

MEETING OF THE

East Bay Wildfire Coalition of Governments (EBWC)

EastbayWildfire.org

Thursday, November 14, 2024

1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

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

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER | ROLL CALL

Chair Susan Wengraf called the meeting to order at 1:10 PM as a quorum of members were present.

Members Present

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

Members Absent

Alameda County: Supervisor Elisa Márquez
City of Hercules: Councilmember Alex Walker-Griffin
City of Oakland: Councilmember Janani Ramachandran (Vice Chair)

Fire Chiefs Present

Alameda County (Chief William McDonald)
Contra Costa County (Assistant Chief Chris Bachman)
City of Berkeley (Assistant Chief Colin Arnold)
City of Oakland (Chief Damon Covington)

Technical Advisory Members

Alliance of Fire Safe Councils (Jon Kaufman)
Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (Mike Torkelson)
UC Berkeley (Ruben Lizardo)

2. APPROVE MINUTES OF OCT 21, 2024

Rodeo-Hercules FPD Board Vice Chair Marie Bowman moved to approve the minutes; Supervisor John Gioia seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA MATTERS

Two public comments including Councilmember Janani Ramachandran's aide stating her regrets that she could not attend at the last minute due to illness.

4. PROPOSAL & DISCUSSION OF VEGETATION MANAGEMENT/CEQA STUDY

Jon Kauffman opened by asking EBWC for an Approval of Proposal Concept before introducing the proposal presenters: Lara Rachowicz of Ascent, Sean Baumgarten of San Francisco Estuary Institute and Mark Tukman of Tukman Geospatial. [The proposal Document and Presentation can be downloaded from the [EBWC website](#) under Meetings. The presentation starts at 0.01:50 of the meeting video.]

PUBLIC COMMENT: Six Public Comments including one from Contra Costa County Fire Assistant Chief Chris Bachman who suggested meeting with the Proposal Team before the next meeting to discuss: best practices CCC Fire is already doing, ongoing reporting, procurement issues, and the possibility of starting with a smaller scale project.

ACTION: Councilmember Soheila Bana moved to approve the Proposal Concept, with direction to the Proposal Team to work with Contra Costa County Fire to discuss the issues they identified before finalizing the proposal, and then report back to the EBWC. Supervisor John Gioia seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

5. PRESENTATION BY AMY BACH OF UNITED POLICYHOLDERS ON FIRE INSURANCE STATUS

United Policyholders Executive Director Amy Bach gave a 30-minute Home Insurance Update. Topics included Wildfire Risk Scores, strategies from the CA Dept of Insurance and the Safer from Wildfires Framework. [The Presentation can be downloaded from the [EBWC website](#) under Meetings. The presentation starts at 1:11:00 of the meeting video.]

6. FEE STRUCTURE

Chair Susan Wengraf noted that given Oakland's current financial situation, Vice Chair Janani Ramachandran did not feel she could recommend the second-year fee structure but could recommend the first-year. [The Fee Structure document can be downloaded from the [EBWC website](#) under Meetings.]

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ACTION: Supervisor John Gioia moved to recommend the Year One Budget with the fee structure noted in the report, subject to each agencies' governing body approving it for that agency. FPD Board Vice Chair Marie Bowman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

7. BOARD CHAIR ELECTION & FUTURE BOARD COMPOSITION DISCUSSION

Chair Susan Wengraf noted that she will be retiring from the Berkeley City Council on Dec 5th and therefore is no longer eligible to serve as an EBWC Elected Representative. She added that Vice Chair Janani Ramachandran will be on maternity leave for a couple of months.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ACTION: Chair Susan Wengraf made a motion to elect Supervisor John Gioia as EBWC Chair and leave the Vice Chair seat open until 2025. FPD Board Vice Chair Marie Bowman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Supervisor Gioia agreed that his office will conduct outreach to relevant member agencies about their respective representatives in 2025.

8. REVIEW & VOTE ON PERMANENT MEETING DATE & TIME

The item was continued until newly appointed EBWC Members join in early 2025.

9. FUTURE MEETINGS AND AGENDA ITEMS

The Dec 5th meeting was canceled. Newly elected Chair Gioia will schedule the next meeting for early 2025. Meetings could be held every other month with executive committee meetings in between.

10. MEMBER COMMENTS

El Cerrito Councilmember Paul Fadelli and Berkeley Vice Mayor Susan Wengraf announced this would be their last meeting. Members appreciated Chair Susan Wengraf for her leadership, vision and work to bring EBWC into fruition and serve as the Coalition's first Chair.

Lisa Jacobs passed out the final Strategic Framework One-Pager, approved with changes, now incorporated, at the October 21st meeting. [The Strategic Framework document can be downloaded from the [EBWC website](#) under Meetings.]

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:22 PM

McWhorter, Laurie

From: Márquez, Elisa, BOS Dist2 <Elisa.Marquez@acgov.org>
Sent: Wednesday, November 20, 2024 8:38 PM
To: McWhorter, Laurie
Cc: Wengraf, Susan
Subject: Re: EBWC Chair Requests Your Response

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello Laurie,

My vote is yes on the proposed fee structure.

Thank you,

Elisa Márquez (She/her/ella)
Supervisor, Second District
Phone: 510-272-6692 Email: Elisa.Marquez@acgov.org
1221 Oak Street, Suite 536 Oakland, Ca 94612
<https://www.acgov.org/board/district2/>

From: McWhorter, Laurie <LMcWhorter@berkeleyca.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 20, 2024 5:23 PM
To: Márquez, Elisa, BOS Dist2 <Elisa.Marquez@acgov.org>
Cc: Wengraf, Susan <SWengraf@berkeleyca.gov>
Subject: EBWC Chair Requests Your Response

Dear Supervisor Elisa Márquez,

I hope this email finds you well.

At the November 14, 2024 EBWC meeting the East Bay Wildfire Coalition voted unanimously on the motion to *“Recommend the Year-1 fee structure noted in the report, subject to each agency’s governing board approving it for that agency.”*

Per advice from EBWC’s attorney, the motion’s approval is contingent on the Chair receiving written confirmation from every Member not in attendance, that they agree to the proposed Year-1 fee structure.

I have attached the Fee Structure for your review. Both Year-1 and Year-2 were approved unanimously by all members who attended the October 21, 2024 meeting, but not all who were not in attendance. Since the MOU requires fee structure approval by 100% of members, the November motion and vote approved just the Year-1 Fee Structure.

Please reply with a yes or no vote to the fee structure motion at your soonest convenience.

Thank you,

Laurie

Laurie McWhorter, Legislative Aide

Office of Susan Wengraf, Vice Mayor and District 6 Councilmember

(510) 981-7160

lmcwhorter@berkeleyca.gov

**** This email was sent from an external source. If you do not know the sender, do not click on links or attachments. ****

McWhorter, Laurie

From: Savas, Jared <JSavas@oaklandca.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 2:05 PM
To: McWhorter, Laurie
Cc: Wengraf, Susan; Merriouns, Iris; Jon Kaufman
Subject: FW: EBWC Chair Requests Your Response

Hi Laurie,

Please see the Councilmember's vote below. If there's anything else you need, feel free to let me know.

Thanks, Jared

Jared Savas (he/him)
Office of Councilmember Janani Ramachandran
Oakland City Council | District 4
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza | Oakland, CA 94612
Office: 510-238-7273 | Cell: 339-237-0635
Email: jsavas@oaklandca.gov

From: Ramachandran, Janani <JRamachandran@oaklandca.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 2:03 PM
To: Savas, Jared <JSavas@oaklandca.gov>; Janani Ramachandran <janani@jananiforoakland.com>
Subject: Re: EBWC Chair Requests Your Response

Thanks – you can let her know I vote yes

From: Savas, Jared <JSavas@oaklandca.gov>
Date: Monday, December 2, 2024 at 1:02 PM
To: Ramachandran, Janani <JRamachandran@oaklandca.gov>, Janani Ramachandran <janani@jananiforoakland.com>
Subject: FW: EBWC Chair Requests Your Response

See below from Laurie

Jared Savas (he/him)
Office of Councilmember Janani Ramachandran
Oakland City Council | District 4
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza | Oakland, CA 94612
Office: 510-238-7273 | Cell: 339-237-0635
Email: jsavas@oaklandca.gov

From: McWhorter, Laurie <LMcWhorter@berkeleyca.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 1:00 PM
To: Savas, Jared <JSavas@oaklandca.gov>; Merriouns, Iris <ILMerriouns@oaklandca.gov>
Cc: Wengraf, Susan <SWengraf@berkeleyca.gov>
Subject: RE: EBWC Chair Requests Your Response

Thank you Jared. We just need Councilmember Ramachandran's written approval of the Year-1 Fee Structure.

-Laurie

Laurie McWhorter

Legislative Aide to Susan Wengraf
Vice Mayor & District 6 Councilmember
Lmcwhorter@Berkeleyca.gov

From: Savas, Jared <JSavas@oaklandca.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 12:23 PM
To: McWhorter, Laurie <LMcWhorter@berkeleyca.gov>; Merriouns, Iris <ILMerriouns@oaklandca.gov>
Cc: Wengraf, Susan <SWengraf@berkeleyca.gov>
Subject: RE: EBWC Chair Requests Your Response

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Laurie,

I'm so sorry for the delay in responding but I did hear from the Councilmember today. Do you need her vote on just the Year 1 Fee Structure or both Year 1 and Year 2? It looks from your message that it's just Year 1, but she wanted to confirm this was the case. Let me know and I'll have an answer from her later today.

Take care, Jared

Jared Savas (he/him)

Office of Councilmember Janani Ramachandran
Oakland City Council | District 4
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza | Oakland, CA 94612
Office: 510-238-7273 | Cell: 339-237-0635
Email: jsavas@oaklandca.gov

From: McWhorter, Laurie <LMcWhorter@berkeleyca.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 20, 2024 5:41 PM
To: Savas, Jared <JSavas@oaklandca.gov>; Merriouns, Iris <ILMerriouns@oaklandca.gov>
Cc: Wengraf, Susan <SWengraf@berkeleyca.gov>
Subject: EBWC Chair Requests Your Response

Dear Chief of Staff Merriouns and Jared,

I hope Councilmember Ramachandran is doing well on her maternity leave. I spoke with her before her leave and she approved of the First Year Fee Schedule listed in the attached report. She planned on attending the Nov 14th East Bay Wildfire Coalition meeting to vote accordingly, however, could not attend because she fell ill.

The EBWC Chair needs Councilmember Ramachandran's written approval of the Year-1 Fee Structure in order for members to request approval from their agency. Could you read the email below and see if there is a way to provide that approval?

Thank you,
Laurie

Laurie McWhorter, Legislative Aide

Office of Susan Wengraf, Vice Mayor and District 6 Councilmember

(510) 981-7160

lmcwhorter@berkeleyca.gov

From: McWhorter, Laurie

Sent: Wednesday, November 20, 2024 5:01 PM

To: Ramachandran, Janani <jramachandran@oaklandca.gov>; Savas, Jared <JSavas@oaklandca.gov>

Cc: Wengraf, Susan <SWengraf@berkeleyca.gov>

Subject: EBWC First Year Fee Structure Approval

Dear Councilmember Ramachandran,

I hope this email finds you well.

At the November 14, 2024 EBWC meeting the East Bay Wildfire Coalition voted unanimously on the motion to *“Recommend the Year-1 fee structure noted in the report, subject to each agency’s governing board approving it for that agency.”*

Per advice from EBWC’s attorney, the motion’s approval is contingent on the Chair receiving written confirmation from every Member not in attendance, that they agree to the proposed Year-1 fee structure.

I have attached the Fee Structure for your review. Both Year-1 and Year-2 were approved unanimously by all members who attended the October 21, 2024 meeting, but not all who were not in attendance. Since the MOU requires fee structure approval by 100% of members, the November motion and vote approved just the Year-1 Fee Structure.

Please reply with a yes or no vote to the fee structure motion at your soonest convenience.

Thank you,

Laurie

Laurie McWhorter, Legislative Aide

Office of Susan Wengraf, Vice Mayor and District 6 Councilmember

(510) 981-7160

lmcwhorter@berkeleyca.gov

McWhorter, Laurie

From: Alex Walker-Griffin <awalker-griffin@herculesca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 12, 2024 8:41 AM
To: McWhorter, Laurie; Jon Kaufman
Cc: John Gioia; Robert Rogers; John Gioia
Subject: Re: EBWC Chair Requests Your Response

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

I apologize for the late response. This was my junk mail. I am so sorry. Yes, you have my approval.

Sincerely,

Alex Walker-Griffin

Councilman, City of Hercules

He,Him,His

(510) 367-2958

Sent with [Spark](#)

On Dec 11, 2024 at 13:59 -0800, Jon Kaufman <jonk@solem.com>, wrote:

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Council member Walker-Griffin,

Please note that we are not asking you for a commitment on behalf of the City of Hercules to pay anything at this time. We are simply asking you to agree with the EBWC dues structure after which the Hercules city will be able to consider a payment.

Please call me with any questions. 510-644-0771.

Jon Kaufman, Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 11, 2024, at 11:37 AM, McWhorter, Laurie <LMcWhorter@berkeleyca.gov> wrote:

Hi Councilmember Walker-Griffin,

Following up on the voicemail I just left you, please review and consider the first year East Bay Wildfire Coalition fee structure in the attached document. The fees for Hercules in year one (1) would be \$3,000. Fees for subsequent years will come up for a vote in the future. Please reply with a yes or no vote to the motion below, made and approved unanimously at the November 20th EBWC meeting.

“Recommend the Year-1 fee structure noted in the report, subject to each agency’s governing board approving it for that agency.”

I have copied the new EBWC Chair, Supervisor John Gioia, his District Coordinator, Robert Rogers, and EBWC’s co-founder, and Jon Kaufman should you need any additional information.

Thank you,
Laurie

Laurie McWhorter

Legislative Aide

Office of Councilmember Susan Wengraf

Lmcwhorter@Berkeleyca.gov

(510) 981-7160

From: McWhorter, Laurie

Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 11:46 AM

To: awalker-griffin@herculesca.gov

Cc: Wengraf, Susan <SWengraf@berkeleyca.gov>

Subject: EBWC Chair Requests Your Response

Hi Councilmember Walker-Griffin,

I am following up on my email below. Please provide written approval to recommend the EBWC Year-1 fee structure noted in the attached report, subject to each agency’s governing board approving it for that agency.

You are the last EBWC Board Member that we are waiting on for approval of the recommendation. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me. I’ve also attached the November EBWC minutes for your convenience.

Thank you,
Laurie

Laurie McWhorter

Legislative Aide to Susan Wengraf

Vice Mayor & District 6 Councilmember

Lmcwhorter@Berkeleyca.gov

From: McWhorter, Laurie

Sent: Wednesday, November 20, 2024 5:20 PM

To: awalker-griffin@herculesca.gov

Cc: Wengraf, Susan <SWengraf@berkeleyca.gov>

Subject: EBWC Chair Requests Your Response

Dear Councilmember Alex Walker-Griffin,

I hope this email finds you well.

At the November 14, 2024 EBWC meeting the East Bay Wildfire Coalition voted unanimously on the motion to *“Recommend the Year-1 fee structure noted in the report, subject to each agency’s governing board approving it for that agency.”*

Per advice from EBWC’s attorney, the motion’s approval is contingent on the Chair receiving written confirmation from every Member not in attendance, that they agree to the proposed Year-1 fee structure.

I have attached the Fee Structure for your review. Both Year-1 and Year-2 were approved unanimously by all members who attended the October 21, 2024 meeting, but not all who were not in attendance. Since the MOU requires fee structure approval by 100% of members, the November motion and vote approved just the Year-1 Fee Structure.

Please reply with a yes or no vote to the fee structure motion at your soonest convenience.

Thank you,
Laurie

Laurie McWhorter, Legislative Aide
Office of Susan Wengraf, Vice Mayor and District 6 Councilmember
(510) 981-7160
lmcwhorter@berkeleyca.gov

<EBWC Fee Structure Final Draft.pdf>

East Bay Wildfire Coalition of Governments (EBWC)

Member Fee Structure

APPROVED

for EBWC Board Members to bring to their governing bodies to approve for their agency

November 14, 2024

The effort to create the EBWC has been largely driven by volunteers, with professional consulting help that has been financed by funds raised by the coalition. Now that the EBWC is formed, the EBWC needs to decide how its work will be supported in the future.

To do the work envisioned, some professional help will be needed for the organizing, program development, fundraising and management work required to meet the goals of the strategic framework.

The proposed 1-year fee structure below is a revision to the proposals presented at the September 23rd meeting, based on member input. The fee structure below was approved at the November 14th meeting for EBWC Board Members to bring to their governing bodies for approval. As noted in the MOU, the fee structure must be approved by 100% of members.

A budget of \$75,000 for year FY 2025 was proposed, given budget timelines and the urgent need for funding.

The two counties carry the majority (60%) of the total fees annually; their share is split equally. The remaining 40% is split between the local member jurisdictions* based on population size. There is a proposed minimum fee of \$3,000 for all members.

	<i>Population</i>	<i>Year-1 (FY 2025)</i>
Alameda County	<i>1,629,000</i>	\$25,000
CC County	<i>1,157,000</i>	\$25,000
Berkeley	<i>125,327</i>	\$3,750
El Cerrito	<i>25,700</i>	\$3,000
Hercules	<i>25,920</i>	\$3,000
Oakland	<i>425,093</i>	\$9,000
Pinole	<i>18,192</i>	\$3,000
Richmond	<i>112,735</i>	\$3,250
		\$75,000

* The Rodeo Hercules Fire District is not envisioned to pay any fees. It will soon be subsumed into Contra Costa Fire Protection District.

East Bay Wildfire Coalition of Governments (EBWC)

Interest Areas:



Strengthen **building and fire codes** and adherence



Support science-driven regional **vegetation management** priorities



Advocate for local, county and state **legislation**



Support **evacuation & response** programs



Secure new **funding** for regional priorities



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”



Focus: 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

Members (Autumn 2024)

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Representative</u>
Alameda County	Supervisor Elisa Marquez
Contra Costa County	Supervisor John Gioia
Berkeley	Vice Mayor Susan Wengraf (Chair)
El Cerrito	Councilmember Paul Fadelli
Hercules	Councilmember Alex Walker-Griffin
Oakland	Councilmember Janani Ramachandran (Vice Chair)
Pinole	Mayor Maureen Toms
Richmond	Councilmember Gayle McLaughlin
Rodeo-Hercules FPD	Vice Chair Marie Bowman

Fire Chiefs:

All member jurisdictions’ Fire Chiefs advise and participate in all EBWC meetings

Regional Advisors:

UC Berkeley, LBNL, EBMUD, EBRPD, Diablo Firesafe Council, East Bay FireSafe Alliance

Founding Mission:

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 of the San Francisco Bay Area.

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.