



**MARIN OPERATIONAL AREA  
DISASTER & CITIZEN CORPS COUNCIL**  
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**Minutes of the June 13, 2019 Meeting**

The Regular meeting of the Marin Operational Area Disaster and Citizen Corps Council (DC3) was held Thursday, June 13, 2019.

**Council Members Present:** Judy Arnold, Frank Cox, Ed Schulze, Catherine Way, Jason Weber, Mike Grant, Garry Lion, Mohamed Osman, and Peter Mendoza. **Council Members Excused:** Mike McDermott, Keith Kennedy, Bill Tyler, Lisa Santora, Joe Chinn, Denis O'Leary, Kimberley Bowman, Vincent Valenzuela, and Jack Baker.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**Marin County Supervisor Judy Arnold ("Chair")** called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. The meeting was held in the Board Chambers, Marin County Board of Supervisors, 3501 Civic Center Drive, Admin Building, Third Floor, Room 330, San Rafael, California 94903.

**APPROVAL OF March 14, 2019 MINUTES**

*Due to lack of a quorum early in the meeting, the Minutes were approved towards the end of the session.*

*The Chair asked for a Motion to Approve the March 14, 2019 minutes after a quorum was met. As submitted to the Council, with a wording correction requested by Frank Cox and no additions, the Minutes were adopted.*

**Motion: Schulze / Second: Cox**

**AYES: ALL**

**2. CHANGES TO AGENDA:**

**Maggie Lang with CERT** requested additions to the agenda.

After speaking with the new director for the Disaster Service Worker program, he confirmed that Marin County CERT was already in compliance on how they swear in CERT students as disaster service workers for the County.

Maggie discussed her experience working as the coordinator of Marin CERT for the last eight years. Being that it was her last day, she wanted to recognize two volunteers for their work – *Diane Ayers*, a retired nurse and member of the Medical Reserve Corps and *Skip Fedanzo*, chair for the steering committee for Central Marin CERT and also a member of the County CERT steering committee. Both were recognized as Volunteers of the Year and were given an award. Their names will also be added to the CERT Perpetual Plaque.

Skip presented Maggie a parting gift as thanks for her time as the CERT coordinator and her service to the County.

*Supervisor Arnold* also recognized Maggie, recounting her accomplishments early on in disaster preparedness in the schools that expanded to the entire County, and eventually as the Marin County CERT coordinator. She emphasized neighbors helping neighbors and developing citizen volunteers willing to help each other. Maggie has assisted in developing Get Ready, Get Ready 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, Marin Business Emergency Readiness Program (MBER) and CERT. She has educated Marin County youth and residents, while collaborating with other disaster councils. *Supervisor Arnold* thanked Maggie for her service and dedication to the County.

### **3. PRESENTATIONS:**

*PG&E Public Safety Power Shut-Off Program, by Mark Van Gorder and Jim Wickham – PG&E.*

The following were the highlights that were outlined during the PowerPoint presentation:

1. <http://www.prepareforpowerdown.com> – information for being prepared for power shut downs
2. 3 Pillars:
  - a. Monitoring and Intelligence
  - b. New and Enhanced Safety Measures
  - c. System Hardening and Resiliency
3. A considerable portion of the County of Marin is designated as an elevated or extreme fire threat, as determined by California Public Utilities Commission
4. Monitoring wildfire risks taking place 24/7 in the Wildfire Safety Operations Center
5. Installation of approximately 1,300 new weather stations by 2022 – information found at [mesowest.utah.edu](http://mesowest.utah.edu)
6. Supporting the installation of approximately 600 high-definition cameras by 2022 – images available at [alertwildfire.org](http://alertwildfire.org)
7. Expansion and enhancement of the Vegetation Management Program – in high fire danger areas, further inspection of the vegetation around power lines will be evaluated
8. Safety inspections ongoing, including Marin County, and will continue using foot patrols, off road vehicles, drones, and helicopters
9. Maintenance and repairs are classified by priority level. Most urgent work will be done first with continuous updates of the system as problems arise. In some areas, concrete or steel poles are being installed which are less impacted by fires. “Tree wire” is also being used in some areas. It is an insulated wire and will reduce arching and sparking of the wires if an animal or tree is on the wire.
10. Disabling of automatic reclosing of circuit breakers and reclosers on lines in high fire-risk areas during wildfire season. Where PG&E has remote control capability, they disable reclosing based on a daily decision-making process during times of elevated risk.
11. Factors that are considered that may cause a Public Safety Power Shutoff:
  - a. Red flag warning
  - b. Low humidity levels – generally 20% and below
  - c. Forecasted sustained winds generally above 25 MPH and wind gusts in the excess of approximately 45 MPH
  - d. Condition of dry fuel
  - e. On the ground, real-time observations
12. Notifications of a PSPS event – if there is 72 hours of advanced notice, PG&E will work with the National Weather Service, CalOES, and will be talking to local office of emergency services and will work on notifications to prepare for a potential power shut down.
  - a. PG&E Emergency Operations Center in San Francisco, will activate if they see a potential event meriting a power shut down
  - b. After meeting with their internal Emergency Operations Center, they will reach out to local jurisdictions for public notification
  - c. Means of notification:

- i. City/County/Agency Notifications
    - 1. AlertMarin
    - 2. Nixle
  - ii. PG&E Customer Notifications
    - 1. Phone call
    - 2. Text
    - 3. Email
    - 4. Social Media
    - 5. Local News/Radio outlets
  - d. Public notification, when possible would occur:
    - i. ~48 hours before electricity is turned off
    - ii. ~24 hours before electricity is turned off
    - iii. Just before the electricity is turned off
    - iv. During the Public Safety Outage
    - v. Once power has been restored
  - e. Medical baseline customers – voluntary list of citizens enrolled in a PG&E program that offers discounts and other services –not comprehensive medical needs list.  
Notifications will be made by:
    - i. Phone calls, email, or text and will request a response that the message was received.
    - ii. If no response from the previous means, PG&E will send a representative to their home
    - iii. If no one is home, the representative will leave a door hanger to advise of the potential of a shut down.
  - f. PG&E may call off the power shut off based on weather changes and/or projections.
  - g. Once the event has passed, all lines have to be checked before portions of the circuit are reenergized. It can take 12 hours or 24 hours for the lines to be checked. Citizens must be prepared for three or four days of power outages. In some areas, it may even be five days.
13. Visit [www.pge.com/wildfiresafety](http://www.pge.com/wildfiresafety) to learn more. If you are a PG&E customer, it is important to sign up for an online account. Make sure your contact information is correct and up to date. If you have questions, please call (866) 743-6589

Questions/Comments:

**Garry Lion, Marin Economic Forum Representative** – Since few people have the means to maintain refrigerators/freezers for an extended period of time, is PG&E recommending the public to get personal generators or back up batteries to provide their own power? Yes. **Ed Shulze, District 5 Representative**, added if citizens do get a generator, that they should not attach it to the house’s main circuit, but to have it wired to a transfer switch. *This is an important point to add and it is best for an electrician to install it to ensure it works properly.*

**Frank Cox, Consumer Representative District 1** – There can be issues with operating home generators during a power shut down, especially with the older population. This can create a risk for starting a fire and other hazards. Does PG&E recognize the issues this could present if a shutdown were to happen? *There are ways to operate generators safely. If someone isn’t able to use one safely on their own, then they could arrange for someone to assist them.* Frank: We will receive alerts that are sent before the shutdown. But what will happen a couple days into the shutdown? Cell providers’ backup systems might last a day or less. The public cannot rely on these methods to receive evacuation notices or updates on the power shutdown. We need mandatory resiliency in the communications systems so that alerts will get to citizens during these outages. There has to be collaborative effort

between PG&E and the Legislature. They need to provide this resiliency for the power that is needed to keep communication systems alive. *Not speaking from the company's but from my own, I encourage everyone to get a solar phone charging unit for this reason. It can power cell phones and other equipment. We will take this point back to PG&E for further discussion.*

**Catherine Way, Marin Council of Mayors & Councilmembers Representative** – In regards to vegetation management, there are homes that have power poles on their property. Will PG&E conduct mitigation work around the pole regardless if it's on public or private land, 12' out from the lines? Is there any recourse homeowner may have to disagree with that? *PG&E is following CPUC guidelines, trying to make a safe distance around power lines and take a look at the vegetation. There isn't much recourse for the homeowner, but we try to notify the residents and let them know. Sometimes when we do go 12' out, it is because of some trees grow more quickly into the lines and we can't come out every two months to keep them maintained.*

**Catherine Way:** Whose responsibility is it from the power pole to the home in terms of mitigation? *It's a partnership. The homeowner is responsible for service drop area. We would like people to call PG&E at (800) 743-5000 and let them know what day the customer is planning to trim around the service drop. PG&E will clear the line three to four feet away from the main energy area where it loads down to the service drop. From there to the house, it's the customer's responsibility. PG&E will de-energize the line while you do maintenance and will power it back on later when you are done.*

**Catherine Way:** I heard that one of the fires in Calistoga may have been caused by a boot legged power pole. I'm not sure how many of them exist in Marin, but are you researching if those are being maintained? *We maintain poles that we're aware of, but if someone is bootlegging a pole we don't know where it is.*

**Mike Grant, Marin County Office of Education Representative:** Is there guidance for schools besides resources we have been shown today? What are the recommendations for schools if the power is out for three to four days? I would think that since we have so many types of schools and locations, it would be based on the individual school. Is there something regionally that's being prepared? *We don't have guidelines specifically for the schools but we will take that back for further discussion. We do have large customer account representatives that deal with cities, public works and water treatment plants etc. I will have someone contact you for schools' specific needs.* Mike: I will work up a draft of information we learned here for Marin County schools and will add more information when we connect. I would like the schools to be as well prepared as possible.

**Peter Mendoza, AFN Representative:** Can you delve into what PG&E is doing or planning for those with access and functional needs? I'm sure you're aware of those with disabilities who use equipment that is dependent on power for wheelchairs and respirators. It's not just for activities but in some cases, these are things that allow us to live. Having the power off for five days may cause people with disabilities, seniors, and those with other access and functional needs, to have their own personal emergency. *This is a company focus and priority. We are collaborating more than ever with county offices of emergency services, health and human services, and VOAD. We are trying to work with as many people as possible to identify where we can go, what we can do, and where we can help. We do have a list of people on our medical baseline list, but it is going to be a whole community response. Not to mitigate or reduce our responsibility to help get the message out, this a community effort. People should help their neighbors. We need to make sure that messaging goes out. We also need to identifying people who may have that special and specific need for electricity and ensure they are receiving notification. We need to find a place where we can set up a generator. If it's for a longer duration, we need to determine if there needs to be a shelter or evacuation site opened. We'd work with OES to make sure there's generation and power, more importantly for those who have critical needs.* Peter: So I understand correctly, is PG&E willing to partner with the County of Marin to help make sure

citizens have generators at their homes or generation available to them? *Not residence by residence. We will work to identify locations where we can establish generation if people need to leave their homes for medical needs, etc. We can also set up cooling centers for hot weather. There are many different scenarios where we'd partner to find locations with large generators to provide power. But we aren't able to go home by home to establish small generators.* Peter: Marin Center of Independent Living has been working in conjunction with Health and Human Services, and he wanted to thank **Dr. Lisa Santora**, County of Marin Deputy Public Health Officer, with her help with the Public Health Preparedness Program. Information was added to the Health and Human Services website to help the AFN community with the power safety power shut off. There is also a list of ten recommendations including asking utilities to help develop an equipment program for people who need power or batteries, to increase notification, and make sure that people know the locations of cooling centers. PG&E notifies citizens on the medical base line list, but one of the things we would like to see is the utilization of CERT to check on people in the community. It would be neighbor to neighbor; especially if you know someone is dependent, to check on them more routinely.

We would also like to see buses made available so that the fire department can go to someone's home for someone who needs help. We have a lot of people in Marin who can't necessarily leave their home, or can't get to their home independently. Some can't get through the door because they use automatic, power operated doors. There are two points I want to make. One, we feel people with disabilities were brought into this discussion late and we are now playing catch up. Secondly when there is an emergency power shut off, no disaster is officially declared, but public safety will be doing what they have to do when the power is out. They will also have to respond to people with disabilities and those who need other assistance. We would encourage PG&E to provide more support from a fiscal point of view.

We appreciate what is trying to be done to with wildfires. People say we all have plans, but often times our plans need support from others. *We will take these comments back and take deeper dive on how we can be more collaborative and provide support.*

From the Citizens:

Patty from the Corte Madera Disaster Council – I heard about a red flag warning last week and emailed PG&E to ask if we were going to power down and get a heads up about it. I never got a response back other than to refer to their website for information, but I didn't receive a response. Are we able to get answers directly and do we have to wait for a power down alert, or can we go somewhere to see whether or not a power down was going to happen? There is a *website where someone can check their address to see if they're part of a planned shut off. People should be getting alerts and updates, need to make sure your account information is up to date. Referring to the website will advise you what areas will have power and those that won't.*

**VOAD Update, by Peter Mendoza:**

Marin VOAD, also commonly known as the Marin Inter-Agency Disaster Coalition (MIDC), is an association of organizations designed to mitigate the impact of disasters in Marin County. We have sixty members, and a distinct organization with committee members from nonprofit, faith based, government agencies, and private businesses. We have been working hard in the past year to increase our membership. We are the only organization that holds a seat at EOC that represents MIDC. Research has been done that determined counties that have a VOAD are less impacted by disasters and we feel they have a big role in our communities. This year alone, we have held a number of activities. This includes four conference calls in response to emergencies, including the mudslides in Sausalito. We are educating people on recovery, how we can support people in Marin after a disaster happens. We will be

holding our first conference in a three part series, focusing on disaster response in Marin County on Tuesday, September 17, 2019 at the Jewish Community Center in San Rafael.

I also wanted to acknowledge **Adriana Rabkin**, a lot of the work we have been doing, including expanding our membership and activities, is in part because of her work. We encourage everyone to get involved in MIDC. Like other organizations within Marin County that act in emergencies, we are a really integral part of the Marin disaster plan. We are working to bring people together, government agencies, community groups, and work together to take what we discuss and educate the community. We all have to come together when a disaster occurs. Lastly, MIDC recently was able to get funding to fund Adriana's position, part-time.

**Adriana Rabkin, MIDC Coordinator**, explained they recently received a grant from the Marin Community Foundation to support their work. In order for a VOAD to be effective, a paid coordinator is necessary. She said they were very lucky that the Marin Community Foundation has funded the position for one year. It is contingent on additional funding, the foundation has requested that they go to the County for additional funding because the need for a full-time position. People can refer to their website that is in the process of being updated at [www.midcpartners.org](http://www.midcpartners.org), but one would only get a sense of what the organization was in the past but not what it has become today. They're focusing on conferences and building membership among the community. They are trying to get in touch with all the community organizations that will inevitably step up in a disaster. MIDC encourages everyone to attend their next meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month – July 10<sup>th</sup> from 9:30-11:00 am.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **Response to Grand Jury Report “Wildfire Preparedness: A New Approach”**

The intention today was to comment on a few of the items that were mentioned in the Grand Jury report. OES is responsible for the following items that were addressed:

1. *Alert and Warning Systems* – There is some clarification needed about the difference between our alert and warning systems. The report recommended collecting Marin residents' information and add it to Alert Marin and Nixle and to make them opt out systems. There is some confusion with descriptions of these systems as being opt in/opt out.
  - a. Alert Marin is a hybrid system. We do have residents' information provided by AT&T, Verizon, as well as Comcast for VoIP customers. Any traditional landlines, including Comcast lines, are in our system – virtually 100% of all who have traditional landlines are in Alert Marin. The data includes the customer's name and address. We use Alert Marin for geolocating notifications using their addresses to notify people in a particular area that will be affected by a disaster. We notify people to take action, for evacuation, to shelter in place, etc. There is confusion that lies in the description as opt in/opt out. Because we have the information in the system from the different phone companies, that portion would qualify as opt out. People are able to opt out if they choose, but we encourage them not to. It is important for them to be notified when we want to them to act in an emergency. If people do want to opt out, they can email [alertmarin@marinsheriff.org](mailto:alertmarin@marinsheriff.org) or call us at the office. We generally don't get many opt out requests, but that option is available. In terms of an-opt in system, we encourage people to register for Alert Marin to add their cell phones. That is one piece of data we cannot get. There were some proposed Senate bills to have a modified definition of a utility to include mobile telephone companies to provide information, but they failed. It would take a change in the

law for this to occur, so we are left with asking the public to sign up for Alert Marin. We recently got grant and budget money to be able to market Alert Marin to encourage more people to sign up.

- b. Nixle is a little different and is an opt in system only. It is populated when you text zip your zip code to 888777. If we sent information via Nixle to a particular zip code, you will receive that information. We have no control over this system unless people manually sign up. We do use it but it is different compared to Alert Marin. It is used for providing additional information in emergencies, not as the first means of notification.
2. **Evacuation Planning** – It was a recommendation that we incorporate plans for mass evacuation for all pending and future road projects for major escape routes. This response requires further analysis, though we do intend to do this. The thought there, whenever possible, to have the roads to have increased capacity or to make them one way in the case of evacuation. When we are able to incorporate this, we will work together with DPW to set the plans.
3. **Chief Jason Weber** added that the Grand Jury report did identify other gaps that exist. We have to do more in order to protect ourselves and that includes vegetation management, fire fuel reduction, alert and warning system improvement, evacuation improvements, grants, defensible space evaluation, and public education.

He also added that the fire service agrees with these suggestions and this should be one of our highest priorities. The fire service was never designed for this level of engagement with wildland fire protection, vegetation management, and was never meant to do so much pre-fire planning. It was designed so that when someone calls 911, to respond to a medical, structure fire, or to contain vegetation fire. All pre-fire work needs to be addressed. We need to have a community conversation to see how we do this and how to do this together. The fire service needs to approach this as one, despite the many fire agencies that work in the County. FireSafe Marin is working on community surveying to see where the community stands. We need to work jointly together to work on a plan for this.

**Question from the Public:** *How do you plan on alerting the public when we have no power?* Health & Human Services, Office of Emergency Services, the County Communications Team, Cities and Towns, are working together to prepare the public. People have to be prepared, find alternative means for charging cell phones, and become educated and aware. If you live in high risk area, you need to plan ahead and find somewhere else to stay during a shut down. It will take individual and independent action. We are doing a lot of communication and outreach and there will be more as we go into the summer.

**Adriana Rabkin** added VOAD is also preparing a report in response to the Grand Jury report. It was noted they didn't address the involvement of the community and that VOAD was not involved. We would like to be involved in some form because we have access to different organizations throughout the County. We can help deliver messages and get people to the table for these discussions. Having community involvement will only better everybody's efforts.

**Stephen Keys** with Cascade Canyon FireWise group and the Grand Jury added that they have decided to form a volunteer group outside of the Grand Jury. It will be tentatively be called, the Wildfire Safety Advocates. They are hoping to support public efforts by creating a uniform response countywide. It would be supported by full funding, however that might be. The Grand jury report recommended a sales tax or a partial tax. They would need consistent and reliable funding.

**Frank Cox** spoke of a concern with cell phone towers. Will Comcast internet signals likely be alive several days into a power shut off? Chief Weber responded that no, they only have a small power interruption power back up. Most residences have switched from conventional copper lines to VoIP. Frank was also concerned since some might see a power outage as an opportunity for ill-gotten gain. The issue of not having power will not allow anyone to call 911 for help. There needs to be a solution for the power and communications industry, pushed by local government.

Gary asked in reference to the Grand Jury report, to what degree will this committee play in this response. Are we going to have any discussion or debate about strategy? Does this also include response to the quarter cent sales tax? We have always struggled to find funding for our ideas. If we're having side groups forming to address disasters in the County, are they supplanting us or working with us? **Chief Weber** responded that the Fire Chiefs started a draft collectively, to make sure we're in step with this entire process. We've shared with it with the Marin managers group. We have also heard and addressed certain business issues associated with it. Also having the people that are in this group, collectively you'll see that we do not want to create another bureaucracy. Instead, we are pooling our resources and working together with the existing groups we have and being more efficient.

**Joe Chinn, Marin Managers Association Representative**, added that this is a regional countywide issue. It is taking the effort of all Fire Chiefs, Cities, and Towns in the County to work on this together. It is a collective response and a huge issue for all of us in identifying these actions to implement.

#### **Status of Grants Administered by Marin County OES**

Please email OES at [oes@marinsheriff.org](mailto:oes@marinsheriff.org) for a copy of the grants report, which was shared at this meeting by Therese Gorostiza, OES Office Specialist/Grants Management.

### **6. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **Public Disaster Education & Preparedness Committee Report**

**Catherine Way, Marin Council of Mayors & Councilmembers Representative**, spoke about the *Haywired* group who conducted a study about earthquakes and the Hayward fault. We would like the group to give DC3 their presentation in the future. We're very focused on fires right now because of the season, but earthquakes have no season. The study provides the latest data and information about the Bay Area's highest risk being on the Hayward fault.

**Frank Cox, Consumer Representative District 1**, spoke about the presentation from Jim Wickham given at the PDEP meeting, covering a lot of the same materials that were covered today. It raises the question about power in terms of life support, not just communication. Loss of power, loss of all the things we consider being part of daily life.

In terms of the Grand Jury report, Chief Weber always says that fires know no boundaries. If that's true, then the solutions to the Grand Jury report will also know no boundaries. We need a statewide solution to the recommendations made in the report. We need education that is beyond the *Get Ready* model. We need people to form a solid, year after year, career based group of trainers that get



this community up and running on all hazards. It will save us money, lives, and communities, and it needs to be funded.

For further detail on these updates and more information, refer to the Minutes from PDE&P. Meetings are posted online on the [www.marinsheriff.org](http://www.marinsheriff.org) website.

For more information about this committee's activities and copies of the handouts, please email OES at [oes@marinsheriff.org](mailto:oes@marinsheriff.org).

## **7. ANNOUNCEMENTS/COUNCIL MEMBER ITEMS/ PUBLIC COMMENTS**

A member of the public pointed out that everything being discussed here is education. Why aren't we televising this on the public communications channel? A lot of what we have to do is public outreach. **Supervisor Arnold** responded that this was a good idea and will be looked at for the future.

**Quinn Gardner, City of San Rafael Emergency Coordinator**, announced that she would be organizing a disaster preparedness booth at the Marin County Fair. They will have alerts sign ups and outreach to the public. Another point she mentioned was that we talk a lot about needing more money. We need to make tough financial decisions – we focus a lot of investment on technology, but we need to focus on people. We can argue in some cases, this can be a mistake. We can invest more in outreach and we have a lot of good volunteers in the County that need better direction.

**Frank Cox** – It is a responsibility of DC3 to report regularly to the Board of Supervisors. Can we draft a document that could be prepared as a formal recommendation to the Board that would support some ideas we have? The Board could see our general and specific recommendations and how we feel funding should support some of the priorities we speak about.

## **8. ADJOURN:**

*Being no further business, the Chair asked for a Motion to Adjourn the Meeting at 4:37 PM.*

**Motion:** None.

## **9. CERTIFICATE**

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Marin Operational Area Disaster and Citizen Corps Council meeting, held on June 13, 2019.

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**Date**

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**Therese Gorostiza, Office of Emergency Services**