

Moraga-Orinda Fire Protection District



BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

June 7, 2017
(Approved July 18, 2017)

1. Opening Ceremonies

The Board of Directors convened in Open Session at 5:00 P.M. on June 7, 2017 at the Hacienda Mosaic Room, located at 2100 Donald Drive, Moraga, California. Director Jex was absent. President Famulener called the meeting to order.

Present were the following Directors and Staff:

President Famulener	Stephen Healy, Fire Chief
Director Anderson	Gloriann Sasser, Admin Services Director
Director Barber	Jerry Lee, Battalion Chief
Director Jorgens	Grace Santos, District Secretary

2. Public Comment

There was no comment from the public.

3. Regular Calendar

3.1 Approval to Accept 2016 FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant

In the summer of 2016, MOFD staff submitted a grant application to the FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) for the purchase of four (4) self-loading gurney systems in the amount of \$175,896. These systems incorporate a battery-powered hydraulic lifting system. Once positioned behind the ambulance, the system hydraulically lifts the patient to improve operator and patient safety by supporting the cot throughout the loading and unloading process. These systems are highly sought after by ambulance providers throughout the country. The cost has prohibited MOFD from acquiring these systems.

On May 19, 2017, MOFD received a notice of award. According to FEMA guidelines, MOFD has 30 calendar days to accept or decline the award (June 18, 2017). Acceptance of this award will require MOFD to provide a 10% matching fund of the original proposed grant budget. This amount is \$15,990. Since the time of grant application, the estimated cost per system increased approximately \$4k from \$35,821 to \$39,718, with a potential cost of an additional \$16k to MOFD. If this grant is accepted, a competitive bidding process and an amendment request to FEMA for additional funding or change in scope may reduce or eliminate this unanticipated cost.

In the proposed FY17/18 Capital Budget, \$35k was budgeted to purchase two (2) standard gurneys for the new arriving ambulances. The self-loading gurney systems from this award will supplant the cost of this purchase. By accepting this award, MOFD will acquire four (4) state-of-the-art gurney systems and eliminate the planned purchase of two standard gurneys in FY17/18. Staff estimates the maximum matching funds needed will be \$30k.

The proposed FY17/18 Capital Budget may be reduced by \$5k. The realized savings may be more depending on the outcome of the competitive bidding process and/or amendment request. MOFD may also return the grant award to FEMA at any time so long as funds are not drawn.

There was a brief discussion between Board members and staff.

On a motion by Director Famulener and seconded by Director Anderson, the Board accepted the 2016 FEMA AFG award and directed staff to make adjustments to the proposed FY17/18 Capital Budget accordingly. Said motion carried with a 4-0 roll call vote: (Ayes: Anderson, Barber, Famulener, and Jorgens; Absent: Jex).

3.2 2016 FEMA SAFER Grant Application

In the winter of 2016, staff submitted a grant application to the FEMA Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response Grant (SAFER). The intent of this grant is to help organizations increase or

maintain the number of trained firefighters in their communities. Under this grant, a newly hired firefighter's salary and benefits are eligible for reimbursement. Other costs such as overtime, uniforms, protective equipment, and training are not eligible.

The period of performance for the SAFER is three years. FEMA will pay 75% of the cost for years one and two, and 35% for year three. If awarded, the fire department is required to provide matching funds of 25%, 25%, and 65% over the three-year period of performance.

In addition, SAFER guidelines require the fire department to retain their "maintenance number" throughout the three-year period of performance. The maintenance number is defined as the number of rostered full-time firefighters at the time of award plus the number of new SAFER firefighters (54 v. 58). If at any time during the period of performance, a firefighter separates from the department for any reason, the fire department must rehire to fill the vacant position. By accepting the grant, the fire department is committed to maintaining this new minimum roster number of firefighters for three years.

MOFD requested funding from FEMA for four (4) positions in the amount of \$1,391,200 over a three (3) year period. Notification of awards will begin in the fall of 2017. Submission of an application does not commit the District to the grant if awarded. In addition, MOFD may decline the grant.

Director Anderson asked if the District will increase the staffing on a daily basis from 17 to 19 personnel, if the District will recover some of that in overtime, if SAFER grant funds pay for putting the new firefighters through the academy, and if only SAFER grant employees must be replaced if they leave.

BC Lee stated that the SAFER grant funds will pay for the salaries while they are in training, just not the cost of the academy itself. He explained that if any rank-and-file positions (firefighters, engineers and captains) leave, the District is required to hire to fill that position.

Chief Healy stated that daily staffing could remain at 17 personnel, which would reduce overtime because there would be more people on the roster.

Director Jorgens asked if the District hires a new firefighter, are they only capable of filling in for overtime for people who are of their same position.

Chief Healy stated that they would fill a firefighter spot only until they are off probation at which time they could become an acting engineer. If the opening is for a captain that day, we can still fill the firefighter spot and then bump people up on that crew that are qualified. Overtime is offered at the rank where the vacancy is. If no one in that rank wants it, then it goes to the next rank lower.

BC Lee stated that bumping up a firefighter to an engineer position happens frequently, especially during the summertime. There are times when the District back-fills for one or two hours when needed. Once they graduate from the academy, new firefighters will have a full-time assignment at a station.

Chief Healy stated that currently, on-duty minimum staffing for the District is 17 personnel plus the Battalion Chief. Asking for the SAFER grant will take the District to 18 personnel on each platoon (A, B, C) to 19. Currently there are 18 people authorized by the Board for each of the three platoons, with a minimum of 17 required. In theory, if everyone was on duty each day, we would have an extra person every day, which happens 0.1% of the time. Receiving the grant will take us to 19 on two of the platoons, and 20 on one.

BC Lee stated that there are always going to be openings on a daily basis. The extra positions will fill that gap to reduce overtime. The District's minimum staffing is currently 17 personnel, per day. If we receive the grant, that would bump it up to 19 personnel that are on the roster per day. However, due to sick leave, disability leave, and vacations, those two extra positions will fill that gap. Anything beyond the two positions will be overtime.

Director Jorgens stated that the most economical thing to do is have the new firefighters be complete floaters, that all they do is fill in for overtime.

BC Lee stated that part of their MOU requires that they are assigned to a certain platoon and schedule.

Director Jorgens asked if it was in the budget for this year, and what would happen to the new firefighters at the end of three years.

Chief Healy stated that staff anticipates some openings within the next three to four years for sure. The overtime is distributed throughout the 54 positions based on the people's availability and their desire to work. If no one wants to work, staff "mandatories" them back, which happens quite often. With respect to the timing, staff does not anticipate these people actually being hired until either the end of FY 2017/18 or FY 2018/19. We will not know about receiving the grant until the end of the year. Then we have go through the hiring process, find an academy for them, so they really will not start until next spring. If we receive the grant, staff would bring a mid-year budget adjustment in January for that.

Director Jorgens stated that the District is already out of money and would have to debt spend if we do that. It would be 10% of the District's discretionary budget. For this year's budget, the District cannot offset on overtime. The budget would be off by \$200K.

Chief Healy stated that if the District receives the award, it would be a Board policy decision whether or not to accept it. If staff is to prepare a mid-year budget and bring that as an option, and based on what the numbers look like at that time, the Board can decide if that is something that they want to do or not. The information was presented to inform the Board that staff applied for the grant so that they are not surprised when the time comes.

Director Barber asked if the District receives the award and accepts it, do we have discretion as to when we begin to implement it. Can we hire someone for the fiscal year that next immediately follows the award date rather than doing something in mid-fiscal year.

BC Lee stated that the SAFER guidelines state that the new firefighters start within four months. The District has 30 calendar days to accept the award and approximately three months to find candidates to hire. The District will likely find out in 180 days (6 months), which is close to the FY 2018/19.

Director Jorgens stated that he would like to see some analysis about a specific plan to show how staffing works and how it can save the District in overtime. He would like to understand what to expect at the end of the three years, and the "aging" of personnel.

Director Jorgens asked if the District could hire personnel with a three-year contract, and at the end of the three years, let them go. He asked if it was in the union contract and if staff could do that.

Chief Healy stated that it is not currently in the contract, but would have to ask legal counsel if the Board could do so going forward, if they chose to.

President Famulener stated that in that time period, there would be older people leaving, we would be paying lower salaries, and we would have put three years of training into them. She thanked BC Lee for applying for the grant.

Director Anderson asked the Board to consider going back to holding the regular meetings on the first and third Wednesday of each month. This would eliminate some scheduling issues. He asked President Famulener to place it on a future agenda so the Board can revisit the issue.

4. **Adjournment**

At 5:42 P.M., President Famulener called for adjournment of the special meeting.



Grace Santos
Secretary to the Board