

Fairfax Town Council Minutes
Special Meeting
Women's Club, 46 Park Road, Fairfax
and via teleconference
Wednesday, February 15, 2023

Mayor Cutrano called the Special meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Call to Order/Roll Call:

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: Bruce Ackerman
Lisel Blash
Barbara Coler
Chance Cutrano
Stephanie Hellman

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Heather Abrams, Town Manager
Michele Gardner, Town Clerk
David Woltering, Interim Planning Director
Janet Coleson, Town Attorney (via Zoom)
Jason Weber, Ross Valley Fire Chief

Approval of Agenda and Affidavit of Posting

M/S, Coler/Hellman, Motion to approve the affidavit of posting and the agenda as submitted.
AYES: Ackerman, Blash, Hellman, Vice Mayor Coler, Mayor Cutrano

Regular Agenda

1. Discuss/consider Ross Valley Fire Department Governance and Leadership Study and provide direction to Town representatives on the Ross Valley Fire Board

Town Manager Abrams presented a staff report. She introduced Ross Valley Fire Chief Jason Weber and consultants Jim Irving and Adam Politzer. They gave a PowerPoint presentation and answered questions from the Council regarding the data for the stand-alone vs. the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA); cost savings through sharing resources; changes in fire service; the distinction between a District and a JPA; if the districts presented in the example were all pre-Proposition 13; the amount of time it takes to set up a District vs. a JPA; fire personnel's preference for regional fire districts; if there would be a change in response times.

Mayor Cutrano opened the meeting to public comments.

Michael Mackintosh supported the recommendations of the consultants.

Frank Egger, Meadow Way, gave a history of fire service in Fairfax. He suggested hiring an Interim Chief to allow the Council adequate time to decide.

Sierra Salin supported joining with other entities as long as dispatch times weren't impacted.

Peter, Fairfax resident, commended the Fire Department's response to his recent house fire.

Liz Froneberger, former CQI RN for Central Marin Fire, stated an EMS Battalion Chief was essential for any department providing a 911 response. She supported a JPA before going to a fire district model.

Oscar Arenas, President of the Ross valley Firefighters Association, stated they would like the exploration of shared services with Central Marin Fire in the short term. In the long-term, they supported a fire district model.

Mayor Cutrano closed the meeting to public comments.

The Council discussed the matter and reached consensus to direct the Town's representatives to the RVFD Board that they would like to proceed with the joint powers agreement.

2. Discuss/consider Town Council Boards and Committee Assignments for 2023
(Continued from the February 1, 2023 meeting)

Town Clerk Gardner presented the staff report. She answered questions from the Council

Mayor Cutrano asked the Council if they would like to make changes to his or her assignments.

Councilmember Ackerman stated "no" but he was willing to give up his alternate position on TAM.

Councilmember Hellman stated she stepped down from the Climate Action Committee (CAC). The Housing Element Outreach Subcommittee and the MCCMC Economic Recovery Ad Hoc Subcommittee should be eliminated. She would be interested in sitting on the MCCMC Homeless Subcommittee and serving as delegate to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG).

Vice Mayor Coler stated she is good with what she has but would like to be the alternate to the Ross Valley Fire Board. She suggested Councilmember Hellman take on the Yellow School Bus JEPa assignment.

Councilmember Blash stated she would like to be the ABAG delegate or the alternate, serve on the MCCMC Homeless Committee, the Measure A Parks Committee, the Ross Valley Paramedic Authority (RVPA) Board, the Safe Routes to Schools Task Force, the Zero Waste Committee, the Pedestrian Trails Ad Hoc Subcommittee, alternate to the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM), and the Ross Valley School Board liaison alternate.

Councilmember Ackerman stated he was willing to give up the alternate position on TAM.

Mayor Cutrano stated he is serving as the alternate to the Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA). He would like to transition as the representative to the Fire Board.

Councilmember Hellman stated she would take over as the ABAG delegate, representative on the MCCMC Homeless Subcommittee, Ross Valley School Bus JEPa.

Mayor Cutrano opened the meeting to public comments.

Mark Bell, Fairfax, stated the Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Committee should be removed from the Town Website.

Michael Mackintosh appreciated that the Councilmembers served on other committees but asked that they prioritize the Town's needs.

Phillip Salaverry, Fairfax, agreed with the previous speaker.

Lisa Sirabella, Olema Road, suggested having two Councilmembers with opposing viewpoints on the Rent Control and Just Cause Eviction ad hoc subcommittee.

Town Attorney Coleson noted that the subcommittee had sunsetted with the adoption of the ordinances.

Mallory Geitheim agreed with the comments made by Michael Mackintosh.

Liz Froneberger agreed with the need to prioritize.

Tony Gardner supported Councilmember Blash for the MCCMC Homeless Subcommittee based on her professional background.

Kathy Flores read a letter she had sent to the Council prior to the meeting.

Georgia Gibbs supported Councilmember Blash as the Chamber of Commerce liaison.

Mayor Cutrano closed the meeting to public comments.

M/S, Coler/Blash, Motion to approve the changes in appointments as follows: Mayor Cutrano will serve as the representative to the Ross Valley Fire Department Board and the MCCMC Homeless Subcommittee; Vice Mayor Coler will serve as the RVFD Board alternate; Councilmember Hellman will serve as the ABAG delegate, the Yellow School Bus JEPa representative, the MCCMC Homeless Subcommittee representative; Councilmember Blash will serve as the TAM alternate, the ABAG delegate alternate, Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA) alternate, Council representative to the Affordable Housing Committee, Measure A Parks Subcommittee, the RVPA, Ross Valley School Board liaison alternate, Safe Routes to School Task Force, Zero Waste Committee. The following will be eliminated: the Rent Control/Just Cause Ad Hoc Subcommittee, the DEI Ad Hoc Subcommittee, the Housing Element Outreach/Communications Ad Hoc Subcommittee, the Neighborhood Safety Liaison, Chamber of Commerce liaison, and the MCCMC Economic Recovery Ad Hoc Subcommittee.

AYES: Ackerman, Blash, Hellman, Vice Mayor Coler, Mayor Cutrano

2. Adopt Resolution Authorizing the Town Manager to Execute an Amended and Restated Agreement with 4Leaf Inc. for Contract Planner Services (continued from February 1, 2023 meeting)

Town Manager Abrams presented the staff report. She answered questions from the Council regarding how long it would take to get the contract finalized; when the individual could start; how they will deal with the lack of a Planning Director; the cost and tasks; if the individual would provide oversight of the department and attend Planning Commission meetings; the timeline for hiring a permanent solution; engagement with the Housing Element consultants; costs for travel time.

Mayor Cutrano opened the meeting to public comments.

Michael Mackintosh discussed the Housing Element Update process and using his property to satisfy the RHNA numbers.

Sierra Salin stated he was concerned about the cost and having someone from outside the community work on the Housing Element.

Michael Sexton, organizer of Fairfax Residents, stated the focus of the consultant should be on the Housing Element and not the Rent Stabilization Ordinances.

Philip Salaverry, Fairfax, asked that no money be spent on the consultant for implementation of the Rent Control Stabilization ordinances.

Norma Neal, Fairfax, stated anything related to the Rent Stabilization Ordinances should be removed from the contract.

Candace, Fairfax, was concerned about the lack of staff and need to focus on the basics. She agreed with the previous speaker.

Mark Bell was concerned about how money was being spent.

Frank Egger, Meadow Way, was concerned with hiring consultants who do not know Fairfax.

Liz Froneberger agreed with comments made by Norma Neal and Michael Sexton.

Lisa Sirabella, Olema Road, agreed that the Rent Stabilization Ordinances should be excluded from the scope of work.

Kay asked about the timeline for the public comment period for the Housing Element Update.

Mallory Geitheim agreed with the previous comments.

Michele DiGregorio discussed the Rent Stabilization ordinances.

Karen Stern was concerned about missing the Housing Element deadline and filling the Planning Director position.

Raymond Burgarella stated the Housing Element was the top priority.

Naomi Alessandra, Fairfax, stated the needs of the Town included finding a Planning Director and working on the Housing Element, but there were other important issues as well.

Georgia Gibbs agreed with many of the previous comments about focusing on the Housing Element.

Chris P. stated the Town is short-staffed and he sympathized.

Claire Armitage suggested the Council prioritize mandatory projects over aspirational projects and supported removing the Rent Stabilization Ordinance work from the contract scope.

Mayor Cutrano closed the meeting to public comments.

Interim Planning Director Woltering stated the scope showed a range of projects, and that the consultant would review the ordinances for familiarity, but the focus would be on the Housing Element.

The Council reached consensus on the need to prioritize the Housing Element and to pause the implementation of the Rent Stabilization ordinances until after the workshop.

M/S, Ackerman/Hellman, Motion to Adopt a Resolution Authorizing the Town Manager to Execute an Amended and Restated Agreement with 4Leaf Inc. for Contract Planner Services.
AYES: Ackerman, Blash, Hellman, Vice Mayor Coler, Mayor Cutrano

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 p.m.