COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Emergency Services Council Committee Meeting Minutes

April 30, 2026

This meeting was called to order at 5:33 PM by Chair Mueller.

I. Roll Call

Atherton	Council Member Bill Widmer	Present
Belmont	Council Member McCune	Not Present
Brisbane	Council Member Lentz	Present
Burlingame	Council Member Pappajohn	Not Present
Colma	Council Member Slaughter	Present
Daly City	Council Member Sylvester	Present
East Palo Alto	Council Member Dinan	Present
Foster City	Council Member Sullivan	Present
Half Moon Bay	Council Member Jonsson	Present
Hillsborough	Council Member Chuang	Present
Menlo Park	Council Member Combs	Not Present
Millbrae	Council Member Rainaldi	Present (Virtual)
Pacifica	Council Member Boles	Present
Portola Valley	Council Member Hufty	Present
Redwood City	Council Member Eakin	Present
San Bruno	Council Vice Chair Medina	Present
San Carlos	Council Member Dugan	Present
San Mateo	Council Member Newsom	Present
South San Francisco	Council Member Nicolas	Present
Woodside	Council Member Goeld	Present
County of San Mateo	Council Chair Mueller	Present

Attending County Representatives:

- Deputy County Executive Calderon, County Executive's Office
- Chief Deputy County Attorney Wong, County Attorney's Office
- Management Analyst Loke, County Executive's Office
- Director Dhapodkar, Department of Emergency Management
- Assistant Director Reynolds, Department of Emergency Management
- Clerk of the Committee Corteway, Department of Emergency Management
- Secretary of the Committee Haddad, Department of Emergency Management

II. Remembering Dina Gunning
- Vice Chair Medina

III. Public Comments, Correspondence, and Announcements
- No public comments or announcements.

IV. Action to Set Agenda and Approve January 29, 2026 Meeting Minutes
- Hillsborough Council Member made the recommendation to approve the January 29, 2026 meeting minutes, and the Atherton Council Member seconded. The meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

V. Advancing "One County, One Voice" – Toward a Unified Communication Framework
- Director Dhapodkar outlined San Mateo County Emergency Management's (SMC EM) work to establish the Public Information Council, bringing together key public information officers (PIOs) from the County Executive Office (CEO), Sheriff's Office, Cal Fire, and all city, law, and fire agencies. The initiative was developed in response to lessons learned from the December 2024 tsunami warning. Director Dhapodkar stated that "One County, One Voice" will be shared with City Managers in June 2026 and requested Emergency Services Council (ESC) support to advance the initiative.
- The focus on public information coordination follows SMC EM's Alert and Warning training series, which brought subject matter experts from all over the world to talk about how they do alert and warning.
- The Public Information Council helps ensure consistent public messaging across agencies, reduces hesitancy to act, provides a platform for sharing information, and enables city PIOs to amplify local messages while sharing updates with the Joint Information Center (JIC).
- The Public Information Council identifies trusted spokespersons, develops standardized holding statements, and builds relationships among city, law, and fire PIOs in blue skies. The Public Information Council is activated to coordinate spokespersons and deploy pre-developed messaging during grey skies or before an emergency. When a Joint Information Center (JIC) is activated, the same coordinated approach continues through dark skies.
- The next step is to exercise "One County, One Voice" during the Golden Eagle Functional Exercise on May 12, 2026 and the Great ShakeOut on October 15, 2026.
- San Carlos Council Member commended SMC EM for acting on lessons learned from the December 2024 tsunami warning, stating that "One County, One Voice" is a good example of government working as intended.
- Hillsborough Council Member emphasized the importance of getting to know stakeholders in advance to support cohesive messaging during emergencies. They asked if "One County, One Voice" is intended for regional disasters or small-scale incidents. Director Dhapodkar stated that the framework continues to be developed collaboratively with participating agencies. Director Dhapodkar noted that the City of Burlingame recently used this shared platform to communicate about its gas leak incident, for which they needed County PIO support.
- Chair Mueller noted that previous incidents have involved different agency approval processes for public messaging and asked whether "One County, One Voice" centralizes message approval or serves as a multi-agency framework. Director Dhapodkar clarified

that it is a collaborative, multi-agency framework that builds consensus on messaging and spokespersons rather than centralizing message approval.

VI. Tsunami Preparedness

- Assistant Director Reynolds updated the ESC on SMC EM's tsunami preparedness over the past year. During Tsunami Preparedness Week in March 2026, SMC EM met with Emergency Medical Services (EMS), fire and law agencies, and city managers to develop a shared understanding of tsunami hazards across San Mateo County (SMC).
- Assistant Director Reynolds reported that SMC EM developed jurisdiction-specific tsunami maps and a countywide tsunami dashboard, which have been shared with fire departments, law agencies, and cities. Since July 2025, the dashboard has received approximately 80,000 views and allows users to identify their location, determine whether they are in a tsunami hazard zone, and understand recommended evacuation actions. He noted that most people only need to travel a few blocks to reach higher ground.
- Hillsborough Council Member asked whether SMC Alert will be used to notify residents of tsunami hazards. Assistant Director Reynolds responded that both Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) and SMC Alert will be used to maximize public notification. He added that warning times may range from only a few minutes to as much as seven to eight hours before tsunami arrival.
- Assistant Director Reynolds noted that tsunami hazard zones are limited along the coast, with many uninhabited areas. Half Moon Bay Council Member noted that only the Miramar area would need to evacuate to higher ground in Half Moon Bay. Director Dhapodkar added that East Palo Alto has two buildings within tsunami hazard zones whose occupants would need to move to a higher floor or evacuate the hazard area.
- Director Dhapodkar stated that the overall goal is to ensure everyone has access to the same information, so residents understand the appropriate public safety actions during future tsunami warnings.
- Chair Mueller commended SMC EM's outreach efforts, including community listening sessions on the coast. He noted that Highway 1 poses evacuation challenges and highlighted the updated tsunami signage directing people to higher ground. He added that additional work is needed on traffic management and public education about tsunami warnings. Assistant Director Reynolds confirmed that tsunami signage is standardized statewide to support consistent messaging.
- Pacifica Council Member asked about coordination with the Tsunami Warning Center. Assistant Director Reynolds responded that SMC EM uses warning language tailored to the County. Following a Tsunami Warning Center alert, SMC EM would send a follow-up message linking residents to the SMC Tsunami Map Viewer to identify their hazard zone and recommended safety actions.
- Hillsborough Council Member asked whether cities are responsible for coordinating public education with the County, so residents understand tsunami sirens and emergency alerts. Assistant Director Reynolds responded that SMC EM is working with EMS, fire, and law agencies to ensure responders understand hazard zones and can clearly communicate appropriate public safety actions to the public.

VII. San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department HazMat Program Presentation

- Battalion Chief Thorne provided an overview of the San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department's (San Mateo Consolidated) Hazardous Materials (HazMat) program, based in Belmont. The team serves all of SMC and provides support to San Francisco International Airport (SFO). It is designated as a State Type 1 HazMat team, the highest certification level. Without the team, the County would need to rely on costly third-party contractors for hazardous materials emergency response.
- Battalion Chief Thorne reported that the HazMat team responds to 100–200 incidents annually, with call volume doubling since 2024 due to an increase in lithium battery fires and toxic smoke incidents.
- South San Francisco Council Member asked about the HazMat team's work with life science companies. Foster City Council Member asked whether Gilead and Genentech are required to report incidents to the team. Battalion Chief Thorne responded that the team supports major incidents involving life science companies and that these businesses are required to submit HazMat business plans identifying the chemicals and quantities on site.
- South San Francisco Council Member asked how the HazMat program uses drones and other emerging technologies. Battalion Chief Thorne responded that the team partners with Menlo Park to use drones for advanced reconnaissance and situational awareness.
- Daly City Council Member and Brisbane Council Member asked what support is needed to sustain the HazMat program and whether staffing is a constraint.
  Battalion Chief Thorne responded that the program has been supported through internal budget reallocations by the San Mateo Consolidated, with additional grant funding from SMC EM. He added that increased staffing would allow incidents to be resolved more quickly.
- Brisbane Council Member asked about mutual aid agreements with neighboring counties. Battalion Chief Thorne explained that mutual aid is unlikely to meet the County's HazMat response needs because few neighboring jurisdictions have comparable capabilities or available resources. Battalion Chief Thorne stated that San Mateo Consolidated has a mutual aid agreement with Santa Clara County, and the two teams regularly train together. He noted that Alameda County declined a mutual aid agreement due to capacity concerns related to the Port of Oakland, and its distance also limits its usefulness. San Francisco has also declined a mutual aid agreement because of limited staffing.
- Pacifica Council Member asked about cost recovery for HazMat responses.
  Battalion Chief Thorne responded that the County Environmental Health Department bills for HazMat cleanup.
- Fire Chief Lorenzen, Menlo Park Fire Protection District, expressed concern about the aging HazMat vehicle and equipment. He noted that the primary response vehicle is 16 years old, replacement parts become increasingly difficult and expensive to obtain after 20 years, and it takes approximately five years to procure a replacement vehicle.

VIII. FY2026-27 Emergency Services Council Joint Powers Authority Proposed Budget

- Assistant Director Reynolds presented the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-27 SMC EM budget of $4.5 million, compared to $4.7 million in FY 2025-26. Budget changes include increased salary costs and the removal of grant funding that is no longer available.
- Foster City Council Member asked whether training could serve as a revenue stream for SMC EM. Assistant Director Reynolds responded that SMC EM does not currently have sufficient staffing capacity to offer training as a revenue-generating service.
- Public comments on the SMC EM budget indicated that some stakeholders, particularly from the private sector perspective, viewed the budget as low.
- Assistant Director Reynolds reported that individual city contributions range from 7% to 16% based on tax roll and census data. In response to a question from San Carlos Council Member, he explained that each city's cost share is calculated using this formula.
- Redwood City Council Member expressed appreciation for the County covering over 40% of the budget. Daly City Council Member noted that SMC EM has relatively low staffing costs.
- Redwood City Council Member asked why ESC membership costs increase across all jurisdictions. Assistant Director Reynolds explained that changes are driven by increases in population and/or tax roll data.
- Hillsborough Council Member moved to approve the budget, seconded by Daly City Council Member. The budget passed with a unanimous vote in favor.

IX. Exemption to Trust Fund $500k Minimum Balance

- Director Dhapodkar presented a request for ESC approval to draw from the reserve fund to support the purchase of a new HazMat vehicle, which would bring the balance below the previously established $500,000 minimum. She explained that a larger upfront payment would reduce long-term costs, noting that vehicle prices continue to increase and delaying the purchase could result in higher expenses.
- Director Dhapodkar estimated the new HazMat vehicle cost at approximately $1.9–$2 million and noted that current estimates have increased from $1.5–$1.9 million last year due to market conditions.
- Chief Lorenzen supported using available funds upfront, noting that it is more cost-effective than financing a vehicle over a four- to five-year period.
- Director Dhapodkar shared that previous HazMat vehicles were purchased using grant funding, but those resources are no longer available. She noted that using reserve funds now would reduce future financial impacts, while delaying the purchase would likely increase costs over time.
- Menlo Park Council Member asked whether future vehicle replacement needs would be included in budget forecasting to ensure they are not overlooked. Director Dhapodkar explained that vehicle replacement funding is expected to fluctuate based on replacement cycles.
- San Carlos Council Member asked about SMC EM's history of using reserve funding. Director Dhapodkar explained that funds have historically been used when annual costs increased significantly, with the intent of balancing short-term budget impacts.
- Hillsborough Council Member provided context on the JPA funding structure, noting that the County contributes 50% of the budget and cities contribute based on a

membership formula. The Council Member emphasized that shared services reduce overhead and that reserves provide flexibility for future operational needs.

- Hillsborough Council Member explained that SMC EM's reserve fund is similar to municipal reserves, intended to provide financial stability during emergencies or unexpected cost increases. The Council Member noted that if reserves are depleted, the agency may need to return to member jurisdictions for additional funding.
- Pacifica Council Member requested more information on how trust funds are used during emergencies and how the balance would be managed if reduced below $500,000.
- Daly City Council Member requested options showing the impact of using different trust fund amounts, noting that using approximately $500,000 would represent a smaller portion of the overall purchase cost.
- Brisbane Council Member asked how funds would be replenished after use. Director Dhapodkar explained that the goal would be to cycle funds between the trust fund and vehicle replacement fund over time to rebuild reserves.
- San Carlos Council Member questioned whether the JPA structure should be revisited to better address long-term funding challenges.
- Brisbane Council Member asked whether outside funding opportunities, such as contributions from companies that rely on HazMat services, could be explored. Director Dhapodkar confirmed that an RFP process through the County could be considered.
- The ESC unanimously approved a motion to withdraw the request from consideration and refer it for further review and development of additional funding options.

X. Authorization to HazMat Vehicle Initiate Procurement

- The ESC unanimously granted approval for SMC EM to initiate procurement of the new HazMat response vehicle.

XI. Report Outs Related to Emergency Services Council

- ESC welcomed San Bruno's new Fire Chief.
- Daly City Council Member provided an overview of Daly City's Real-Time Information Center (RTIC), which integrates drones, cameras, police body-worn cameras, automated license plate readers (ALPR), and patrol car systems. The Council Member highlighted the value of integrating these tools to enhance situational awareness and serve as a force multiplier for public safety operations. Daly City Council Member suggested that SMC consider a similar regional approach and invited interested agencies to visit Daly City's RTIC, learn more about the system, and share best practices. Agencies interested in visiting were encouraged to contact the Daly City Police Chief.

XII. Adjournment

- Vice Chair Medina adjourned the meeting at 8:00pm.