPD: Board Vice Chair Marie Bowman – AYE

9. FUTURE MEETINGS AND AGENDA ITEMS

Next meeting: November 14, 1:00 p.m.

FPD Board Vice Chair Bowman suggested that we ask CA Insurance Commissioner Lara to present on new proposed methods of working with Insurance Companies.

Jon Kauffman requested EBWC review and consider approval of the Vegetation Management Plan Proposal the Alliance of FireSafe Councils is securing, during the November or December meeting.

Councilmember Fadelli requested EBWC come up with a permanent monthly day & time for its meetings at El Cerrito Council Chambers.

Chair Wengraf noted we need to have elections at November's meeting.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None

11. MEMBER COMMENTS

Councilmember Fadelli requested a brief update on the Oakland Fire. Oakland Fire Chief Covington reported that crews, including Cal Fire, were hopefully wrapping up operations on the 14 ½ acre fire the evening of 10/21. Two dwellings were burned. There was one minor injury that did not require medical services.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.