



Wildfire Prevention Assessment District

Citizens' Advisory Committee

Approved Meeting Minutes for

Thursday, May 21, 2015, 7:00 PM



Trudeau Center, 15500 Skyline Blvd., Oakland CA (Wheel Chair Accessible)

Committee Members in Attendance:

Fred Booker, Chair (District 1)

Mary Thiessen, Recording Secretary (District 4)

Clint Johnson (District 6)

Doug Wong, Vice Chair (At Large)

Committee Members Absent:

Susan Piper (District 1)

Chris Burgardt – Fire Fighter rep

Mike Petouhoff (District 4)

Vince Crudele, Vegetation Management Inspector Supervisor

Lin Barron attending for the Oakland Wildland Stewards (OWLS)

1. APPROVAL OF DRAFT MEETING MINUTES FOR APRIL 16, 2015, WPAD MEETING

The Board M/S/P Draft minutes from April 16, 2015 meeting with changes.

2. OPEN PUBLIC FORUM

Lalaine Coaxum presents to the WPAD a Matching Grant request. This will be discussed and decided at the June 18, 2015, WPAD meeting.

Vegetation Contractor Richard Otterstead voiced concerns about fire inspections and not having enough time to clear properties he is contracted to maintain. Inspector Crudele asked that he be emailed the APN of the property and the date the property would be cleared so they could be inspected then.

Barbara Goldenberg representing the Diablo Firesafe Council, informed the group that there is a new and current Grant Application posted on their website. Ms. Goldenberg also explained how they have received more money for Grants and encourages applicants and to apply before the current deadline in August. Sweat equity is also a contributing factor and can be included as part of the Match at \$25/ hour.

Barbara Kluger asked Inspector Crudele if Knowland Park was on the list still for goat grazing. Inspector Crudele informed Ms. Kluger the goat contract is in effect for 3 more summers and includes Knowland Park.

3. REVIEW OF FINANCIALS

Chair Fred Booker reviews current financials with the Board, the only change being the first \$5000 in Matching Grant to Montclair Railroad Trail.

4. CITY OF OAKLAND/ OFD BUDGET EXPLANATION

Chair Fred Booker sent the below email to the Financial Department's Pauline Feng on May 13, 2015, regarding some concerns with the Mayor's proposed Fire Department's Budget to City Council. Included are Ms. Feng's responses to the concerns from an email dated May 21, 2015.

Good Day Ms. Feng,

I was just reviewing the Budget being proposed by the Mayor's office for City Council approval. I was wondering if someone could explain the following submitted OFD budget items to the Board:

1. *On page G-35 (2321), the 2105-16 & 2016-17 Wildfire Prevention Assessment District Budget is \$1,391,979 & \$1,393,582 respectively. Our total budget for FY 2015-16 was \$1,530,436 (Total Expenditures of \$1,116,288 + \$414,148 in Reserve Funding). What is the WPAD Budget being proposed by the Mayor?*
 - a. *Ms. Feng: The Mayor's proposed FY 15-16 WPAD budget is based on baseline revenue and expenditures projected by the Finance Department*

2. *Also on page G-35, \$944,958 for all years is budgeted for FEMA (2124). Is this money regarding the FEMA vegetation management grant?*
 - a. *Ms. Feng: The \$944,958 is budgeted for other FEMA grants that the Fire Department has been managing. These funds are not related to the FEMA Vegetation Management grant. A staff report for the Vegetation Management grant is scheduled for the City Council meeting on May 26th. Once the City Council approves acceptance of the grant, we will appropriate the approved funds to FEMA grant -Vegetation Management.*

3. *On Page G-36, Authorized positions (2321) Wildfire Prevention Assessment District for all budgeted years as being (1.00). What does position does this refer to?*
 - a. *Ms. Feng: This position refers to the Program Analyst II that the Advisory Committee authorized, per an agenda for the September 5, 2013 special meeting and the approved May 15, 2014 minutes (attached).*

4. *On Page G-37, The Organizational Chart by Division shows Fire Prevention and Support as having 35.50 Full Time Employees whereas our count is closer to 18. Why the discrepancy?*
 - a. *Ms. Feng: The staffing is based on all staff in the Training and Support Services Bureau which includes Training, Support Services, US&R grant, and the Fire Prevention Division (Administration, Engineering Services, Fire Code Inspections, Commercial Inspection, Vegetation Management, and Fire Safety Education).*

5. *I did a key word search within the Data on the City's Open Data Platform for "Wildfire Prevention Assessment District" which returned 2 items, one for FY 2015-16 & one for FY 2016-17 in the amount of \$18,646 each for WPAD Engineering Services (P407810). The budget submitted to us by OFD and passed by the Board shows that Engineering Services as being \$0 for FY 2015-16.*
<https://data.oaklandnet.com/Financial/Proposed-Budget-for-Fiscal-Years-2015-2017/w4j2-chmt>
 - a. *Ms. Feng: There is no budget for WPAD for Engineering Services starting with FY14-15 as indicated in the WPAD approved proposed budget (attached). So far, this fiscal year there have been no expenditures posted for Engineering Services.*

5. STAFF REPORT

Please see attached, "Oakland Fire Department Prevention Bureau Vegetation Management Unit Staff Report", May 21, 2015, submitted by Vincent Crudele, Vegetation Management Supervisor/Inspector.

The Board M/S/P letter to be written on behalf of the WPAD Board and sent to Mayor Schaaf, Chief Reed, and Council representatives regarding concerns: 1. The OFD key personnel positions still vacant; 2. FT & PT Inspector vacancies (Chief Reed has not followed through with HR); 3. Program Analyst position approved in 2013 still has not been hired. (Please see attached email letter sent to Mayor Libby Schaaf, Oakland City Administrator, Council Persons: Annie Campbell Washington and Dan Kalb.)

6. HILLS VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

This was formally known as the FEMA project and is now being referred as the Hills Vegetation Management Plan now that OFD has accepted the Biological Opinion as a basis for the project. Please see attached, "Oakland Fire Department Prevention Bureau Vegetation Management Unit Staff Report", May 21, 2015, submitted by Vincent Crudele, Vegetation Management Supervisor/Inspector.

7. DISTRICTWIDE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Inspector Crudele is still in discussions with Deputy Director Darin Ranelletti, City Department of Planning and Building, and acting Environmental Review Officer. The CEQA/EIR for Hills Vegetation Management Plan (FEMA) will be completed prior to the Districtwide Vegetation Management Plan's CEQA process.

8. GATEWAY GARDEN FUNDING REQUEST

Sue Piper had sent a request that previously approved funding from the WPAD for informational signs at the Gateway Garden be reassigned from original use to plants, irrigation, and education as the signs may be done in-house by EBMUD.

The Board M/S/P to amend Gateway Garden WPAD Grant, to use money for education, plants, and irrigation.

9. PROGRAM ANALYST II FUNDING

Please see attached, "Oakland Fire Department Prevention Bureau Vegetation Management Unit Staff Report", May 21, 2015, submitted by Vincent Crudele, Vegetation Management Supervisor/Inspector.

10. PARKING ENFORCEMENT DISCUSSION

This item has been moved for discussion at June 18, 2015 meeting.

11. VOLUNTEER DAY TO COMPLETE SKYLINE BROOM PROJECT

The completion of the Skyline Broom Project is scheduled for some time in July. The staging location will be on the grass Valley side on the top of Frontage Road.

The Board M/S/P motion to approve \$1000 to rent a Chipper, fuel, Insurance, and porta potty for Skyline Broom Project.

CITY OF OAKLAND



250 FRANK H. OGAWA PLAZA • 3RD FLOOR • OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94612

Fire Department
Fire Prevention Bureau
Office of the Fire Marshal

(510) 238-3851
FAX: (510) 238-6739
TTY/TDD: (510) 238-6884

May 21st 2015

Oakland Fire Department Fire Prevention Bureau Vegetation Management Unit Staff
Report

WPAD Board Members,

Fire Suppression District Inspector Staffing;
Full time Staff includes the following
Vincent Crudele - Vegetation Management Supervisor
Fire Suppression District 1 - Vacant
Fire Suppression District 2 - Enrique Orduna
Fire Suppression District 3 - David Davis
Fire Suppression District 4 - Vacant
Fire Suppression District 5 - Vacant

On May 7th, Supervisor Crudele submitted required "justifications for hiring" to Fire Administration's Human Resources to open recruitment and post the vacancies on the City employment webpage. As of today, the job announcements have still not been posted.

TPT Seasonal Inspector Pinto is the only employee approved by the Fire Chief to return to duty on June 1st at this time.

Program Analyst II;

The Program Analyst II position is still waiting to be filled and is in the control of Human Resources Management. The position was declined by the only eligible applicant since it was re-classified as limited duration employment.

Annual Inspections;

Vegetation Inspections will begin as soon as the Vegetation Management Inspection Forms are completed by the City print shop and the forms are distributed out to the stations. Last year we began on May 24th and it looks as though we will begin sometime during the week of May 25th, 2015.

FEMA Grant;

City Staff is working with Contract Compliance to draft an RFQ for management of the grant and its implementation.

Thank you,

Vincent Crudele
Supervisor / Inspector
510-238-7391 Office
vcrudele@oaklandnet.com

**Email letter from Fred Booker, WPAD Chair to Mayor Libby Shaaf, City Administrator, and Council Persons:
Annie Campbell Washington and Dan Kalb**

Mayor Libby Schaaf
City Administrator John Flores
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza
3rd Floor
Oakland, CA 94612

June 2, 2015

Re: Wildfire Prevention Assessment District Concerns

1. There are three issues that need to be addressed if there is any hope of renewal of the Wildfire Assessment District:

- a. The completion of a District Wide Vegetation Management Plan.
- b. Resolving staffing issues within the Vegetation Management Unit of the Oakland Fire Department.
 - i. Assistant Civilian Fire Marshall vacancy
 - ii. FT & PT Inspector vacancies
 - iii. Program Analyst position
- c. The acceptance of FEMA funds and the immediate initiation of the CEQA/EIR process.

2. Having a district wide vegetation management plan has been an issue the community has been adamant about since the inception of the Wildfire District. The WPAD held a retreat in February of this year which was attended by 42 District residents on both sides of the eucalypt issue who unanimously called for a functional district wide plan. Several conceptual plans have been submitted to the City Council in the past, the most recent being the 2011-2014, Vegetation Management Plan. A review of this 71 page document shows it to be qualitative in scope and totally useless as a management tool for City property within the Wildfire District. What is needed is a comprehensive review of each property, an inventory of species, a fire hazard rating, a proposed vegetation treatment plan with a proposed schedule of treatment. Initial contact by the WPAD Board has been made with City of Oakland Planning, Public Works and IT and we are awaiting the completion of an RFP, though, it is uncertain whether there is any work being done towards this goal. Considering the volatility of staffing (i.e. Institutional memory) within the department a district wide vegetation management plan would at the very minimum be a guide of what to do, where to do it and when to do it. The WPAD has allocated \$194,148 in FY 2015-16 for this plan, though, additional funds might be available following review of the final FY 2104-15 financials.

3. It is my understanding that every single individual within the Vegetation Management Unit of the OFD has been offered a job either within other OFD departments or with outside agencies. The morale situation is terrible with staff feeling as though there is no appreciation for their years of service and dedication to their jobs. There is a very real likelihood that the unit will find itself either empty or severely understaffed as we come into another wildfire season in a drought year. Part Time inspectors always looking for work elsewhere have to be trained yearly and with staff turnover where does that leave us? Complicating this is the lack of an Assistant Civilian Fire Marshall who could oversee the unit and be the senior staff person to oversee the implementation of the upcoming FEMA project and district wide vegetation management plan. Given that we have multiple vacancies and expectations of more within the unit there has yet to be any job postings for the currently vacant positions. Currently there are no Part Time inspectors on staff, and to my knowledge only one individual available for rehire. It would be helpful if the Mayor and City Administrator could meet with the unit to review their concerns.

4. The Wildfire District at OFD's request has allocated funds for a Program Analyst II position. Currently, \$149,478 has been allocated for this position through the FY 2015-16 (\$33,000 FY 2014-15; \$116,478 FY 2015-16). Though, additional funds could be made available following a review of the final FY 2014-15 financials. The program Analyst position was funded two years ago and has yet to be filled. Initially the position was proposed to assist in the letting of vegetation management contracts when over a million dollars a year was being spent on vegetation management. However, the last two years less than \$200,000 has been spent on vegetation management and it is unlikely to increase in the future. When approving the FY 2015-16 budget the WPAD board thought that the Program Analyst could assist in contracting for the FEMA and district Wide vegetation management plan, but in a recent conversation with the Chief and Ms. Claudia Cappio of the City Administrator's Office, the Chief mentioned that the PA would not work on the FEMA project nor the district wide vegetation plan but rather confine themselves to contacting vegetation management jobs. Given recent history that would approach 100% overhead, and in my opinion an unnecessary expense for which the money would be better spent elsewhere such as on completing the district wide vegetation management plan.

5. I was happy to see that at the Public Safety Committee meeting, Council Members voted unanimously to accept FEMA funds. Upon approval by the full council it is imperative that the City proceed with urgency to complete the CEQA/EIR process and get this much needed vegetation management project started.

Sincerely,
Fred Booker
Chair, Wildfire Prevention Assessment District