

**Woodside Fire Protection District
Board of Directors Meeting
Administration Building
808 Portola Rd.
Portola Valley, CA 94028
November 28, 2023**

The meeting of the Board of Directors was called to order at 7:00pm by Director Miller

Directors Present: Miller, Holthaus, Cain

Directors Absent: None

Staff: Chief Cuschieri, FM Bullard, FM Giuliacci, Finance Manager Liu, Zoom Attendees – Chief Nannini, Capt. Douthit, Chief Hird, Chief Zabala, Capt. Francisco, FFPM Witsoe, Chief Dagenais, DFM Hird, St. 19,

Other Attendees: WFPD General Counsel Rubin Cruse (RPLG); Mike Wassermann – Capital Program Management, MJ-Lee, Craig Taylor, Catherine Engberg

Public Comment Non-Agendized Topics:

No public comments

Regular Agenda: (Audio recording available only)

Consent Agenda: Director Cain motioned to move items 1 to 5 from the regular agenda to the consent agenda and approve them as submitted, 2nd by Director Holthaus. Motion passed 3-0.

Item 6: Accept 2024 Board Meeting Dates

Director Cain motioned to accept 2024 Board Meeting Dates as submitted, 2nd by Director Holthaus. Motion passed 3-0.

Item 7: CPM – Mike Wasserman to Provide Station 7 and 8 Project Update
Presentation highlights included –

Budgeted Contingencies

- Station 7 - Construction Contingency removed.
Contingency no longer needed per VBI.
Balance transferred to IH7 Project contingency.
- Station 8 -Construction Contingency removed.
Contingency no longer needed per VBI.
Balance transferred to IH7 Project contingency.
- Interim Station 7 Removal -Updated Budget
Received ROM construction estimate from VBI of \$337k
Project Budget increased to \$475,000
- Overall Estimated Program Budget Balance +/--\$280ko
Includes T-Mobile reimbursement for underground infrastructure is a pending addition to the program balance of \$178,000.

Interim Station 7- Removal Schedule

- Demo Permit plans have been submitted to SLAC and the County for approval.
Comments are coming back piecemeal from SLAC
SWPPP Plan also being required by SLAC
No Comments back from the County yet.
- On and Off-Site permit approval should be completed by the end of December.
- Station 7 is now scheduled to be ready to move-in on December 11th.
- District move to be completed by January 18th.
- VBI demo to be complete in early March.
- Potential for partial portable purchase by SLAC.

Station 7 – Project Schedule Update

- Construction scheduled to completed January 11th (Extended 4-weeks).
Delay due to Cal Water permit issues with Caltrans.
Drywall installation is complete.
Painting is 95% complete.
Casework being installed.
Light fixtures are complete.
PG&E final power is complete.
PG&E gas is still pending a Caltrans permit. Once permit is received expect about 4 weeks to completion.
Cellular on Wheel (COW) relocation cannot be done until Cal Water is completed. Move date TBD.

Station 7 Project Schedule & Impact Concerns

- Cal Water Service
The existing feed to the building is undersized and needs to be increased.
Caltrans permit approval has been received. Work began yesterday (11/27).
This has pushed final completion back 4 weeks.
- T-Mobile Impact on Station
Power to the COW will be provided through the new station permanent power.
The COW will be relocated to the parking spaces in front of the Station after Cal Water is complete. It will remain there until the new monopole is installed.
The new monopole will take at least 1-year for permitting, new PG&E and AT&T services.
T-Mobile is working with Town for new monopole planning approval.
Plan submitted to the Planning Dept. on 10/26.
- Generator Delay
Cummins has revised their estimated delivery date from December to March 2024.
Cummins has agreed to pay all temp generator rental costs.
Temporary generator will be located in parking spaces by future generator location.
BAAQMD final approval for the generator has been received.

Approval of Amendment #3 Agreement Between Woodside Fire Protection District and Capital Program Management, Inc.

A motion was made by Director Cain to approve Amendment #3 Agreement Between Woodside Fire and Capital Program Management as submitted, 2nd by Director Holthaus. Motion passed 3-0.

Item 8: 2nd Reading: (1) Conduct a public hearing and (2) Consider taking the following action: As introduced on October 24th, 2023, adopt Ordinance No. 23-04, “AN ORDINANCE OF THE WOODSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT OF SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA ESTABLISHING A SCHEDULE OF FEES TO BE CHARGED BY THE FIRE DISTRICT.”

FM Giuliacci summarized Ordinance No. 2023-04. She informed the Board that establishing a schedule of fees to be charged by the Fire District usually happens every 3 years, alongside the new code cycle adoption. No comments were received after the 30 days open to public comment review. The fees are for services such as permits, inspections and reviews.

Public Comment: None

A motion was made by Director Cain to approve and adopt Ordinance No. 23-04, “AN ORDINANCE OF THE WOODSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT OF SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA ESTABLISHING A SCHEDULE OF FEES TO BE CHARGED BY THE FIRE DISTRICT.” as submitted, 2nd by Director Holthaus. Motion passed 3-0.

Item 9: Adopt Resolution #23-09, Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Woodside Fire Protection District Adopting Board of Directors Rules of Procedure

Director Miller stated that the Board has never actually had any rules or procedure in place. This resolution places basic rules and decorum rules of procedure.

A motion was made by Director Cain to Adopt Resolution #23-09, Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Woodside Fire Protection District Adopting Board of Directors Rules of Procedure as submitted, 2nd by Director Holthaus. Motion passed 3-0.

Item 10: Adopt Resolution #23-10, Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Woodside Fire Protection District Establishing a District Records Management Policy, and Retention Schedule

Director Miller stated that this resolution modernizes and sets in place a set of policies and practices we have operated under but has never been codified.

A motion was made by Director Cain to Adopt Resolution #23-10, Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Woodside Fire Protection District Establishing a District Records Management Policy and Retention Schedule as submitted, 2nd by Director Holthaus. Motion passed 3-0.

Staff Reports:

Director Miller expressed his appreciation to see the data that Flame Mapper had created put into play during a simulation held by Fire Prevention.

FM Bullard presented to the Board a report on a Joint Work Plan with the Town of Portola Valley Regarding Fire Safety and consider providing direction to staff.

Presentation as transcribed:

“This is just a short presentation on a collaborative effort between the district and the town of Portola Valley, that we would like to make aware to the board of directors, that deals with key approaches to fire safely as we work toward our needs and requirements for the housing element, the general plan

and safety element. So, there's 13 key approaches to fire safety that were requested by myself Fire Marshal Bullard, at the February 15th, 2023 Portola Valley Planning Commission meeting. The 13 key approaches were part of a work plan to be completed by Woodside Fire's Fire Marshal, the Town Planning Director who at that time was, Laura Russell. About a month later, there were seven mitigation measures that were emailed to the Town attorney from the District's attorney Ann Danforth, on March 29th, 2023.

The goal of the 13 key approaches to fire safety and 7 mitigation requests is to obtain enforceable standards to mitigate fire risk in the District. Both the Town and the District are in the process of taking steps to achieve that goal. The District is currently in the process of establishing a current Wildland Urban Interface, WUI, for the district, that would include designations of fire hazard severity zones. The Town is currently in the process of updating its General Plan Safety Element. As you know, wildfires are part of California's present and an increasing part of our future due to the effects of climate change. Although wildfires have been an important natural process, recent changes in fire frequency, intensity and location are posing increasing threats. More acres of California have burned in the last decade than the previous 90 years, and eight of the state's ten largest fires since 1932 have occurred in the last decade. Lightning is a common cause of large wildfires. However, in recent years, human activity has caused some of the largest fires, such as downed power lines and electrical sources. Wildfire's dramatic adverse impacts include ecological impacts, erosion and water quality impacts, destruction of structures, loss of life and financial resources. Development in fire prone areas increases the likelihood of more destructive fires. Firefighting resources will be taxed, more habitats, and people will be in harm's way and more structures will burn. So, it's imperative that local jurisdictions consider wildfire impacts as part of the development review process, where to best place new development, and mitigate fire impacts to the extent feasible.

Some of the key definitions that I think are important to understand. What is a Wildland Urban Interface? It's generally defined as the area where the built environment meets or intermingles with the natural environment. Cal Fire land classifications are Low, Moderate, High and Very High Fire Severity Zones, with High and Very High Fire Severity Zones being the most severe. Chapter 7A refers to more stringent building codes that apply to Very High Fire Severity Zones under state law. The Town of Portola Valley Building Code exceeds Chapter 7A and applies to the whole town. State Responsibility Area or SRA is where the state has responsibility for firefighting. And the Local Responsibility Area, LRA, is the local agency that has the responsibility for firefighting. Those are areas where we have responsibility for firefighting. The state is in the process of updating their SRA and their LRA maps. Those were expected long ago. Our hope is that they are released soon. And then home ignition risk and structure to structure fire spread depend on two dominant sources of ignition. Embers being lofted up by the fire. Radiant or convective heat emitted from nearby fire. The

greater the proximity of any structure to any other structure or fuel source, the greater the need for noncombustible construction materials. The California Attorney General has issued guidance with best practices and mitigation measures for local governments considering approval of development projects in fire prone areas. Wildfires are part of California's present, and as a result of climate change, increasingly part of California's future. Eight of the ten largest wildfires in California history have occurred in the past decade. As local governments consider new development projects, it is imperative that they carefully analyze and mitigate wildfire impacts as part of the environmental review process required by the California Environmental Quality Act, also known as CEQA. The Attorney General's guidance is intended to help local governments design development projects in a way that minimizes impacts to wildfire ignition, emergency access, evacuation and protect California's residents and the environment. Local governments have a responsibility to address wildfire risks associated with new development projects early in the planning process when changes to these projects can still be made, says the attorney general, Bonta.

The climate crisis is here, and with it comes increasingly frequent and severe wildfires that force mass evacuations, destroy homes, and lead to tragic loss of life. We must build in a way that recognizes this reality. This guidance is intended to provide local governments with concrete considerations and specific mitigation measures for new developments in wildfire prone areas, so that five, ten, or twenty years down the line, we aren't faced with a catastrophe that could have been avoided. So, the Attorney General guidance is an excellent resource. It includes useful information. It demonstrates that multiple state departments are now engaged in wildfire issues and provides suggestions for how to best comply with CEQA, when analyzing and mitigating a proposed project's impacts on admission risk, emergency access and evacuation. It's aimed at proposed development such as residential, recreational, or commercial developments. The extent to which it applies will vary. It includes things to consider, issues, alternatives, mitigations. It's intended to assist lead agencies with their planning and approval of future projects. Local jurisdictions can draw from this guidance, even if it is not a formal CEQA review. The District believes that in working with the Town to do these things, it is confident that the Town will be safer than it ever has been in the past.

The 13 key approaches for fire safety are, number one, keep and expand progressive prevention policies in the 2010 Safety Element. Pursue widening roads, especially in new subdivisions. Establish multiple access and egress routes and new subdivisions. Meet Cal Fire minimum fire safety regulations in the Very High and High Hazard areas within the District. Conduct site-specific individuated Wildfire Hazard Assessment Plans. Build to Chapter 7A and the 337 Residential Code with local amendments. And enhance construction methods and materials to be noncombustible. Limit exposure to flammable materials. Increase defensible space standards around structures. Adopt new requirements for fuel breaks and parcels in the SRA and LRA areas within the District. The

District and Towns to adopt a map, including or indicating the Very High and High fire Hazard Severity Zones. And then revisit the ADU and SB9 Fire Safety Checklist and consider adoption of appropriate ordinances. Finally, educate the public on key fire safety issues.

The role of the Fire District in this plan. As the Fire Marshal, I prefer not to comment on whether an area should be developed. The District understands that the Town has housing obligations under state law. The Town has contracted with expert consultants who are familiar with CEQA, and the District must trust that the consultants have or will have done due diligence in determining the safest locations for development. The District encourages the Town to refer to the Attorney General guidance. Instead, the Fire District should focus on codes that will apply if development occurs in fire prone areas. The District should focus on enforcing the Fire Code approved by the two Towns. Focus on implementing new fuel mitigation ordinances. Focus on provisions for emergency evacuation procedures based on fire and traffic modeling, software being utilized by the District and the Towns. Fire modeling and other spatial and statistical analyzes are valuable to quantify risks for projects. We should be using these tools for future analysis of specific projects to the extent feasible. The addition of new development may impact the evaluation of project residents and the existing population, and evacuation modeling should be considered at the time of the project review and approval when there is time to modify the project, and not be deferred to building permit review. Where highly combustible structures such as wood frame buildings are near one another, the hazard of structure-to-structure fire spread can increase dramatically. Closer structure density should be accompanied by Fire Code amendments to mitigate concerns, and the District will provide recommendations based on the latest and greatest best practices. There should be a project level site specific assessment of hazard and risk for development in areas of heightened hazard. The goal is the prevention and/or containment of rapid-fire expansion and spread to neighboring homes and fuel complexes. Methods to achieve this goal can vary based on the site; individual assessments are most effective because there is no one size fits all solution. Mitigation should be linked to risk and not just hazard. Higher density development can complicate firefighting effectiveness and safety. Appropriate measures and enhanced access should be reviewed as well. Moving forward on this plan, the Fire District's role will be that the Fire District is currently working on the adoption of a fuel mitigation and exterior hazard abatement ordinance. Fuel breaks in the SRA and the LRA are on hold and will be assessed later, at a later date and time. Implementation of the minimum fire safety regulations in the Very High and High Fire Severity Zones. Establishing multiple access and egress routes is going to be ongoing. The District is to make recommendations for the Town to consider limiting exposure to flammable materials on new construction projects and district-wide hazard and risk assessment.

The Town will be responsible for the Safety Element draft, which is currently under review. The Town continues to implement the current 2010 Safety Element, including the intended use of the

Moritz Map until adoption of the revised Safety Element. The Town will work to establish enforceable fire prevention policies regarding development in the Very High and High Fire Severity Zones. For evacuation routes, road widening strategies will be specified in the new Safety Element. Regarding access and egress routes, with the transition of Town Staff, the Town will ensure communications continue with landowners and to be included with the next draft of the Safety Element. Chapter 7A already applies to the whole town and it must be updated every three years. The Town Council has expressed their interest in adopting the Housing Element by the end of March, and the IS/MND must be adopted concurrently. Moving together, both the District and the Town will be working together. Best practices and state laws are evolving, and we will continue to evaluate and update local approaches together. Adopt the new District Fire Hazard Maps for the SRA and the LRA. Implementation of Cal Fire's minimum fire safety regulations to the Very High and High Fire Severity Zones. We will revisit the Accessory Dwelling Unit and SB9 Fire Safety Checklist and consider the adoption of the appropriate ordinances and assess the environmental impact of plan development on wildfire risk and public safety once the Woodside Fire Protection District Hazard Risk Assessment is complete. Enhanced zoning, subdivision, and building codes to mitigate risk of fire spread between combustible structures and vehicles. Enhanced safety and reliability of power and communications utilities. Together, we will implement the town-wide emergency evacuation plan prepared through the Emergency Preparedness Committee in collaboration with multiple other agencies. Consideration of site-specific individuated Wildfire Hazard Assessment plans would have potential to model off Town process for geological safety. The Town already has a process, through the geological safety, where they would identify whether an area can be built on, based on certain criteria that they have through the geological safety. Then using maps developed by Cal Fire and/or the Fire District, and then the policy to be developed by District and Town, and the potential to better capture local concerns than a CEQA analysis. Then enhance construction methods and materials to be noncombustible, and then again, educate the public on the key fire safety issues."

Director Holthaus asked about what the other entities within the Fire District are doing. FM Bullard responded that Portola Valley is ahead of Woodside on the same elements, and a lot of the same issues being addressed in Portola Valley will be addressed in Woodside as well.

FM Bullard responded that the District is waiting for Moraga-Orinda Fire, as they are currently being challenged with implementing fuel breaks.

Director Miller finds the vegetation management plan confusing but considers it crucial for improving property values, obtaining insurance, and ensuring community safety by clearing vegetation. Despite the current plan being on hold, he encourages continued exploration of options, expressing a long-term commitment to addressing the issue for community benefit.

FM Giuliacci acknowledged that they will continue to examine the issue. However, due to recent significant changes in the fire code and the introduction of a new fuel mitigation ordinance, the plan is to approach the matter gradually in phases. The intention is to help the community better understand and accept the changes by taking smaller steps towards the ultimate goal.

Director Miller stated that it is confusing for people, and while he understands the long-term goal is to clear vegetation in the district, he realizes it's challenging for individuals to invest in it immediately. However, it's crucial to prevent fires from spreading between properties. Director Miller questions the effectiveness of road widening and emphasizes the need to double lanes on key roads like Alpine and Portola for a meaningful impact on traffic flow during evacuations.

Director Holthaus appreciates the collaboration, believing it brings more organization to the approach. However, he expressed a concern about maintaining urgency in addressing the complex issues and ensuring that progress is made rather than just having discussions without tangible results.

FM Giuliacci highlighted collaborative efforts in developing a fuel mitigation ordinance for the 7-13 work plan. A workshop was held in November to educate residents about the ordinance, addressing concerns and clarifying that it doesn't mean removing all trees, especially in animal habitats. The second workshop on January 15th will provide more insights based on feedback. The proactive approach aims to address concerns, with the goal of adopting the ordinance efficiently and ensuring compliance across the district. FM Giuliacci expressed the importance of completing tasks thoroughly before moving on to the next, following a systematic checklist approach.

FM Bullard emphasized the significance of defensible space and home hardening for improving the survivability and structural resilience of homes and expressed a commitment to promoting and

implementing these measures. He also informed the Board that the number of Firewise Communities increased from one to four in the last year.

Public Comment: Transcribed as recorded.

MJ-Lee – “Two things. First of all, I wanted to thank Kim for everything she's been doing. You know, I'm on the wildfire preparedness committee, and she came and talked to us on November 15th. We had over 55 residents participate. And that's the kind of outreach coming from the fire district that is really going to make a difference. I've been writing wildfire tips for three years now, and I walk around, and I don't see enough response coming, you know, from the community. People aren't taking this seriously enough. I think the ordinances will help with that, but I think Kim's doing all this outreach and assuring people this is not something you have to spend \$20,000 in one drop, you know, up front. I think that's going to help a lot. Her obvious willingness to work with everybody is going to pay off, I think. The other thing I wanted to mention is in Don's last slide, he talked about enhancing construction methods and materials to be noncombustible. I just wanted to make a little caution about that, because in Portola Valley, you know, we changed the deck ordinance, so that, at one point it said decks had to be noncombustible if you replace them, and that created huge problems. The next year, effectively, this year, the building official changed the wording again, but he tried to be a little stricter from this date. I talked to Cal Fire building materials listing guy, the guy who actually started that whole project. And he told me that the way we worded our ordinance in Portola Valley, there is no material on the BML that will meet our town's requirements. I'm going to present that to our committee at this coming meeting. I just wanted to point out that it seems like when you try to go stricter than what the state is saying, I think it brings a lot of unintended consequences. We aren't the scientists, you know, that are right in there doing what those guys are deciding. And I think we need to be cautious. And I would say that also applies to fuel breaks. If you're going to say you have to have a 50- or 100-foot fuel break around the perimeter of your property, I think if you look at the science, maybe that's not the most effective way. I'm kind of glad that the fuel break stuff is on hold right now. So, thank you.”

Catherine Engberg – “Thank you so much. So, Catherine Engberg. I have been serving as the interim Town Attorney for Portola Valley for about the last six months. I just wanted to thank the efforts of Rubin and Kim and Don, for working with our staff on this draft workplan. It's really, I think, going to be a good effort. It helps to clarify in terms of who is responsible for what and which topics, you know, we'll do best with collaboration. So, we want to thank y'all for that. Also, just note that I do plan to bring this item forward to the town council on December 13th. So, they have the same information in terms of the draft work planned for council. I can't promise to have quite as technical

of a presentation as Don provided, but I will do my best and understand that your staff will be available to support amid any questions from town council. Thank you.”

Craig Taylor – “Thank you. I just wanted to say, I've been meeting with the Fire Marshals. I'm Craig Taylor. I'm a member of the Portola town council. And I've been meeting with the fire marshals monthly for the last 4 or 5 months. And it really has been a good collaboration. And I really appreciate Kim's position of trying to ramp the residents up. I mean, you know, I think the really important thing that we keep in mind is we all agree that there's a fire hazard, but we don't want to create a sort of an allergic reaction, where people think; oh, this is outrageous. And then we're fighting them to get it done rather than bringing them along and encouraging them to do it. So, I think, you know, Kim's approach is really important, to start encouraging. And then at some point, you know, if people are being obstinate, then we've got enforcement powers to basically follow up. So, I'm actually really encouraged, that I think we're going to make a big difference in Portola Valley in terms of fire safety in the next 3 to 5 years. Thank you.”

Fire Chief's Report:

State Fire Wildland Season-

- This year's wildland fire season has been minimal compared to years past. As of today, CalFire reports about 319k acres burned throughout the state. With the reduction in fire activity CalFire has elected to decrease their seasonal staffing earlier than expected.
- Last week Chief Cuschieri attended a National Weather Service Update for the County that was hosted by DEM. They basically stated we could have another significant wet winter based on the data they were gathering. They emphasized maintenance, preparedness, and that the County will have their EOC's open as needed throughout the winter depending on the level of storms that come through.

The District Updates

Grant Applications-

- The Cal Water Firefighter Grant that the District applied for new firefighting nozzles was accepted. This was for the amount of \$32,355.00 in which we should receive funds in the first quarter of 2024. I would like to say thank you to everyone who assisted with the project. We plan to look for more grants in the future for more funding options.
- APEC - Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation forum took place in the bay Area from November 11th -17th. All fire departments in the County were on a low-level stand-by in case of any incidents that occurred.

Promotional Testing-

- Our promotional testing for Battalion Chief and Captain has finished and we now have lists established. December 4th is our Deputy Chief Interview. Once those are complete, we will promote as needed.

New Fire Recruits-

- Our new recruits are doing well in the Fire Academy and will graduate December 9th. After graduation they will go through an additional weeklong rope rescue awareness class and then through a week of our own additional training before they get assigned a station and shift.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

No written communications at this time.

Chief Cuschieri closed the meeting by thanking FM Bullard for his many years of service. The Board thanked FM Bullard for all his efforts in fire prevention and wished him well in his retirement.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:17P.M

The next scheduled meeting will be held January 31st, at 7:00 P.M at the WFPD Administration Building, 808 Portola Rd. Portola Valley, CA 94028.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pat Cain – Board Secretary

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