



Southern Marin Fire Protection District

308 Reed Boulevard
Mill Valley, California 94941

Phone: 415 388-8182

Fax: 415 388-8181

Measure U Oversight Committee Meeting

Monday, September 16, 2020

6:30 pm

Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER - Mr. Kessell called the meeting to order at 6:36 pm

In Attendance: *Committee Members (all via Zoom Meeting):* Leslie Hail, Jim Burns, David Kessell, Greg Norby. *Staff (all in person):* Fire Chief Tubbs, Deputy Fire Chief Peterson, Deputy Fire Chief Welch, Deputy Chief Fred Hilliard.

Absent: David Orleans

OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION - No members of the public present.

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

Mr. Kessell suggested the following Agenda Adjustments:

- a. Add Poll of the Committee at the end of the meeting.
- b. Reserve time for Agenda setting for the next meeting.
- c. Attempt to determine the time and date of the next meeting.

REPORTS

Mr. Kessell gave a brief summary of what occurred since the last meeting. The meeting in the Spring was cancelled, since it was too late to post agenda per the Brown Act. The issues to be discussed were the Charter and possible exceptions. Attorneys have reviewed the Charter, found no issues, just that we need a Resolution to formally adopt it. There was an offline discussion with Mr. Burns, Mr. Kessell and Chief Tubbs regarding scope and reports. It was decided that the next meeting does not have to wait until after the audit, so the meeting got scheduled for today. Chief Tubbs and Staff were working on proposal for reports that were asked for earlier.

1. Performance Metrics

a. Staff Report – Performance Metrics

Mr. Kessell and Chief Tubbs walked the committee through the metrics. They covered the six metrics in the report that correspond to the items that Measure U is funding. 2017 Fiscal Analysis by the District found that within 7-8 years our financial position would be such as to either require service reductions, or a new revenue stream. At the same time, community was requesting additional vegetation management work. In 2015 Deployment Analysis study, performed by an outside professional consultant, contained threats and hazards assessment and operational deployment model. So then, Measure U was passed. The first 5 metrics on our list are measuring the baseline levels of service, and the last one is based on the community request.

Each metrics is showing the “before” and “after” Measure U figures. Maintaining Local EMS services metric is done via Deployment Report and also Response Time Report. Chief Tubbs highlighted how the Response Time Report shows the improvement since Measure U.

These standards are not universal. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) provides high level standards and best practices, but acceptable risk levels are determined individually by the community they serve. That then determines funding, and levels of local emergency response resources.

Mr. Kessell pointed out that metrics are meant to show if we are doing what Measure U promised, determined annually. He also wanted to know when these standards were set? Chief Tubbs said that it likely goes back to when the agency was set up, and metrics used then were not the same, which was the reason for the 2015 Deployment Analysis. This covered our risks, threats, hazards, volume of calls, resources required to handle them, and also the anomalies (i.e. wildfires, storms). Response times were compiled by the consultant, and report recommended parameters for the turn-out times, and travel times. Report was presented at the Board meeting and the Board adopted response time standards.

The Committee members wanted to know, given the changes in the circumstances since 2015, are our deployment times and resources still adequate? Chief Welch mentioned that the Deployment Analysis Report has response times based on different types of incidents, and that the situation has actually not changed much in the last few years. Mr. Burns mentioned interest in tying the Tod Lando report to the Deployment report. Chief Tubbs said that the Lando report highlighted preparedness and prevention, reducing need for deployment. So, with the Lando report, as we apply Measure U and Measure C funds, we can address high priority areas/activities. Mr. Kessell brought the discussion back to the Measure U charter, which is about measuring success of Measure U funded items. He also thought that in the future, the committee might bring to the Board a question of whether deployment numbers are adequate in our current environment.

Mr. Kessell noted that the same Response Time Report is mentioned in several different metrics. He also wanted to know if we plan to break out reporting by different types of incidents (medial/fire/cardiac & stroke). Chief Tubbs said yes, and also said the industry standard per NFPA 1710 are “fractal response times” - filtering out misleading anomalies. That Records Management System used across Marin County has a number of pre-build reports, but not quite all we need, so we may need to manipulate further in Excel.

Mr. Kessell asked when we may have the first draft of the reports, and Chief Tubbs said that ETA is pending, will keep everyone updated. Mr. Kessell wanted to know more specifically what the response time is measuring? Chief Tubbs clarified that response time is a combination of a sequence of events, and begins with dispatch’s receipt of the 911 call. Dispatch is provided by Marin County Sheriff. Additionally, cell phones, unlike land lines, are first routed to the nearest CHP dispatch center and then to the Sheriff’s Dispatch. Mr. Kessell wanted to know if the Sheriffs Dispatch publishes response time reports, the answer was no, only by special request. In our metrics, the period from the receipt of the 911 call, up until a unit dispatched, is not included in our response time. The call is dispatched directly from 911 to the optimum unit(s). We should make a disclaimer about this in our report.

The next step, which is included in our metrics, is the “turn-out time” aka “reflex time”, which is the time from when a Station is alerted, and to when the unit has responded. The following step is “travel time”, which is from when the unit notifies that it is responding, to the time they arrive.

A lot of this is not within our control (i.e. traffic). Sometimes, if the unit is out in the field and responded from one incident to another, they may be closer and therefore have a better response time. Mr. Kessell noted that we should make all the caveats clear to the public within the report. Mr. Kessell also notes that the rest of the items 2-5 are similar in reporting structure and use some of the same reports between each other.

Chief Tubbs particularly called out the Qualified Paramedic report, which is shown “before and after” Measure U. He also noted that paramedics are the most easily lost resources, since those skills are so readily transferable. He also explained that Fire Fighters have additional responsibilities and qualifications, such as EMT or Paramedic. Chief Peterson stated that the report labeled “Measure U Qualified FFPM” counts paramedics, not EMTs, since Measure U specifically refers to “qualified paramedics”. EMTs are a less senior qualification. Paramedics are one of the most sought-after qualifications in California Fire Service, which is why Measure U counts them specifically.

Mr. Burns brought up the concept of comparing our metrics not just to our own past performance, but to performance of other comparable departments. Those metrics are not very available, so it would be a future goal. Chief Tubbs mentioned the possibility of achieving a similar goal via accreditation by the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE), which is comprehensive, but costly, and would take many years. It is on our long-term strategic plan. The Deployment Analysis we completed is a fraction of the process. Certification is also available to individuals, and we have several senior members who are certified, such as Chief Tubbs, Chief Welch, and Chief Peterson.

Ms. Hail asked about impact of COVID-19 on our staffing. Chief Tubbs said we had no lay-offs, nor do we forecast any. Based on analysis of 2008 recession, we isolated factors to watch and determined options to avoid layoffs. No one on our staff has been reported to have COVID-19, which is a testament to our infection control and patient screening efforts. There’s also been protective measures in place during wildfire response

2. Audit

a. Staff Report – Assessment and Conclusion of Audit Type

Measure U Ordinance calls for a financial audit. We recently completed a separate district 17/18 audit, and at the same time we worked with the auditors for the best way to address Measure U audit, especially for the Committee. Options were either a financial or a compliance audit. It was determined, after meeting with legal counsel and with the committee informally, that the financial audit best complies with the Ordinance. This is because compliance audit has to do with dedicated funding, and we do not have this situation. We will be recommending the financial audit option to the Board of Directors at an upcoming meeting of the BOD.

3. Measure U Final Budget and Annual Report

a. Staff Report – Budget Closeout & Annual Report Status

The Ordinance requires the Fire Chief to report a close-out of the Final Budget annually, and this will be presented at the upcoming Board of Directors Meeting. The fiscal year is July 1 to June 30. See the Board meeting packet for the September 23rd meeting which will be available on September 18th.

Mr. Kessell pointed that in the past, audits were not available for about fifteen months after year end close. However, this year, per Chief Tubbs, we should be able to have the audit by the end of this year, or early next year, which is a great improvement.

4. Measure U Annual Wildland Risk Reduction Report

a. FY 19-20 Vegetation Management Annual Report

This was presented by Chief Hilliard. The meeting packet has Risk Reduction Report slides, on Measure U Vegetation Management Program accomplishments. This year we have developed the program, by looking at existing programs in other locations. Chief Hilliard and Jim Casper got a planning grant and obtained a SMFD specific WUI hazards report by Tod Lando, which helps us determine what areas Measure U funded projects should be taking place. Our (SMFD) budget report this year describes where the money was spent. Areas of focus include paved road fuel reduction, chipper, fuel breaks, Firewise and Home Assessments. The biggest section of the projects, approximately \$230k, was spent on the Paved Road Fuel Reduction program. We had a strong focus on establishing Firewise communities, and completing home assessments. See meeting packet for full project breakdown.

Jim Burns wanted to be able to see a specific report section, maybe next year, as to how the projects corresponded to risk areas in the District. Chief Tubbs said that we plan to take the Lando report, and extrapolate a work plan, that we can then use to compare to expenditures. Also, when our defensible space inspectors come online, they will be incorporating their field observations.

Greg Norby spoke in support of us using a more advanced risk assessment to help prioritize vegetation management efforts, including types of activities. He suggested that report on the categories of the risk reduction activities, with established targets, be added to the Metrics Report. He also acknowledged the difficulties of working on various agencies' land, like PG&E, GGNRA, Caltrans, etc. Mr. Norby brought up the vegetation situation at the Tennessee Valley intersection.

Mr. Kessell would really like to see the 2020 & 2021 goals with quantitative objectives ASAP. He'd also like to see a chart how much will be funded by Measure C vs Measure U.

5. Southern Marin Fire Protection District WUI Wildfire Hazards & Risk Assessment Report

a. Discussion

Chief Hilliard presented high level notes for this substantial report. The report is based on CWPP for wildfire, but includes more specific data for the District area. This report includes historical data. Report looked at fuel loads, areas of potential risk, and flame length based on fuel characteristics. This report helped us pick the areas in the district that could have the worst fires, with regard to vegetation, so we can target our projects. This is a recurring activity, so we also prioritizing areas to maintain. Specifically, the Shoreline Highway area is being looked at, including partnering with Caltrans. We were planning to put a metrics in place this year, but COVID-19 changed the situation. The planning process continues and we will get there.

Chief Tubbs mentioned that of all of the Marin County agencies, only Novato has a similar report, and we are well equipped for a source of info to make decisions.

Greg Norby asked if anything would anything prevent the District for working on areas along the borders with GGNRA, issues resulting from rather dated GGNRA fire management documents with older CEQAs and environmental clearances? Chief Tubbs said that Mr. Norby was right to point out the issues of GGNRA/Dept. of Interior finances and admin processes. Chief also mentioned the push-back from the environmental community, once Measure C was passed. Chief Tubbs said that more detailed report information helps us with ability to influence and persuade.

Chief Hilliard added that we have a relationship with GGNRA, and they add our input to their vegetation management plan. We can then assist in clearing certain areas that they are subsequently willing and able to maintain.

David Kessell pointed out parcel-by-parcel breakdown in the report, and wanted to know when we might have a related schedule? Chief Hilliard said it probably be in April, since we have recently received the report and it takes time to set up the priority setting system. We are tracking inspection data and project data, but it's more than one system, so is complex, but is a priority. The Committee members hoping to have this sooner than April, even if a partial plan. Mr. Kessell suggested maybe getting short term professional assistance.

Mr. Norby noted unavailability lack of ignition data (cause of the fire), and why it was not available? Answer is not currently available.

3. Wrap-Up

a) Mr. Kessell asked Chief Tubbs if he has a clear view of the things that the Committee would like to see in the future, or would the Chief like something like a vote or specification? Mr. Burns wanted to know if they are to provide opinions. The Chief said we were clear on the valuable feedback received tonight, but it does not need to be in form of opinion, based on the Committee's established role. Our goal is to provide the Committee with requested involvement in the six Measure U Metrics.

b) Next meeting date is Wednesday November 18th, 2020

Agenda to include:

- Discussion of the Annual Finance report. It's an SMFD report, which contains Measure U income/expenditures.
- Progress on the metrics.
- Interim progress on turning Lando report into action plan/analysis etc.

c) Poll of the Committee

- *Greg Norby* – Expressed appreciation of the fire department crews doing home inspections. He commented on big improvement on several properties in Marinview areas. He recommended County-Wide cooperative GIS Consortium if we need assistance with information management.
- *Leslie Hail* - Complimented everyone for prevention efforts during this difficult year.
- *Jim Burns* – Echoed what Ms. Hail said, and said he is excited about the direction we are taking in managing fire risk.
- David Kessell – Thanked Chief Tubbs for working with the Committee, especially on the the initial stages of Committee setup and function.

Chief Tubbs expressed appreciation for Committee feedback, and it's helpful in the District's direction.

Mr. Kessell asked about disseminating information to the community, other than having meeting packets posted. Chief Tubbs noted that the Ordinance says Committee does not have the authority to communicate externally, but rather shall communicate through the Board. Chief suggested using the Emergency and Disaster Preparedness committee as the platform.

4. ADJOURNMENT – Adjourned 8:41 PM