

Brian Helmick
Interim Fire Chief



SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF:
Bethel Island Discovery Bay
Brentwood Knightsen
Byron Morgan Territory
Oakley

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL
3:00 PM MONDAY, AUGUST 28, 2017

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NEWS RELEASE & MEDIA AVAILABILITY

EAST CONTRA COSTA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT BUDGET UPDATE: PRELIMINARY AUDIT REVEALS \$6.2 MILLION ADDITIONAL ACCUMULATED OPERATIONAL SAVINGS

***The District has corrected financial mistakes that resulted in
underreporting of carryover funds***

At a special meeting scheduled for 3:00 pm on August 28, the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District's Finance Committee will receive a proposed final budget for Fiscal Year 2017-18. This budget includes an additional \$6.2 million above the starting balance in the Preliminary Budget approved by the Board of Directors on June 5, 2017.

The District identified the underreporting of the starting fund balance based on financial information contained in the recently completed external audit of the Fiscal Year 2014-15 budget. Ongoing discussions with Contra Costa County Auditor Robert Campbell and his staff further clarified the results, and the audit was accepted by the District Board of Directors on August 7, 2017.

Through further inquiry, the District has determined that the underreporting resulted from an incomplete transition of District funds and financial operations from Contra Costa County to the District, dating back to late 2014-early 2015. As a result, carry-over funding was understated in each of the following years, compounding the problem.

"This is a frustrating situation for all involved, but it would be much worse if the District had lower-than-expected funds rather than higher," said Board of Directors President Joel Bryant. "The Board and staff of the District have done the best they can to serve our community despite being dramatically underfunded and understaffed. I wish the newly discovered funds meant we could proceed with an expanded service model beyond the three stations we have now to protect nearly 249 square miles and 115,000 residents, but access to these "found" monies is not a long-term solution for the District. I look forward to working with the Board and our constituents on a plan for how to put these one-time funds to their most worthy use in service to our community."

Auditor Robert Campbell added, "My staff and I will continue to work with and assist the District to finalize its financial transition from the County."

The East Contra Costa Fire Protection District is grateful for the assistance of its auditor at Maze & Associates, Contra Costa County Auditor-Controller Robert Campbell and his staff, and the finance staff from the City of Brentwood for their help in identifying, confirming, quantifying and correcting the error.

Media Availability, Monday, August 28, 2017, following the Finance Committee Meeting

A memorandum with more detailed information will be available at the 3:00 p.m. Finance Committee meeting, which will be held in the Council Chambers of Brentwood City Hall, 150 City Park Way in Brentwood.

Interim Fire Chief Brian Helmick will be available to the media to answer questions immediately following the meeting.

ABOUT THE EAST CONTRA COSTA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT: The East Contra Costa Fire Protection District spans 249 square miles and our firefighter/EMTs serve more than 115,000 residents in the Cities of Brentwood and Oakley, the Town of Discovery Bay, the communities of Byron, Bethel Island and Knightsen, the Marsh Creek/Morgan Territory area, and all other areas within unincorporated Contra Costa County to the east of Antioch and to the southeast of Clayton.

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