



Meeting Minutes

San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department Board of Directors Regular Meeting Wednesday, July 14, 2021 – 4:00 P.M. Zoom Video Teleconference

1. OPENING

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 pm by Board Chair Goethals.

1.3. Roll Call

Board Members Present: Goethals, Lieberman & Awasthi

Board Members Absent: None

2. AGENDA CHANGES

There were no agenda changes.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

4. CONSENT

Board Member Lieberman made a motion to approve the Consent calendar, which was seconded by Board Member Awasthi. The Acting Board Secretary took a roll call vote, and the Consent calendar items were approved 3-0.

Board Member Lieberman commented on Items 4.2 and 4.3 regarding purchase orders for Bus & Equipment and L.N. Curtis & Sons as sole vendors. He clarified with Interim Chief Thrasher that the department is working appropriately by not paying higher fees and is being financially prudent. Board Chair agreed.

5. NEW BUSINESS

Item 5.1 – Public Hearing adopting a resolution approving revisions to the San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department’s Master Fee Schedule in accordance with the NBS Fee Study Document.

Fire Marshal Marshall introduced Nicole Kissam and Lauren Guido from NBS. Both Nicole and Lauren shared a project overview of the Fee Study to the Board. Annual operational permits with and without California Fire Code (CFC) permits, including development plan review and inspection fees were studied. It was noted that per California Constitution and Government Code there are limitations to how fees can be set accordingly. The steps for the fee study included collection of data, review of the fee structure, a time study, analysis of full cost of service, which then becomes a report for fee setting policy and adoption. It was determined that the Bureau of Fire Protection & Life Safety currently recovers approximately 67% of the total annual cost of providing services. The Board was given the option to adopt all fees at 100% which would result in an additional \$945,000 in recoverable cost.

Additionally, Fire Marshal Marshall shared a Master Fee Schedule presentation detailing specifics pertaining to SMC Fire and further clarified the options for the Board to consider. The fee study by

NBS will allow for a more intuitive fee structure and allow us to charge appropriately for services rendered.

Board Member Goethals asked if there was any public comment on this item, which there were none.

Board Member Lieberman commented that Fire Marshal Marshall's presentation was helpful at clarifying what was done and why. While there are many changes, he agrees to raising the rates to full recovery. Furthermore, he requested that if there is any unexpected resistance, to please bring back to the Board to address. Board Member Awasthi reiterated that we should keep an eye on any unintended impacts. Regarding a timeline, she suggests a middle approach for less impacts. Board Chair Goethals requests a quarterly update on the fund balance.

Board Member Lieberman made a motion to adopt the resolution, which was seconded by Board Member Awasthi. The Acting Board Secretary took a roll call vote, and the resolution was approved 3-0.

Item 5.2 – Adopt a resolution authorizing the Fire Chief to hire up to an additional six (6) FTE firefighters in anticipation of future vacancies within the Department.

Interim Chief Thrasher provided an overview to the Board requesting to increase over hiring from four to six firefighters as we prepare for upcoming vacancies. Staying ahead of the vacancies helps with the length of time spent in a fire academy.

Board Chair Goethals asked if this impacts the request to the state for grant funded positions. Interim Chief Thrasher stated that grant requests twelve positions funded for 3 years which would not be needed for this fall. If we receive the grant, funding will come from that source. In addition to this topic, we are in the process of identifying if additional firefighters should be added in our full-time employee count.

Board Member Goethals asked if there was any public comment on this item, which there were none.

Board Member Lieberman made a motion to adopt the resolution, which was seconded by Board Member Awasthi. The Acting Board Secretary took a roll call vote, and the resolution was approved 3-0.

6. OLD BUSINESS

Item 6.1 - Adopt a resolution approving a Supplemental Budget Appropriation for Fiscal Year 2020-21 and to consider the options for providing a proportional allocation of operating contribution credit to member agencies.

Treasurer Rich Lee provided a presentation on the general fund Fiscal Year 2020-21 budget update as well as discussion regarding the operating contribution credit.

Currently, we are estimating the general fund expenditures at \$44.1 million which is a \$1.4 million difference. As described in the staff report, this is largely due to mutual aid deployment responses. The budget is made whole through deployment reimbursements from Cal OES and FEMA which is estimated at \$44.5 million in revenue. Request to the Board is to appropriate the reimbursement revenues to increase the operating overtime budget in the amount of \$1.4 million.

Regarding the operating contribution credit to member agencies, Treasurer Lee provided three options for the projected \$0.4 million in projected net surplus. As detailed in the staff report, option 1 allocates the projected surplus split 60/20/20 to the member agencies, option 2 uses reserves to total \$1.0 million to the member agencies, and option 3 recognizes the projected surplus as a net increase to fund balance.

Staff recommendation is to pursue option 3 that allows for financial flexibility which increases Fire's reserve from \$1.3 million to \$1.7 million.

Board Chair Goethals asked if there was more overtime than anticipated. Treasurer Lee agreed and stated that in order for the \$1.0 million to materialize, Fire had to leave 3 vacant firefighter positions unfilled, but doing so resulted in additional overtime costs to meet minimum staffing levels. Board Chair Goethals stated therefore we have contracted with former Chief Brian Kelly to address Fire's staffing needs. Interim Chief Thrasher agreed and stated the evaluation will review the costs of full-time firefighters in comparison to overtime filling vacancies. Another overtime factor is our increased workers' compensation claims.

Board Chair Goethals asked if there was any public comment on this item, which there were none.

Board Member Lieberman commented that option 3 is the financially prudent way to proceed and to build the reserves for the fire department.

Board Member Awasthi made a motion to adopt the ordinance, which was seconded by Board Member Lieberman. The Acting Board Secretary took a roll call vote, and the ordinance was approved 3-0.

7. REPORTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Interim Chief provided the following Chief and Operations update:

- Department continues to investigate the arrest of firefighter currently on administrative leave.
- Continue to exercise caution as COVID restrictions decrease.
- Call volumes have increase by 17% in comparison to last year.
- Eight members deployed to the Lava Fire near Shasta. This is the first deployment of the year in the two new Type 6 Fire Engines.
- Four members deployed to the Bootleg fire in Oregon.
- Four firefighter recruits from the Spring Academy graduated earlier this month and have been assigned at stations on July 3rd.
- Conditional offers to eight more recruits were made and we anticipate them starting in a Fall Academy in early September.
- AFSCME negotiations have begun and will bring back discussion seeking authority at a future meeting.
- We are awaiting the move in date for new Fire Station 25.
- We are monitoring the build process of our next three fire engines. In anticipation of their arrival, we have donated a 1997 Spartan engine to CCSF for use at their fire academy.
- The Firefighter Association's Chili Cook Off is back at San Mateo Central Park on August 28th.
- Lastly, we recognized retirement of Battalion Chief Chuck Goodwin. After a 32-year career that started with the Foster City Fire Department, Chief Goodwill will retire at the end of the month. He will be formally recognized at a future meeting.

Treasurer Lee shared a brief update on the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) project. A formal RFP was released in March and closed in April. Ten proposals were received through a multi-agency collaboration, including SMC Fire, and have narrowed it down to three proposals. We will go through system demonstrations starting the week of July 26 and will conclude on August 20. A vendor recommendation will be anticipated in late November to award contract.

Fire Marshal Marshall provided the following CRR update:

- The fire season has begun throughout the state we continue to monitor impacts locally.
- Fire Ordinance that past last meeting is now being implemented.
- Fee schedule update will allow us to move forward with improving the budget

- Local Hazard Mitigation (LHM) being steer headed by SMC for all three cities which is due at the end of the month. It will be followed by an overall county-wide disaster debris removal plan.
- In-person CERT, Get Ready & CPR/AED classes have returned.

8. CLOSED SESSION

The Fire Board went into Closed Session at 5:01 pm.

9. RETURN FROM CLOSED SESSION

Board Chair Goethals reconvened the meeting at 5:09 pm and announced the appointment of Interim Chief Kent Thrasher.

Legal Counsel Ross reported that the Board adjourned to Closed Session at 5:01 PM and concluded at 5:06 PM.

With respect to Closed Session Agenda Item No. 8.1., there was reportable action in the form of unanimous Board direction to postpone consideration for recruitment for a Department Fire Chief until January 2022 and to confirm the appointment of Interim Fire Chief, Kent Thrasher as Department Chief. Postpone for Chief until January 2022 and continue Thrasher as Chief until that time.

It was further indicated that a written Report Upon Return from Closed Session to confirm the oral report would be prepared consistent with the provisions of Government Code section 54957.1 for the matter agendized for Closed Session consideration.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 pm.