

CENTRAL MARIN FIRE COUNCIL

APPROVED MINUTES OF MAY 9, 2019

REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
FIRE COUNCIL OF THE CENTRAL MARIN FIRE AUTHORITY

HELD AT
THE COMMUNITY ROOM AT THE CENTRAL MARIN POLICE AUTHORITY

250 DOHERTY DRIVE
LARKSPUR, CA 94939

ON
THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2019
AT 6:30 P.M.

(or upon conclusion of the Police Council meeting, whichever is later)

ROLL CALL

The Regular Meeting of the Fire Council of the Central Marin Fire Authority was called to order at 6:55 p.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Catherine Way, Chair, City of Larkspur
Bob Ravasio, Vice Chair, Town of Corte Madera
Sloan Bailey, Council Member, Town of Corte Madera
Larry Chu, Council Member, City of Larkspur

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

STAFF PRESENT:

Todd Cusimano, Corte Madera Town Manager
Dan Schwarz, Larkspur City Manager
Scott Shurtz, Fire Chief
Daria Carrillo, Finance Manager
Nick Gabbard, Larkspur Fire Representative
Tom Timmer, Corte Madera Fire Representative
Tom Bertrand, Authority Counsel
Rebecca Vaughn, Authority Clerk

STAFF ABSENT:

None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Chair Way asked if any members of the public would like to address the Council, and there were

no speakers.

PRESENTATIONS:

There were no presentations.

REPORTS AND COMMENTS

A. COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Chair Way reported that she was asked to join the board of FIRESafe MARIN and she accepted the invitation. At the next meeting, they will introduce two new board members; herself and Stephen Quarles. She hopes to use this opportunity to further many of the policies that FIRESafe MARIN is getting underway in the county.

Chair Way further reported that the Governor's Status Report on Catastrophic Wildfires, Climate Change and California's Energy Future was just published. The League of California Cities, the League of California Counties and the Governor will host a symposium on this subject on June 3rd. The report was recently published, and she encouraged everyone to read it.

B. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Dan Schwarz reported that the Grand Jury has issued its report about wildfire safety. The report can be viewed and downloaded from the Grand Jury's website. There is a lot of interesting, good information about lessons learned from the various fires that have occurred in the North Bay and in Paradise. There are some errors in the solutions part of the section, and the cities may try to have a uniform response, explaining to the Grand Jury that they got some of the analysis wrong in the part about taxation and funding. But this report is geared toward analyzing and advocating for the county-wide solution that the Marin Fire Chief has been promoting, which is to create an entity that would carry out wildfire prevention by doing a lot of brush clearing, particularly in the unincorporated areas. He reported that he has been participating on a working group that Matthew Hymel from the County has organized to figure out how to make this happen administratively and bring something to policy makers throughout the County.

He further reported that the Fire Chief will be requesting an extension to the deadline for approving a response to the Grand Jury report since the next regular meeting of the Fire Council is scheduled to take place after the July 18, 2019, response deadline.

C. CHIEF'S COMMENTS

Chief Shurtz reported that Todd Cusimano asked him to provide a new org chart for the coming fiscal year, and he distributed the chart to the Council members for their review. He pointed out that the two lighter gray boxes are Kentfield employees, although they work with Central Marin Fire, and so they do fill operational roles in our organization. The other notable item is that the Captain 15, Engineer 15 and Firefighter Medic 15 on each shift is new, having the three people at station 15.

Chair Way inquired about the Nurse Educator position. Chief Shurtz responded that the Nurse Educator is Liz Froneberger. She was previously working for Corte Madera Fire. She is a half time employee. CMFA has a relationship with Kaiser Hospital, and she is actually a Kaiser employee.

The Authority funds half of her position and she spends half of her time at Corte Madera Fire doing CQI, continuous quality improvement, and nurse education. CMFA also works with the Nurse Educator and the CQI specialist for RVPA and Marin County Fire, and what they do is divide and conquer their roles and do a little bit of work for both agencies just based on their specialties.

Chair Way called for any questions from the public on the org chart. Seeing none, she called for the next item on the agenda, the Consent Calendar.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Chair Way called for requests for any items to be removed from the Consent Calendar for discussion. Seeing none, she called for a motion.

- A. Approve Resolution No. 2019/13 to Tax Defer Member Paid California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) Retirement Contributions
- B. Acknowledge and File Central Marin Fire Authority's Accounts Payable Check Listing for April 2019
- C. Approve Minutes of March 22, 2019 Special Fire Council Meeting

There was a motion and a second (Ravasio/Bailey) to approve the Consent Calendar. The motion was approved unanimously.

BUSINESS ITEMS

- A. Approval of Resolution No. 2019/14 Adopting the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Central Marin Fire Authority Budget**

Recommendation: that Council receives the presentation and approves the Resolution adopting the FY 2019-20 budget for the Central Marin Fire Authority

Finance Manager Daria Carrillo introduced the proposed budget for the 2019-20 Fiscal Year. She presented a spread sheet summarizing the proposed revenue and expenses, followed by a page that breaks down proposed revenue and expenses in more detail. She reported that the budget for 2019-20 has increased by nearly one million dollars over the budget for the current fiscal year, 11.7%, but about half of that increase has to do with expenditures that were previously paid by Larkspur and Corte Madera, now being paid by the Fire Authority. The main expense is the insurance transfer. Central Marin Fire, is a member of Bay Cities JPIA, as are Larkspur and Corte Madera. Bay Cities JPIA is a pool for insurance and in past years, Larkspur and Corte Madera paid the premiums for the workers' compensation, as well as the general liability and property insurance. This year, that has been transferred to Central Marin Fire Authority. So that \$422,000 line item is the cost transferred to the insurance fund. That includes the premiums, and also \$70,000 in claims, in case any claims arise. A separate insurance fund has been established to track insurance expenses.

Finance Manager Carrillo further explained that although the Fire Authority, and indirectly, the City of Larkspur and the Town of Corte Madera, will pay that \$422,000, the premiums for the individual agencies will decrease. In Corte Madera's case, it will decrease by about \$100,000, and although she was not sure about Larkspur's decrease, she stated that she received a spreadsheet from Bay Cities JPIA which indicated it would decrease about \$140,000.

In addition, Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA) costs that were paid by the agencies in the past were also transferred to the Fire Authority in this year, and that amounts to about \$67,000. The remaining portion of the increase has to do with, but not limited to, salaries and benefits. There is a 2% increase to the salary schedule that is included, step increases that are scheduled, PERS retirement that is included, and currently three vacant positions that are included, although they have not yet been filled.

Most of the other costs are flat. Supplies increased 3% overall, because costs typically go up every year. She also reported that there is a surplus projected for the current fiscal year of about \$189,000 and that is related to overtime reimbursement from the State of California for emergency response. Even though overtime has exceeded the budget, because there was an emergency response, the State is reimbursing the Fire Authority for those costs. She stated that \$657,000 had been received in reimbursement, at the time of budget preparation, but currently the total reimbursement received is at \$704,000. And that is because often times the numbers cross fiscal years, so that is why there is the surplus. Regarding the \$189,000 currently listed as a surplus, if that actually does materialize, staff will be asking to transfer that to the insurance fund in order to fund an insurance reserve.

Chair Way asked how much has been billed so far for emergency wildfire responses. Chief Shurtz responded that the Authority has billed the State for \$737,000, and has received nearly all of the requested reimbursement.

Chair Way called for any questions from Council for staff.

Council member Chu stated that he often finds fund accounting in public sector kind of odd, because if you really wanted to match up something that is a reimbursement, it's really an offset, as opposed to an actual expense that you accrue. Finance Manager Carrillo responded that she has asked the auditors about that in the past, and they have advised that it is generally not recommended to abate expenditures in government accounting, that it is best to book it as revenue. The possible reason being so you can find it later, so you can run reports of State reimbursement for overtime cost, rather than having to comb through the payroll expenditures looking for it. The auditors advised her to do it this way.

Chair Way asked if they anticipate in the Governor's new budget that the reimbursements for out of county work in the wildland fire time will be greater this year. Chief Shurtz responded that it is hard to know for sure, it depends on how significant the fire season is. He stated that we are in the last year of the CFAA agreement so everybody is anticipating that getting renegotiated for the next wildfire season. And the feds right now are actually posturing to change the agreement prior to the expiration of the CFAA and there is a lot of talk about that amongst the fire chiefs. Most of our responses are for state incidents. Our firefighter do also go to federal incidents, but the lion's share are state incidents.

Chair Way then called for any questions from the public. Seeing none, she called for a motion.

There was a motion and a second (Bailey/Ravasio) to adopt Resolution No. 2019/14 adopting the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Central Marin Fire Authority Budget. The motion was approved unanimously.

B. Approval of Resolution No. 2019/15 Identifying the Terms and Conditions for Fire Department Response Away From the Official Duty Station and Assigned to an Out-Of-County Emergency Incident

Recommendation: that Council discuss and approve the Resolution as presented

Chief Shurtz reported that the requested resolution is a housekeeping item. A similar resolution already exists for Larkspur and Corte Madera and he is bringing this request forward because, as a new agency, he anticipates that the State will require the same from CMFA. It is a requirement from the State OES to acknowledge that if they are to reimburse CMFA for portal to portal responses, which means staff are on the clock as soon as they leave do not get off the clock until they are back and available for local response, that we have that memorialized in an MOU. State OES wants to ensure that they are paying CMFA for what we are paying our employees. The language in the resolution is what is required by State OES.

Chair Way called for any questions from Council for staff.

Council member Bailey inquired about the \$739,000 that was invoiced for reimbursement during the last fire season. It is greater than the amount listed as revenue from State OES. Chief Shurtz responded that they are still waiting on reimbursement for a couple of incidents.

Councilmember Bailey asked if State OES ever pushes back on numbers provided or tries to negotiate reimbursements. Chief Shurtz responded that they never push back on the numbers if they are accurate but the amount of time it can take to receive the reimbursements varies. A salary survey is submitted every year so that the reimbursement request is based on accurate salaries.

Chair Way then any questions from the public. Seeing none, she called for a motion.

There was a motion and a second (Ravasio/Chu) to adopt Resolution No. 2019/15 identifying the Terms and Conditions for Fire Department Response Away From the Official Duty Station and Assigned to an Out-Of-County Emergency Incident. The motion was approved unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There was a motion and a second (Bailey/Ravasio) to adjourn the meeting.

The Council adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m. to the next regular meeting scheduled for August 8, 2019.

Rebecca Vaughn, Authority Clerk
Central Marin Fire Council