



Promoting Wildfire Safety Through Education and Action

**Santa Barbara County Fire Safe Council
Executive Committee Meeting
June 20, 2023**

Executive Committee Directors Present: Paul Van Leer, Rob Hazard, Kevin Varga, Victoria Cooper, Nic Elmquist

Executive Committee Directors Absent: None

Others Present: Anne-Marie Parkinson, Kate Furlong, Jessie Tobin, Scott Coffman, Ted Adams, Phil Seymour

1. [CA Fire tors and Foundation Grant](#) - partnership with Wildfire Defense Mesh (aka Brushfire Mesh) on a grant for vent retrofits and education

- Wildfire Defense Mesh reached out about partnering on an application for this grant opportunity doing a vent retrofit and education program.
- Max award = \$25,000; application deadline = midnight June 30, 2023
- Grant application idea: create a vent retrofit education program where we buy and provide the materials to train community leaders how to do DIY vent retrofits so we empower them and provide them with the resources to help their vulnerable neighbors do vent retrofit. This is similar to Fire Department programs buying smoke detectors and handing them out.
- Kate has managed a grant from this organization before and says it is very easy to manage.
- To ensure we are not promoting a singular product we can explain to residents the option of mesh material and let them choose what they want.
- MOTION: approve AMP to complete a draft application for the CA Fire Foundation grant for EC review prior to submission.

2. Chipping Grant Allocation Discussion

- Director Seymour brought up the concern about (1) the amount of chipping funds being spent at Hollister Ranch, (2) potential work being done outside of the scope of the grant, and (3) the EC not following the EC bylaws of getting the chipping contracts approved by the board prior to implementation.
- Concern 1:
 - Director Hazard, Elmquist, and Van Leer stress the importance of community organization in order to receive additional (or any) assistance

through these community based programs. Hollister Ranch was a very organized community who expressed their needs. While there are an intermix of vulnerable residents in the WUI, a majority of the homeowners in the high fire hazard areas in SB are fiscally comfortable. Lastly, while it is easy to split areas up by community, it is important to remember that everything is connected and fire does not follow human designated boundaries, so work done in one community affects fire risk in adjacent areas/communities, including vulnerable communities in the low/no fire hazard areas.

- At the end of the 2023 chipping season, the PM, not the subcontractor, will create and send a report outlining funds spent in each community, participation level, etc. and come up with recommendations for work and a potential schedule for the 2024 Chipping season to ensure more dispersed use of funds.
- Concern 2:
 - Director Coffman recommends cutting the last 3 weeks of work from HR (week of July 10-24) as further review reveals this work is not supported by the grant SOW.
 - Kate/Jessie will write a draft letter to be sent to SB Tree Care about the reduction in work in Hollister Ranch.
 - The PM will seek additional chipping needs to try to cover these 3 weeks of work. The EC will be updated on progress.
- Concern 3:
 - The EC agrees this was an oversight, thanks to Director Seymour for bringing this to their attention
 - The Board will be provided the Chipping contracts to review and vote on at the next board meeting.
- Director Coffman will pull together an estimate of Hollister Ranch's in-kind match contribution to the chipping work.

3. Employee car damage during FSC work

- Gustavo's car was slightly damaged in a hit and run when picking up leftover brush from a chipping area.
- AMP to review what other nonprofits have done in this case and provide a recommendation to the EC.
- AMP will also include a policy for use of employee vehicles for FSC work to be included in the upcoming Employee Handbook.
- For future brush left over by the chipping contractors, the PM will reach out to the local FD to remove it.

4. ED 2023 priority tasks

- Priority ED tasks for the remainder of 2023 are to work on getting the FSC finances caught up, creating a financial plan, and writing policies and procedures to be included in an Employee Handbook.

5. SBCFSC finances

- Discuss creating a Finance Subcommittee and recruiting participants at the next board meeting.

ED Administrative Update

- Submitted the CFSC Defensible Space grant for \$500,000 to help vulnerable residents do defensible space. Grant period is Sept 2023-Dec 2024. We should hear back late July if we are awarded the grant. Fingers crossed!
- Addressing a misclassification in our workers compensation policy where they incorrectly recorded the wrong estimated annual payroll and clerical codes. We still have coverage though, we're just paying a little more than we should be which will be addressed at the end of the policy where they will do an audit to determine how much we actually owe and either reimburse us or ask us to pay the difference.

Motions:

- Approve AMP to complete a draft application for the CA Fire Foundation grant for EC review prior to submission. Director Hazard makes the motion, Director Cooper seconds, all in favor.
- Cut the last 3 weeks (week of July 10th-24th) of chipping funded work in Hollister Ranch and provide a written letter to SB Tree Care of this change in the schedule. Rob makes the motion, Kevin seconds, all in favor.

Minutes submitted respectfully: Anne-Marie Parkinson