



Meeting Minutes

San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department Board of Directors Regular Meeting Wednesday, May 12, 2021 – 4:00 P.M. Zoom Video Teleconference

1. OPENING

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 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.

5. NEW BUSINESS

Item 5.1 - Receive Fire Board feedback and public comment on the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Operating Budget and consider adopting a Resolution approving the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Operating Budget.

Treasurer Rich Lee provided a PowerPoint overview of the timeline for the proposed 2021-22 Budget. April's meeting provided a budget preview. This meeting is a study session and consideration for Board adoption. Later this month, Belmont will be having its first budget hearing and subsequently in June, San Mateo and Foster City will both be holding their first budget hearings. Shortly thereafter, all three cities will have their second budget hearings and budget adoption. After the budget has been adopted by each of the three member agencies, then SMC Fire's budget becomes final.

SMC Fire comprises of two primary funds: the General Fund at \$43 million and the Fire Protection & Life Safety Fund at \$2.6 million for a total of \$45.6 million in projected expenditures for next fiscal year. By expenditure type, the majority comes from personnel which is 88% of the total budget, followed by the operating budget at 10%. The funding sources comes from the operating contributions from the member agencies (60% from San Mateo and 20% each from Belmont and Foster City), and is offset by fire fees that are collected by SMC Fire as well as any grants or other intergovernmental revenue that comes to SMC Fire. The total funding sources is projected to be \$45.5 million for next fiscal year.

The General Fund will have a breakeven year at \$43 million in total revenues and total expenditures at \$43 million. This includes keeping fund balance at \$1.4 million. Treasurer Lee made a quick note that

the estimate for the current fiscal year does reflect the \$1 million credit going back to the member agencies which will be split sixty 60/20/20 between the member agencies.

The Fire Protection & Life Safety Fund will also have a breakeven year at \$2.6 million in total revenues and an equivalent amount in total expenditures. As previously communicated to the Board, this fund will end the current fiscal year with a slight negative ending fund balance that will require a temporary loan from the General Fund at the end of the fiscal year. It is anticipated that this fund will take approximately 3 years to recover.

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

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

Item 5.2 - Conduct a workshop on the concept of introducing a First Responder Fee, which is a fee to defray the cost of providing Department services.

Chief Iverson provided an overview to the Board (attached). All Board members asked clarifying questions about the fee. Chief Iverson stated the following:

- The fee is charged directly to the insurance company provided by the individual. One thing for the Board to consider, if we were to propose such a fee, would be to allow waivers for those who may have hardships or may not have insurance.
- No other department in San Mateo County utilizes this fee. SMC Fire is a trendsetter in the County, and this would be an opportunity to take the lead for others to follow.
- Collecting insurance information while providing medical care is already taking place when a medic collects patient information. Minimal time will be spent to collect insurance data.
- It would depend on the Board's direction to allow for waivers or exemptions if someone is uninsured.
- The Nexus study identified hourly cost for an apparatus at \$533. Since we're on scene for an average of 30 minutes, roughly \$267 would be charged per apparatus per incident.
- If multiple crews respond, each apparatus would have a fee.
- Rationale for this proposal is to look at the ongoing costs for emergency services provided and to address high demand calls that utilize our resources.
- Administrative costs for collecting money from insurance companies are typically outsourced with a 90% recovery rate. Additionally, there are typically exemptions for hardships.

Board Member Lieberman skeptical to pursue further. Board Member Awasthi not interested in pursuing this further. Board Chair Goethals stated this is an interesting concept, but it would need to be explored in a public and political way. He proposed that the Board consider discussing during an annual retreat that with member agency City Managers. Item will not be brought back right away but can be something to consider if this becomes an industry standard.

6. OLD BUSINESS

Item 6.1 - Adopt an Ordinance adopting the 2021 International Wildland Urban Interface Code with amendments and modifying the 2019 California Fire Code with local amendments. Public Hearing – Second Reading

Fire Marshal Marshall provided an overview of this topic during April's meeting. Taking Lieberman's advice and we will look at reducing the retrofit side of things in the future. As we approach fire season significantly earlier, we are hoping this ordinance helps us to mitigate the effects.

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

7. REPORTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fire Chief Iverson stated this is his last meeting as he accepted a position with Redwood City Fire Department. He thanked all for the experiences and opportunities while with SMC Fire.

8. CLOSED SESSION

The Fire Board went into Closed Session at 4:38pm.

9. RETRUN FROM CLOSED SESSION

Board Chair Goethals reconvened the meeting at 5:40pm and announced the appointment of Interim Chief Kent Thrasher.

Legal Counsel Ross reported that closed session adjourned at 4:38 PM and concluded at 5:40 PM. With respect to Item 8.2, it was a 3-0 vote to appoint Deputy Fire Chief Kent Thrasher as Interim Chief for the Department. With respect to Item 8.1, a written Report Upon Return from Closed Session would be prepared consistent with the provisions of Government Code section 54957.1 for the matters considered in Closed Session.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The Acting Board Clerk reminded the participants that next meeting is scheduled for July 14th at 4:00pm and the meeting was adjourned at 5:46 pm.