

Minutes from the January 28th, 2021, Bolinas Fire Protection District Board Meeting, Via Zoom.

Pres. Molesworth called the meeting of the Bolinas Fire Protection District to order at 7:02 P.M. Vice Pres. Kimball, Dir. Torrey, Dir. Dunne, and Dir. Martinelli were present. Also present: Chief Krakauer and Administrative Manager Isaac Taylor

MSC Torrey/Kimball (unan.) to approve the Agenda with the amendment to move items 5a and 5b to the beginning of the meeting.

Discussion – FIRESafe Bolinas (John Cozzi, Mark Fraser, and Jonna Alexander-Green)

Pres. Molesworth welcomed John Cozzi, Mark Fraser, and Jonna Alexander-Green, and asked them to introduce the project they have been developing to the full Board of Directors.

John Cozzi began by reading the group's mission statement, "Wildfire Safe Bolinas is a nonprofit community initiative formed to address hazardous conditions that pose a risk to Bolinas. Our aims are to enlist community-wide participation to protect our town and its unique character from major loss due to wildfire; contribute to sustainable management of an eventual eradication of hazardous invasive tree species in the Bolinas community, including the eucalyptus, especially along the evacuation route, community refuge areas, and other hazardous locations, while respecting and preserving heritage trees; restore native and fire-safe, less volatile vegetation in areas affected by the removal of hazardous trees, while retaining the integrity and health of native wildlife habitat and the natural, biodiverse beauty of our Bolinas peninsula (butterfly tree stands would be preserved as well); and to educate our community and citizens throughout West Marin about defensible space, wildfire-safe practice, native flora and fauna of our Bolinas bioregion."

Jonna Alexander-Green delivered prepared remarks, describing fourteen areas of blue gum eucalyptus identified by an arborist as posing potential danger to Bolinas, recommending their removal, and requesting the support of the Bolinas Fire Department for this project by way of resource allocation and/or fiscal sponsorship. Jonna acknowledged the enormous size of undertaking eucalyptus grove removal, but stated that the group sees the project as an opportunity for education and community engagement. Jonna noted that the group was prepared to undertake all required fundraising.

Pres. Molesworth clarified that this is an initial discussion only, with no actions or decisions by the board of directors or Bolinas Fire Protection District.

John Cozzi described a troubling "intuitive vision" he had in the wake of the Tubbs Fire in Sonoma County, of a similar event devastating the town of Bolinas. He described their group's extensive vegetation management and fuel reduction outline as requiring "a whole lot of work and a whole lot of money." He stated that he believes that the hurdles of finance and community opposition could be overcome. As to the opposition, John noted his appreciation for their intentions and love of the eucalyptus, but remarked that all trees on the group's list posed a specific threat due to poor health, proximity to structures or power lines, or encroachment on egress, and that if every identified tree were removed, approximately 60-70% of eucalyptus on the Bolinas peninsula would remain. John ended by arguing that the time is right to undertake this project cooperatively, and that it has been "put on the back burner for far too long."

Mark Fraser noted the potential existential threat from events like last summer's Woodward Fire, the increasing threats associated with climate change, and the immediate need for cooperation with the District to mitigate these risks.

Pres. Molesworth asked for questions from the board of directors.

Vice Pres. Kimball asked the group for their opinion on fuel reduction in the understory, rather than tree removal. He noted the high cost of removal, as well as legal barriers to removal projects posed by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). John Cozzi agreed that in some cases this type of fuel reduction is an acceptable alternative, but that burning in the canopy remains a significant risk due to ailing trees. John admitted his unfamiliarity with CEQA, but stated that the group will get educated about these requirements.

Dir. Torrey asked about the request for fiscal sponsorship. Jonna responded that the group believes that partnering with the Bolinas Fire Department could be ideal, but that they are also just asking for support.

Pres. Molesworth and Vice Pres. Kimball clarified that the Bolinas Fire Protection District is not legally permitted to serve as a fiscal sponsor, but that the Bolinas Volunteer Firefighters Association is a 501(c)3 nonprofit, and could theoretically function this way, but lacks the administrative and managerial expertise to serve as a fiscal sponsor. Jonna noted that the group is also considering pursuing a 501(c)3 designation.

Dir. Martinelli gave appreciation for the level of interest shown by the group and community, and recommended investigating Firewise communities, a program of the National Fire Protection Association. Vice Pres. Kimball echoed this recommendation, and noted several Marin communities are already Firewise communities. Vice Pres. Kimball urged the group to be very thoughtful about using community resources, noting the multifaceted and ongoing nature of wildfire preparedness, regardless of any particular fuel removal or reduction initiative.

Chief Krakauer commended John, Mark, and Jonna for their efforts toward community-based preparedness. He expressed support for community-based preparedness, and cautioned that we proceed at a speed which allows us to take everything into account. He noted that he will be meeting with the group and representatives from FIRESafe Marin.

Vice Pres. Kimball clarified that his comments are not intended to suggest opposition to wildfire risk mitigation, and he acknowledged the town has a longstanding need to address these risks. He urged everyone to constructively pitch in for the shared goal of preserving the town.

Dir. Martinelli recommended reviewing the new 2021 Marin Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) available through the FIRESafe Marin website.

Pres. Molesworth opened up the discussion to public comment. Dale Polissar expressed skepticism about the possibility of a devastating wildfire in Bolinas, noting significantly different conditions from areas like Paradise, CA. He also noted his personal appreciation for the character of eucalyptus trees. Mark Fraser stated his opinion that Bolinas will ultimately face a choice between keeping eucalyptus trees and preserving the town, noting the increasing risk factors of climate change and extremely low humidity. Judy Molyneux commented that wildfire could still pose an existential threat to Bolinas, even if some eucalyptus trees are removed. She suggested alternate mitigation strategies, such

as fire towers and utilizing water drops from Bolinas Lagoon. Pamela Dake expressed gratitude for everyone's care and concern, and expressed hope that the town can come together to make evacuation routes and the town safer. Eleanor Lyman also expressed gratitude for the efforts toward improved safety, but gave her support for mitigation efforts which do not contribute to deforestation, noting the benefits trees represent for wildlife and air quality. Rick Gordon echoed Eleanor's sentiments, acknowledged the need for risk mitigation, and advocated for a fuel-reduction plan with a more limited scope for tree removal. Rick also argued for separating the issues of fire safety and native plants.

Discussion – Sirens (Judith Shaw)

Judith Shaw stated that her focus is less on saving the town, but rather saving lives in the case of a wildfire or other emergency. She recalled that two years ago, she arranged a visit to Bolinas by a representative of Colorado-based Sentry Sirens. She noted the potential extreme danger posed by limited exit routes from Bolinas, and gave the cautionary example of the fatal 1991 fire in the Berkeley Hills. Recalling the successful efforts to raise money for the construction of the Bolinas Fire Station, she expressed confidence that money could be raised to finance installation of sirens. She referred to the possibility of partial funding through a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant program. Judith reiterated her strong belief in the need for sirens, and urged the District to seriously investigate the possibility of acquiring such a system.

Pres. Molesworth thanked Judith Shaw for bringing her concerns before the board, and asked Vice Pres. Kimball to summarize the related work he has been doing as a board member of the newly-designated Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA). Vice Pres. Kimball noted that the new tax-funded agency will receive approximately \$20 million per year for the next ten years. These funds will be allocated as follows: 60% for core projects (wildfire detection, evacuation, and improvements; grants for defensible space projects; public education), 20% for defensible space evaluations; 20% to local fire agencies. Kimball noted that MWPA is currently working on countywide detection and evacuation coordination as a top-priority project.

Pres. Molesworth asked Dir. Martinelli to share his perspective on discussions within Marin County Fire regarding sirens. Dir. Martinelli noted that sirens are one tool for emergency notification, with certain benefits and disadvantages. He agreed that MWPA are researching many different emergency tools, and may recommend sirens in some cases. However, he cautioned for the need to work in alignment with the county, to ensure that our systems are fully interoperable with countywide systems.

Pres. Molesworth asked Chief Krakauer to explain the rollout of NOAA emergency weather radios. Chief Krakauer noted that several radios were obtained from FIRESafe Marin, and information has been added to the District website about the radio functions and purchasing instructions. Chief Krakauer explained that the District can relay a detailed message to the Marin Office of Emergency Services, which would go out to these radios with an emergency alert. In the case of a power outage, radios operate with batteries. Vice Pres. Kimball noted that the radios can potentially interface with the county's evacuation system in the near future, highlighting an advantage of an integrated approach to emergency preparedness.

Judith Shaw acknowledged the advantages of emergency radios, but voiced her concern that radios may not reach everyone in town at the time of an emergency. She noted that the Sentry Sirens operate on batteries, and again advocated for the opportunity through

the USDA grant program. Pres. Molesworth highlighted the purpose of MWPA to establish standard wildfire prevention measures countywide. Judith Shaw acknowledged the value of this approach, but cautioned that sometimes an individual town may need to act on its own to address its own unique needs. Judith Shaw thanked the directors, Fire Chief, and Isaac Taylor for the discussion opportunity, and was thanked in return for bringing this important discussion to the board.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

No additional general public expression.

CHIEF'S REPORT

MERA

Chief Krakauer attended the MERA meeting on Thursday, January 28th. It was repeated that mobile installations for Next Gen will begin in February, and the District will be working with MERA technologists to get engines in and out of the shop for installation. All bid packages have been released and are open for bids on site upgrades and new sites. Notable, the bid for a Muir Beach repeater was approved, which will provide improved radio coverage for the Bolinas and Stinson Beach.

Prevention

Chief Krakauer discussed District wildfire preparedness and response in item 4e.

Roads

Chief Krakauer delivered comments from the District to a Marin County traffic engineer recommending minor changes to sign location and striping for pedestrian access areas along Terrace Avenue. The District avoided making comments on more controversial proposals from some residents. Chief Krakauer spoke to the same engineer and County sign officials about potential placement of a sign near the Bolinas wye where several vehicles have gone into the ditch following a wide left turn. Chief Krakauer spoke with one of the BCPUD Downtown Parking Committee members about recent work on parking ordinances and new 'No Parking' signs at Brighton and Wharf. The member also noted the recent installation of a new stop sign downtown, as well as ongoing discussions around adding speed bumps on Brighton and Wharf roads. Chief Krakauer addressed two instances of vegetation encroachment on Little Mesa in an effort to keep the road clear.

Inspections

The District conducted two inspections of existing private water systems on Horseshoe Hill Road for new property owners.

Planning

No update.

Grants

Chief Krakauer and Isaac Taylor have been working on a regional application for the FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant program, to obtain new self-contained breathing apparatus for Bolinas, Stinson Beach, Muir Beach, Inverness, and Nicasio Fire departments. The grant proposal will be submitted before the February 12th deadline.

Training

With in-person trainings currently suspended due to COVID-19 precautions, we continue to focus on virtual EMT trainings using the Target Solutions online platform. In addition, a Zoom meeting last week focused on calls involving an altered level of consciousness.

Volunteers

Payment has been submitted for AirMedCare Network membership, and we are awaiting confirmation and further details. Isaac Taylor added information on the AirMedCare Network air ambulance insurance to the District website.

Apparatus

Engine 283 and Utility 232 are temporarily out-of-service with electrical problems. Repairs by Joe Walker and Ian Johnson are scheduled for Sunday, after which the vehicles are expected to return to service. A small fire on engine 283 was averted by early detection of the problem.

Disaster Council

No update.

Resource Recovery

No update.

Buildings and Grounds

Asst. Chief Steve Marcotte and Capt. Pete Smith have completed pads for the new training container. Pete has begun building out the interior for controlled-burn simulations for volunteer trainings. Steve is working on standard operating procedures for the container and coordinating with Bay Area Air Quality Management District to ensure compliance.

General Operations/Administration

Chief Krakauer reported approximately ten calls for downed trees and power lines due to a storm on the night of Tuesday, January 26th, which resulted in a power outage of approximately four hours. PG&E technicians were quick to respond and restore power.

Chief Krakauer attended a meeting of the MWPA Operations Committee on Thursday, January 28th. Items covered included the formation of ad hoc committees for finance and the 2021 work plan; an update from Executive Officer Mark Brown on the board retreat which he, Operations Committee chair Bill Tyler, and Director Kimball attended; an update from Executive Coordinator Rich Shortall on FIRESafe Marin work; and a presentation by Todd Lando on the 2021 Marin Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).

Chief Krakauer and District staff met with UC Berkeley/UC Davis representatives and planned to move ahead with the traffic and communications study. Professor Thomas Maiorana provided a work plan schedule and provided an update on continuing work on the virtual simulation. The team plans to review progress in early February, with a goal of delivering the program to the community via Zoom soon thereafter.

Isaac has added information on NOAA Weather Radios to the District's website, and Asst. Chief Marcotte has purchased additional radios with Disaster Council funds to be distributed to area coordinators.

Chief Krakauer and Asst. Chief Marcotte met with Wildfire Safe Bolinas, formerly known as FireSafe Bolinas, to discuss wildfire preparedness. Evacuation roads, Community Refuge Areas, and NOAA radios were discussed.

Bolinas Fire Protection District continues to offer COVID-19 testing for volunteers and staff every other Monday from 9:00am to 10:00am. The testing procedure is easy, with results returned in less than 48 hours.

Marin HHS continues to offer weekly community testing for COVID-19 at the Bolinas Fire Station each Monday from 10:00am to 12:30pm. Director Martinelli, along with two other Marin County Fire staff, Isaac Taylor, and Bolinas Fire volunteers and staff have been assisting with supervision and registration each Monday. Testing is expected to continue indefinitely at the County's discretion.

Firefighters received their second round of COVID-19 vaccinations at the Marin Center location in San Rafael last week. Several firefighters have signed up to assist with vaccination efforts beginning this week. We plan to be reimbursed for these hours through FEMA and Marin County Sheriff's Office. Currently, vaccinations are open to Phase 1A groups (e.g. healthcare workers, residential care facility workers and residents, etc.) and Marin County residents 75 and older.

The annual SCBA flow testing was conducted on January 14th. Two packs were repaired at no cost and returned to us.

Chief Krakauer met with Bill Pierce of the BCPUD about the water shortage in Bolinas. Given the limited rainfall, rationing is likely and will be discussed in an upcoming meeting of the BCPUD.

Chief Krakauer met with Chiefs Weber, Stevens and Fox to discuss succession planning for the Inverness Fire Chief. The Inverness Public Utility District faces many of the same personnel challenges as Bolinas, including a lack of available employee housing. The Chiefs discussed the potential for shared services.

Stinson Beach Fire Protection District is hiring a new Duty Officer, with Anita Brown on the hiring panel. The first round of interviews occurred today.

Isaac Taylor gave an update on BFPD's annual audit. He is in communication with Nigro & Nigro, who have submitted the annual Financial Transactions Report to the State Controller's Office. The final audit package is expected around the beginning of February. No penalties or additional fees are anticipated.

Chief Krakauer obtained a new District iPhone for himself, as well as an iPad and iPhone for vehicle 219.

Chief Krakauer and Isaac Taylor continue to work with legal counsel to develop a policy for planned security cameras at the fire station.

Surfers' Overlook Repair/Terrace Avenue

No Update.

Personnel

No update.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Action Item #1 – Election of Officers

MSC Kimball/Torrey (unan.) to nominate Dir. Molesworth for President.

MSC Torrey/Martinelli (unan.) to nominate Dir. Kimball for Vice President.

Action Item #2 – Formation of Committees

MSC Kimball/Torrey (unan.) to approve existing Committees with the addition of Dir. Dunne to the Finance Committee.

Action Item #4 – Approve Regular Board Meeting Schedule for 2021

MSC Dunne/Martinelli (unan.) to approve the Board Meeting Schedule for 2021.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MSC Torrey/Kimball (unan.) to approve the Consent Calendar.

BOARD MEMBER REPORT

Last week, Vice Pres. Kimball attended the regular Board Meeting and a Board Retreat with the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority directors. The facilitated retreat included an opportunity for the 17 board members to meet one another in person, breakout sessions, and a full meeting to explore core values, governance policies, and integration with the Operations Committee. The group developed a vision and mission statement, which will be utilized as a foundation for developing a Strategic Plan and Tactical Plan at the next meeting. Dir. Kimball reported that the meeting and retreat went very well, with excellent facilitators, and that the board members are working very well and respectfully with one another in the pursuit of public service.

President Molesworth is in communication with County Counsel to deliver a primer on the Brown Act at the next regular Board Meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Personnel Committee – Chief Krakauer reported that the Personnel Committee met on January 25th for a general check-in and discussion of career development training. Dir. Torrey thanked Chief Krakauer and Dir. Martinelli for the meeting, and noted the importance of discussing the impacts of COVID-19 on District personnel and training. Dir. Torrey noted a need to review employee benefit policies at a meeting of the Personnel Committee before the end of this fiscal year.

Buildings and Grounds – No Update.

Operations Working Group –No Update.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

None.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Dir. Torrey thanked Pres. Molesworth for continuing to serve in her role as Board President. Vice Pres. Kimball and Dir. Martinelli echoed this appreciation.

ADJOURNMENT

MSC Dunne/Torrey (unan.) to adjourn at 9:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Isaac Taylor
Administrative Manager

Note: Minutes of all Board meetings are available for review at the Bolinas Library and on the District's website.