



Council Agenda Report

From: Thomas Frutchey, City Manager

Subject: Proclaiming a Local Public Health and Safety Emergency Related to the Risk of Multi-Day Electrical Power Outages in the North County this Summer and Fall

Date: July 16, 2019

Facts

1. As is being reported to the Council under Presentations on the July 16th Council meeting agenda, PG&E has initiated its Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) program this summer. Under this program, PG&E will "... monitor conditions across [its] system and evaluate whether to proactively turn off electric lines for safety when gusty winds and dry conditions combine with a heightened fire risk."
2. While no single factor will drive a Public Safety Power Shutoff, some factors that PG&E will consider include:
 - a. A red flag warning declared by the National Weather Service;
 - b. Low humidity levels—generally 20% and below;
 - c. Forecasted sustained winds generally above 25 mph and wind gusts in excess of approximately 45 mph, depending on location and site-specific conditions such as temperature, terrain, and local climate;
 - d. Condition of dry fuel on the ground and live vegetation (moisture content); and
 - e. On-the-ground, real-time observations.
3. It is highly likely that these conditions will occur one or more times this summer and early fall. Thus, there is a high likelihood of one or more such shut-offs that will envelop the Paso Robles area this summer and fall.
4. Cut-offs are likely to be at the transmission main level. Because of the configuration of PG&E's transmission mains, power may be turned off in Paso Robles even if the precipitating conditions are elsewhere in the system.
5. PG&E has noted that it will restore power only when PG&E is certain that it is safe to do so. Power to the entire Paso area could be off for as long as 2-4 days after the extreme weather has passed, even if there is no fire.
6. Power shut-offs will most likely occur during an extreme heat wave, when people with health issues and other sensitivities are already stressed.
7. If and when this happens, there will be no street lights and no traffic signals, so local travel will be hazardous. Fuel will be extremely limited, so many people will be unable to transport themselves. Grocery stores will be closed or operating with extreme limitations, since foods cannot be kept frozen or chilled.
8. Since first learning about this program, the City has been preparing. However, there is much more that needs to be done, and some of the major actions necessary to fully prepare will be significantly delayed if the City must adhere to the policies and standards designed with only normal operations in mind. Such policies require formal bid processes and the receipt of Council approval at a regularly scheduled Council meeting for expenditures over \$35,000.
9. It is best to waive some purchasing requirements and related policies to speed preparations and increase their effectiveness. Adequate oversight can still be fully maintained by the Council and community through a variety of actions, including:

- a. Weekly reporting to the Mayor of actions undertaken during the prior week and intended for the upcoming week.
- b. Monthly reporting to the Council at a regular or special Council meeting of the actions undertaken and the status of the City's preparedness.
- c. Placement of these reports on the City's website, on the Council meeting page (where it would normally appear) as well as on the emergency preparedness page.

Options

1. Take no action;
2. Declare an emergency and authorize the City Manager to take those actions necessary or appropriate to prepare;
3. Declare an emergency but amend the resolution to meet Council preferences;
4. Provide alternative direction to staff.

Analysis and Conclusions

Declaration of a local emergency will allow the City to protect critical infrastructure, continue to provide vital services, and provide respite for citizens without power. Newly purchased or rented generators will power communications at Fire Station #2, the computer server room at the City Hall Annex, and community cooling centers in the Council Chamber, Senior Center, and Centennial Banquet Room. Contracts will be completed with JB Dewar and other local fuel providers, as appropriate, to increase the availability and delivery of diesel, gas, natural gas, and propane fuels.

Fiscal Impact

There is no impact resulting solely from the declaration. The financial impacts will result from actions taken in conformance with the resolution. The cost of generator support is currently estimated not to exceed \$300,000.

Recommendation

Approve Resolution 19-XXX declaring a local emergency due to the threat of wildfires and authorizing the City Manager to take those actions necessary and appropriate to complete preparations.

Attachments

1. Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. 19-XXX

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO DE ROBLES
PROCLAIMING THE EXISTENCE OF A LOCAL EMERGENCY
RELATED TO AN EMERGENCY POWER SUPPLY SHORTAGE, AND AUTHORIZING THE
IMMEDIATE PURCHASE OF NEEDED EQUIPMENT, SUPPLIES, AND SERVICES, INCLUDING
EMERGENCY POWER GENERATORS

WHEREAS, Paso Robles Municipal Code section 2.24.020 defines an “emergency” to include extreme peril to the safety of person and property caused by such conditions such as fires and severe energy shortage, which are or are likely to be beyond the City’s control of its services, personnel, equipment, and facilities, or a sudden and severe energy shortage that requires extraordinary measures beyond the authority vested in the California Public Utilities Commission; and

WHEREAS, in response to devastating wildfires throughout the state in recent years, to reduce the risk of wildfires, the area’s local electric utility provider will disable the automatic reclosing of circuit breakers and reclosers and may shut off power to electric lines in high-risk fire areas during wildfire season; and

WHEREAS, the local utility provider’s precautionary measures, or a natural or manmade disaster, could increase the frequency and duration of power outages; and

WHEREAS, such electric power interruption would terminate the power to all community and City facilities, including the City’s police station, fire stations, City Hall, emergency cooling centers, corporation yard, and all other City facilities, as well as urgent care centers, senior care facilities, etc.; and

WHEREAS, the disruption of healthcare, fire, police, and emergency services can impair search and rescue, emergency medical care, and public health and safety; and

WHEREAS, the City currently has a number of unmet needs. For example, the City has an insufficient backup power supply to power critical facilities providing emergency fire, rescue, medical, shelter, and communication services; and,

WHEREAS, Paso Robles Municipal Code section 2.24.060 provides that when a local emergency is proclaimed, the City Manager may obtain vital supplies, equipment, and such other supplies and services found lacking and needed for the protection of life and property, at fair value; and

WHEREAS, Paso Robles Municipal Code section 2.24.020 provides that expenditures made in connection with emergency activities shall be deemed conclusively to be for the direct protection and benefit of the inhabitants and property of the City; and,

WHEREAS, said City Council does hereby find:

That conditions of imminent threat to human health and public safety have arisen with Paso Robles, caused by the risk of wildfires in the state and the City’s local area; and

That the aforesaid conditions of extreme peril warrant and necessitate the proclamation of the existence of a local emergency;

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HERBY PROCLAIMED that a local emergency now exists throughout the City; and

IT IS HEREBY FURTHER PROCLAIMED AND ORDERED that during the existence of said local emergency, the powers, functions, and duties of the Director of Emergency Services and the emergency

organization of Paso Robles shall be those prescribed by state law, by ordinances, and resolutions of this city and approved by the City Council on July 16, 2019.

IT IS FURTHER PROCLAIMED AND ORDERED that authority is given to the City Manager to undertake all actions necessary to procure the necessary equipment, supplies, and services, such as emergency power generators and refueling contracts for those generators, to serve the community during an extended power outage.

IT IS FURTHER PROCLAIMED AND ORDERED that said local emergency shall be deemed to continue to exist until its termination is proclaimed by the City Council of the City of Paso Robles, State of California.

APPROVED by the City Council of the City of El Paso de Robles by the following vote on July 16, 2019.

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Steven W. Martin, Mayor

ATTEST:

Caryn Jackson, Deputy City Clerk