

CALIFORNIA FIRE SAFE COUNCIL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING: Open Session
February 8, 2011
McClellan, CA 9:00-200 p.m.

Board members attending: Bruce Turbeville, Pat Frost, Pat Kidder, Frank Stewart, J. Lopez, Kate Dargan, Troy Whitman, Jay Watson, David Horne, Dave Bischel and Neil Fischer. Excused: Jerry Davies, Jo Ann Fites, and Wally McCall

Staff attending: Margaret Grayson, Amber Gardner, Dan Lang, Liron Galliano, Randy Richter, Dave Farley, Denise Carrington, Cathy Brooke, Katie Ziemann, Katy van Ruiten, Alli Shetler, Dalonna Scott and Diane Wells.

Guests attending:

Bill Brandt- Auburn Lake Trails Fire Safe Council/El Dorado County Fire Safe Council

Ken Hasse- El Dorado County Fire Safe Council

Joanne Drummond- FSC of Nevada County

Ryan McDermott- Nevada Fire Safe Council/Tahoe Region

Jerry Tanhauser- Highway 108 Fire Safe Council

Laura Dyberg- Mt. Rim FSC/Inland Empire Fire Safe Alliance

Robin Yonash- Greater Colfax FSC

Julie Rogers- Mendocino County Fire Safe Council

George Alves- Placer County Fire Safe Alliance

Phyllis Banducci- CALFIRE

Jon and Pat Spinetta- Mt. Laguna Fire Safe Council

Edwina Scott-Mountain Communities Fire Safe Council

Linda Colombo- Nashville/Sandridge FSC

Vicky Yorty- El Dorado County FSC

Jan Cokely-Santa Clara County Fire Safe Council

Judie Irwin- Grizzly Flats Fire Safe Council

Call to order: Chairman Kidder called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. and welcomed those attending.

Approval of November 9, 2010 Minutes Mr. Whitman moved to approve the meeting minutes from November 9, 2010, Mr. Frost seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Local Fire Safe Councils Remarks

Joanne Drummond- (Fire Safe Council of Nevada County): Ms. Drummond was pleased to announce the formation of a new public forum called the Fire Safe Communities Association (FSCA). The intent of the FSCA is to share experiences and resources that are common to fire safe councils in California and to provide services that the California Fire Safe Council cannot or does not want to complete. One of the first tasks of this forum will be to assist homeowners with fire insurance cancellations. Ms Drummond said other issues the forum will address is

hazardous fuel implementation, non-profit forms (such as policies and procedures manual) and collaboration among fire safe councils. Ms. Drummond remarked that this forum will attempt to eliminate the “middle man” and provide services to local fire safe councils. Ms. Drummond requested California Fire Safe Council’s support because she feels this new forum will be mutually beneficial.

Ms. Yonash remarked that the website for the FSCA will post other organizations that will be supportive. This website is www.firesafecommunitiesassociation.weebly.com.

Ms. Drummond added that she had spoken to several California Fire Safe Council Board members about this new proposal and they were supportive.

Mr. Stewart commented that he saw a real benefit in this group.

Ms. Gardner asked Ms. Drummond how this group would be funded. Ms. Drummond responded that this group is all volunteer at this point.

Edwina Scott (Mountain Communities Fire Safe Council): Ms. Scott thanked the Board members for their continued support and for all the grants they have received in the past. Ms. Scott remarked that her fire safe council really saw value in the Ember Awareness training and has been able to coordinate eight local workshops on the subject. The MCFSC has recently been awarded a FEMA grant to replace shake shingle roofs in their community. She thanked the Board again and asked them to keep up the good work.

Ms. Grayson asked Ms. Scott to tell the audience about their meeting on Feb 16th. Ms. Scott responded that the MCFSC is hosting a meeting with USFS representatives to discuss community partnerships.

Pat Spinetta (Mt. Laguna Fire Safe Council): Ms. Spinetta thanked the Board for their help and support of local fire safe councils. She also complimented the CFSC Board for the grant management and coordinating of the Grants Clearinghouse. Ms. Spinetta remarked that she appreciated that CFSC is available to assist with all aspects of grant writing and management. She said that fire insurance cancellations are a major issue for their area as well. She recommended that CFSC form a small working group to tackle issues such as insurance cancellations and CEQA and NEPA, instead of CFSC supporting the newly formed FSCA. These issues are much bigger than local fire safe councils and counties and it needs to be dealt with on the state level.

Ms. Yonash remarked that the intention of the FSCA group is to have all those agencies Ms. Spinetta mentioned in the association so they can work on it together.

Mr. Kidder said he really enjoys hearing what local fire safe councils are doing. He said with the economic climate he is not sure how much money is going to be available for local fire safe councils in the Clearinghouse this year. Mr. Kidder mentioned the uncertainty in funding will also affect the California Fire Safe Council. He said that CFSC has written letters to the

Secretary of Interior and Agriculture and let local fire safe council know what the impact will be on the local level. It's going to be the local fire safe councils that will move on the momentum.

Ms. Rogers asked that the Board take a vote on supporting the Fire Safe Communities Association today.

Mr. Fischer responded that he would like more time to consider the proposal. Mr. Frost agreed. Ms. Dargan stated she wanted to consider this as a Board because while she supports the concept, thinks the implication is that this new group will confuse CFSC's identity. She remarked that the Board needs to be careful that they do not delude the CFSC image. Ms. Dargan suggested the issue be put on the agenda for the next meeting. The entire Board commented on their thoughts and agreed that they wanted more time to consider this proposal. Ms. Dargan and Mr. Lopez both volunteered to gather more information on the issue for the next Board meeting.

Treasurer's Report December 31, 2010 Financial Statement:

Mr. Horne passed out two items: the 2011 projected budget, and a spreadsheet showing the open grants with remaining funds. Mr. Whitman made a motion to approve the December 31, 2010 financial statements. Mr. Watson seconded. Unanimously approved.

Presentation of the CFSC Financial Forecast

Mr. Horne asked the Board to review the CFSC Open Grants with remaining funds spreadsheet. He said the Finance Committee and the accountant met recently in Long Beach and to predict the financial status based on available funds and uncertain future funding. He said in 2011 CFSC's funding level does not change. He predicted a total of \$17.7 million in grant income with \$16.4 million of that amount passed through to grantees. Mr. Stewart asked how many subgrants that number represents. Ms. Grayson said that it represents about 292 open grants. Mr. Watson asked if any of these master grants will be rescinded. Mr. Kidder remarked that all the CFSC grants in hand are safe for their duration since CFSC has grant agreements in place.

Mr. Horne stated that if CFSC reduces general expenses, any surplus funds cannot be rolled into grants. Mr. Stewart asked how the timing works with grants and why CFSC continues to work on grant funds into the future. Mr. Horne explained the contracted schedule on each grant. Mr. Horne says that in 2013 we will fall off a cliff with no new funding. He also stated this graph is the most dire situation for CFSC.

Mr. Horne asked the Board to look at the projections sheet. One version has a projection if CFSC receives \$5 million and the other shows no new grant money for 2012 Clearinghouse year. Mr. Kidder and Ms. Dargan really liked these projections. Ms. Dargan asked Mr. Horne to identify which of the grant program income sources are line-item budgets and which are earmarks. Ms. Grayson said probably FS 11B, 11ES, 11WUI are NOT earmarks. The vast majority of the recent USFS moneys are earmarks; such as 09SFA, 10ES, 09X, 11SFA,

11SFAX. Ms. Dargan said it may be reasonable to assume \$0 in earmarks in the future and 50% in line-items. Ms. Grayson said that everything she has heard indicates there will be some USFS money and it will look different and may have some different requirements. Mr. Horne said he thinks the match requirement will be high; 25-50%. Mr. Kidder said the Interior is trying to develop a stove pipe organization that all projects will be approved at the Secretary of the Interior level.

Mr. Stewart said that both agencies are shifting into collaborative forest projects funding only. He said it completely dismisses the work that the local fire safe councils are doing. He appreciates that the local fire safe councils are thinking beyond 100 foot clearance.

Mr. Horne repeated that in 2011 the level of service and funding will and should continue throughout 2011. It also helps deliver to the funders that we are continuing to deliver the same amount of good service. In 2012 we will deal with what needs to happen with the budget.

Mr. Fischer would urge the Board to take on this issue at the next Board meeting. Mr. Kidder asked what the Board would like to be made available at the next Board meeting. He stated he would like the Board to start working on both budget projections. Ms. Grayson added that we should give the staff as much notice as possible if there are to be lay-offs. Mr. Frost asked to see a summary of what budget projections mean to our annual work plan? Mr. Stewart asked to see the same report with information about grants by region, percent completed, by region, number and dollar amount.

Approval of 2011 Budget

Mr. Frost made a motion to approve the 2011 budget and Mr. Turbeville seconded.

Discussion: Mr. Stewart asked why all the fees are going down except the Accounting. Ms. Grayson responded that the some of the regular financial work are done by staff and that will change with a decrease in funding.

Unanimous approval.

BREAK-----

Reconvene at 10:35 a.m.

Executive Director's Report/Clearinghouse:

Ms. Grayson reported on various recent projects the organization has been working on.

She reported that Jerry Davies with Farmers Insurance recently awarded two mini-grants to local fire safe councils; Arrowhead Communities Fire Safe Council and El Dorado County Fire Safe Council.

Ms. Grayson also stated CFSC is starting to close-out USFS grants. Mr. Stewart asked what

happens if there are surplus funds? Ms. Grayson responded that you use the money or lose it; they cannot be rolled into other grants. The USFS will bill CFSC for any unused funds.

Ms. Grayson spoke about the website revisions. Three of CFSC's staff have expertise with working and revising websites and they have begun planning revisions. Mr. Stewart asked if one of the job descriptions cannot be re-written to have the staff be working on that.

Mr. Davies has informed CFSC that \$50,000 may be given to CFSC to sponsor two regional fire safe council conferences. Mr. Davies, Ms. Grayson and several Board members will meet later this month to decide on the potential of this project. If this project moves forward, one Conference would be held in Sacramento and one potentially in Ontario.

Ms. Grayson said that Cathy Brooke will attend a three day class on writing FEMA grants since Ms. Grayson will not be able to attend. The meeting will take place on February 23-25, 2011 in Pasadena. Mr Lopez remarked that up to \$180-200 million in federal funding from FEMA may be available this year, and FEMA would like to train individuals on how to submit grants to their program.

Mr. Horne reminded Mr. Stewart that the FEMA grants are primarily for permanent fixes, like replacing roofs but not for cutting trees. Ms. Dargan said the conversation should start with Cal EMA to partner with FEMA.

Ms. Grayson noted that the Clearinghouse did open on Jan 5th and the deadline for grant submittals is April 1. She reminded the Board that CFSC needs to open the Clearinghouse in case money does come and so that applications can be ready. Ms. Grayson remarked that the tentative calendar for the Clearinghouse includes an applicant notification deadline of July 15th. There may be the need to extend the Clearinghouse deadline to incorporate any last minute changes. We are getting a lot of requests to host the workshops. None have been scheduled yet, but she would like the Board to consider scheduling those workshops, possibly one per grant manager, with a maximum of 6 total in the State. We are researching the potential of using live/ interactive video conferencing, digital versions of workbook materials and printed workbooks for instruction.

Mr. Frost commented that video conferencing is available at all USFS offices throughout the State. These are live, interactive feeds that individuals would need to go to a USFS office to participate in. Shasta Trinity area said they would be interested in assisting with it, but need to work out some details.

Mr. Kidder wanted to hear from the Board what their opinions are on the Clearinghouse workshops. Mr. Horne asked if there are changes this year that need to be communicated. Are there new grantees this year? They should be able to download the manual online. Ms. Grayson commented that there are new changes this year, and there are always new applicants. Ms. Dargan thinks there should be no more than 4, and the face to face is important to explain the uncertainty in the funding. Mr. Fischer stated that he's not sure, but want us to ask the local fire safe councils to spend that time to lobby for more funding. Mr. Lopez said the exchange of

information is very important between fire safe councils at the meeting. Mr. Bischel said he wanted to extend the closing date to June 1st.

Ms. Dyberg stated that she has to make choices on when she takes off work to attend a session.

Mr. Tannhauser stated the timing of the workshop is important to the due date of the application. He likes more time before the deadline, and to look at the options of printing.

Ms. Columbo likes the CD idea, and would like the individual fire safe councils to put on the grant writing workshops themselves.

Ms. Drummond has had success with webinars in the past.

Ms. Cokely likes the varying degrees of functionality, one or two workshops, a webinar and CDs.

Ms. Yonash wants as much time as possible to put the grant applications together.

Mr. Watson made a motion to put on 4-5 workshops and extend the deadline to May 1st. Mr. Frost seconded. Ms. Dargan said she thinks we should have a normal review process this year, since she believes it is too aggressive to assume we are not getting any federal money this year.

Mr. Kidder said his amendment is to extend the Clearinghouse to June 1st, would like the in-person workshops to be given if there are enough new people, 4-6 weeks before the deadline. Mr. Lopez amended the motion to say that we research multiple ways to convene the workshops and use different media for the instructional booklets.

Ms. Brooke spoke in favor of more local fire safe council workshops and that they are important to keep them. She also spoke to the value of in person workshops and making sure the information is the same for each workshop. She also thought there is a value in the printed workbooks. CFSC shares them with legislators, the press and new fire safe council groups.

Mr. Tannhauser would like to make a suggestion that each fire safe council research whether video teleconferencing is available in their area.

Mr. Fischer made a motion to extend the Clearinghouse deadline to June 1st, 2011. Second by Frank Stewart.

Mr. Stewart made a motion to have two workshops to each region. He would like to defer to the grant managers on determining the best timing for the workshops. Second by Mr. Turbeville. Mr. Lopez recommended that we also experiment with video teleconferencing and multi-media sources. Unanimously passed.

Mr. Horne made a motion to have the review process coordinated with the revised time

schedule. Mr. Lopez seconded the motion. Unanimously passed.

Discussion on Executive Session Model:

Mr. Frost reported on his research into Closed Executive Sessions for CFSC Board meetings. He reported that CFSC is not subject to the Brown Act but we should establish guidelines because we are entrusted with managing large sums of federal money. He suggested that CFSC should follow basic Roberts Rules of Order for all Board meetings. Mr. Frost mentioned that agenda items such as litigation, personnel, trademarked items and strategic planning should always occur under closed session.

Mr. Stewart asked if there were ever items that should not be on the closed session. Mr. Kidder wants our policy regarding executive sessions to be public knowledge and he indicated that our intention is to conduct most business in open sessions.

Presentation on CFSC Business Model:

Ms. Dargan reported on the draft CFSC Business Model Plan. She noted that Joanne Fites worked with her on developing this.

“The mission of CFSC is to mobilize California’s to protect their homes, communities and environments from wildfire.” With that mission in mind, Ms. Dargan asked the group to consider alternate ways for CFSC to meet the mission with diminished grant sources. The existing model is focused primarily on the Clearinghouse. Is this the business model that we want to pursue or is it time to change it? Is it strategically time to further our mission and is this model the model we want to stay with?

Mr. Stewart added one of the tasks should expand to say developing and managing federal and state grant funds, not just federal grants.

Mr. Watson stated that bringing grants to local groups should always remain the heart of the organization, since we are so nimble at doing that, and stay true to that.

Mr. Kidder stated that local fire safe councils have really grown from the implementation of the National Fire Plan. He’s questioned that going away from being a grant funder would really change the state of the local fire safe councils.

Ms. Dargan asked what are the multi-year funding sources out there?

Mr. Watson thinks that we need to focus more on the CFSC message, and he asked if we really defined what it means to be a fire safe council.

Mr. Lopez said there is a natural evolution in fire safe councils. We need to realign and move with them.

Mr. Turbeville stated that the education is the key.

Mr. Kidder asked that Ms. Grayson post the CFSC business model on the website and ask for input from local fire safe council groups.

Other Items:

Mr. Fischer stated his goal as a new Board member is to attend as many local fire safe council meeting as possible. He recently met with the Santa Clara County FSC and Fire Safe Marin. He thanked the local fire safe councils for the hard work. Mr. Fischer said he would like to attend the Butte County Fire Safe Council meeting soon.

Mr. Horne reported that he has spoken with the web consultant and got a recommendation for him to update the website. The consultant's estimate was \$10,000 to update the website. Mr. Horne proposed to obtain a formal bid to upgrade the website and move control over to the local administration.

Mr. Frost commented on a series of four upcoming workshops with the Society of American Forestry on stewardship contracting and collaboration. No dates are set yet but are forthcoming.

Ms. Dargan will be doing three presentations: California Fire Chiefs Fire Prevention, WUI Conference in Reno and one with fire safe planning with Carol Rice.

Mr. Stewart said February 24th is the next Sierra Dialog meeting and is geared toward the forthcoming land management division process. March 3rd is the next Sierra Nevada Conservancy meeting and he will be attending and asking for \$3 million to be held for the county wide coordinators funding.

Adjournment of Board to Executive Session:

Mr. Horne made a motion to move into Executive Session at 1:45 p.m. Mr. Whitman seconded. All approved unanimously. The closed session included the election of new officers, an update on pending litigation, discussion on a potential environmental clearance proposal, the reelection of current board member and the election to the board of new member Phyllis Banducci.

2011 Board of Directors Meetings:

May 11, 2011 Oakland, East Bay Regional Park District; Lake Temescal
November 9, 2011 San Diego

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Amber Gardner
Clearinghouse Manager