



**Agenda Item No. 11.**

**Staff Report**

**Date:** December 14, 2023

**To:** Mayor Brekhus and Council Members

**From:** Raffaello Pata, Police Chief

**Subject:** Presentation regarding Evaluation of Emergency Management Program

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**Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Town Council receive a presentation regarding the evaluation of the Town of Ross Emergency Management Program conducted by Jeffries Public Safety Consulting.

**Background and Discussion**

In April 2023, the Town hired Dave Jeffries of Jeffries Public Safety, an expert in Emergency Management, to review and evaluate the Town's existing Emergency Management Program. After interviewing Town staff and reviewing the plan, Mr. Jeffries prepared an evaluation of the Town's past and existing capacity to respond to major emergencies. The Chief of Police and Mr. Jeffries will present an overview of the evaluation report including its recommendations.

**Fiscal, resource and timeline impacts**

The cost to conduct interviews, review the existing Emergency Operations Plan and other documents, and prepare the evaluation report will not exceed \$2,000. Implementing the consultant's recommendations may require additional resources and will be requested as part of the Town's annual budgeting process.

**Alternative actions**

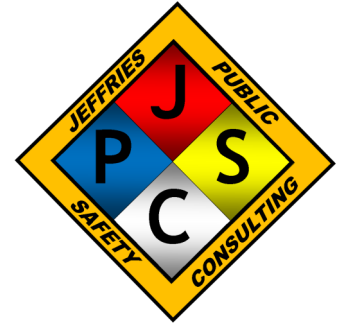
None

**Attachments**

Memorandum and Evaluation Report, Jeffries Public Consulting, dated December 5, 2023

December 5, 2023

Christa Johnson  
Town Manager  
Town of Ross  
PO Box 320  
Ross, CA 94957



Dear Town Manager Johnson

Jeffries Public Safety Consulting was tasked with conducting an evaluation of the Emergency Management program for the Town of Ross and developing recommendations for improvement.

Key recommendations include:

- a) Update the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and provide training to affected Town staff on that plan.
- b) Increase Emergency Operations Center (EOC) related training.
- c) Conduct periodic exercises and look for opportunities to participate in County-wide or Regional exercises.
- d) Update the Emergency Operations Center.

## **1. Methodology**

In conducting this program evaluation, I reviewed existing Town documents and interviewed Town staff members.

a) Review of Town Materials:

- 1) Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2018
- 2) Emergency Operations Plan, 2021
- 3) Town Ordinance 2.28, Disaster and Emergency Control

b) Interviews of Town Staff:

Interviews were conducted with Town Manager Johnson, Police Chief Pata, Public Works Director Simonitch, Maintenance Supervisor Alcozar, Maintenance Worker Zac Baker, Town Clerk Cyndie Martel and Recreation Supervisor Langford.

1) During the interviews, it became apparent that while some staff were familiar with their EOC roles, there were gaps in knowledge regarding how the EOC operates.

2) The EOC Organization chart was described as needing revision or relying on Marin County staff to maintain, with an understanding that the Town could not

Jeffries Public  
Safety  
Consulting

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PO Box 368  
Cotati CA  
94931

Phone: 707-483-1098  
E-mail:  
dave@jeffriespsc.com

adequately staff more than one shift per day.

3) Other than the Town Manager and Police Chief, none of the staff reported any Incident Command System or Emergency Operations Center training. There was also very limited experience from exercises or actual activations.

4) Knowledge of the Emergency Operations Plan and Local Hazard Mitigation Plan was very minimal, except for the Public Works Director's knowledge of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan as he represents the Town as part of the current update.

5) As for day-to-day issues, several of the staff were able to identify the Town's Emergency Services Director (Town Manager). For disaster related spending, answers varied from \$2,500 to \$50,000. Succession planning for Town staff was informal or assumed and there was no knowledge of succession planning for the Town Council.

6) Continuity of Operations: It appears that many Town records are still maintained in paper and susceptible to loss in an emergency or disaster. It appeared that electronic records were maintained in off site servers, but local to the Marin area. As for relocating town facilities, various sites were mentioned, but seemed informal.

7) Elected Officials training: During the interviews there was one reference to old training courses, otherwise, none known.

8) Town Ordinance: There was little to no familiarity with the Town Disaster Ordinance and of the Disaster Council described in the ordinance.

## **2. Current Emergency Management Program**

### **a) Emergency Management Plans**

#### **1) Emergency Operations Plan**

The Emergency Operations Plan is fairly recent (2021) but would normally receive an update in 2024 or 2025. That said, there are areas that could use an update prior to a full revision, such as EOC staffing and organization as well as the role of the Operational Area Emergency Operations Center in larger disasters.

#### **2) EOC Staffing and Organization:**

As listed in the Emergency Operations Plan, the Town EOC lists the potential to staff 44 positions in a full (Level 1) Activation. This is not possible with even a single shift per day, let alone a need for two shifts per day. The EOC organization needs to be right-sized for the Town of Ross, its likely responses and its available staff.

The EOP mentions that EOC operations will shift to the Marin Operational Area EOC in the event of a large-scale emergency or disaster. While the Operational Area EOC would likely be open to support the unincorporated areas of Marin as well as coordinate needs of Marin's cities

and towns, in the absence of a clear MOU/MOA, cities and towns have a responsibility to provide emergency management services to their communities.

### **3) Local Hazard Mitigation Plan**

The current Plan is dated 2018, but the Town of Ross is currently participating with the County in a new Multi-jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan that should be available for Town approval later this year.

### **4) Town Disaster Ordinance**

The Town Disaster Ordinance (Section 2.28) was enacted in 1971 and shows minor updates in 2009. This three page ordinance could benefit from review and updates to address issues such as expenditures and price gouging as two examples.

### **5) Continuity of Operations Plan**

While no plan appears to currently exist, a Continuity of Operations/Continuity of Government Plan addresses issues such as the loss of Town Hall or other Town Facilities as well as developing plans to mitigate risks such as the loss of Town records and Information Technology resiliency.

## **b) Emergency Operations Center Operations**

As mentioned above, familiarity with the Emergency Operations Center, staff training and exercises can be improved. The primary EOC is the Town Council Chambers which presents several challenges as most of the furniture is fixed in place and there was little evidence of EOC materials being on hand and available. (The Town of Ross has access to WebEOC from the County and other technologies that can be of assistance in an EOC activation).

## **c) Emergency Management Training**

As described above, training for EOC staff can be improved.

CalOES has developed an EOC Credentialing Program that provides some guidance. However, it should be noted that credentialing for EOC's such as the Town of Ross is voluntary. (I serve as a member of the CalOES committee that created and maintains the EOC Credentialing Program.)

Free training is available from FEMA's Independent Study Program, as well as through the Bay Area UASI's Training and Exercise Program and CalOES on-line and in person training.

## **d) Continuity of Operations Planning**

The Town of Ross does not currently have a Continuity of Operations/Continuity of Government Plan.

## **e) Local Hazard Mitigation Plan**

As mentioned above, the Town of Ross is currently working alongside the County of Marin on a new Multi-jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan that should be finalized this year.

### **3. Recommended Emergency Management Program**

#### **a) Plans**

- 1) Emergency Operations Plan: The current plan should be updated to reflect the Town's capability to respond to emergencies and disasters.
  
- 2) Local Hazard Mitigation Plan: Continue to work with Marin County to complete the Hazard Mitigation Plan process.
  
- 3) Continuity of Operations/Continuity of Government Plan: Consider developing a COOP/COG plan to support Town operations.
  
- 4) Town Ordinance: Consider updates to the current Ordinance.

#### **b) Emergency Operations Center Operations**

The Emergency Operations Center location and secondary location should be reviewed with plans to support both locations with EOC materials and support desired EOC technologies. EOC staff would benefit from EOC Tabletop and Functional exercises.

I recommend that the Ross Emergency Operations Center be set up with the available resources one day to allow an opportunity to evaluate the physical layout of the space, positioning of the sections, and to review all of the forms, displays and other EOC materials. The secondary EOC location should be reviewed in a similar fashion.

The extent to which the Marin County Office of Emergency Management or Ross Valley Fire would assist with Ross Emergency Operations Center activities should be explored and understood. I have spoken with the Ross Valley Fire District and they have no current plans to directly support town/city EOCs. They are aware of an offer from Marin County OEM to have jurisdictions co-locate at the Operational Area EOC, that would assist in coordination, but this differs from the County assuming a role as a town EOC.

#### **c) Emergency Management Training**

- 1) FEMA Emergency Management Institute (EMI) Independent Study Program Website:  
<https://training.fema.gov/is/>

This link connects to over 200 FEMA courses. Users need to establish a free FEMA student ID before starting their first course. Courses are free and on-line. Students work through an online presentation, followed by a multiple-choice exam. A passing score (70%) results in the student being emailed a certificate of completion.

- 2) Recommended courses for EOC staff include:  
All EOC Staff (Sections in bold for CalOES EOC Credentialing)

Course #      Course Name

<b>IS-100.c</b>	Intro to Incident Command System
<b>IS-200.c</b>	Basic Incident Command System
<b>IS-230d</b>	Fundamentals of Emergency Management
<b>IS-368</b>	Disabilities and Access and Functional Needs
<b>IS-700.b</b>	Intro to National Incident Management
<b>IS-706</b>	NIMS Intrastate Mutual Aid
<b>IS-800</b>	National Response Framework

Specialized Topics

<u>Course #</u>	<u>Course Name</u>
IS-29.a	Public Information Officer Awareness
IS-42.a	Social Media in Emergency Management
IS-554	Emergency Planning for Public Works
IS-559	Local Damage Assessment
IS-700	Introduction to NIMS

3) CalOES Courses

CalOES Credentialing Program – Local Government EOC Credentialing: While optional for local government, the credentialing program uses the courses listed in bold above and below as foundational for all EOC Credentialed positions. Once the basics have been met, each EOC position has additional coursework to complete. Recognizing that it is extremely difficult for most jurisdictions to fully credential all of their potential EOC staff, this program does provide a basis for basic training needs.

CalOES sponsors some on-line courses as well as training at the California Specialized Training Institute and through their Outreach Instructors, additional courses in the Bay Area.

CalOES on-line training: [https://csti-ca.csod.com/catalog/CustomPage.aspx?id=20000553&tab\\_page\\_id=20000553&tab\\_id=20000590](https://csti-ca.csod.com/catalog/CustomPage.aspx?id=20000553&tab_page_id=20000553&tab_id=20000590)

<u>Course #</u>	<u>Course Name</u>
<u>On-Line</u>	

**SEMS G606** Standardized Emergency Management System Introduction

In-Person CalOES/FEMA courses

<u>Course #</u>	<u>Course Name</u>
<b>G191</b>	Incident Command System/Emergency Operations Center Interface

G197	Emergency Planning for Access and Functional Needs
G300	ICS300 – Intermediate ICS (Field Supervisors)
G400	ICS400 – Advanced ICS (Field Commanders)
<b>G611</b>	EOC Section Specific Courses
<b>G626E</b>	EOC Action Planning
<b>G775</b>	EOC Management and Operations
	EOC Fundamentals (Old Earthquake Course)

In-person courses in the Bay Area are advertised by Cal OES and by the Bay Area UASI Training and Exercise Program: <https://www.batep.org/?p=home>  
Government employees can register for access to the Bay Area UASI TEP and be notified of upcoming courses.

### **Marin Op Area Training**

The Marin County Office of Emergency Management hosts training throughout the year that are available to local agencies.

### **Custom Courses**

I have created a variety of custom courses for a variety of local agencies covering EOC basics. These are usually presented in 2 hour blocks and can cover such topics as EOC Basics, Plans and Operations Sections, Logistics and Finance Sections and Action Planning.

### **Exercises**

Once training has been provided, the next step is to conduct exercises. These can be standalone for the Town of Ross or can take advantage of County or Regional exercises that provide additional realism with communications between the EOC and the Operational Area EOC.

#### Typical Exercise Types:

Tabletop: Discussion based, 2-4 hours. Participants are provided with a Situation Manual describing the modules/scenarios and questions. Following the exercise an After-Action Report/Improvement Plan is produced.

Functional Exercise: Operational exercise in which participants work in their EOC roles based on a scenario and supplemented with injects with new information. These exercises typically run 6-8 hours total. Following the exercise an After-Action Report/Improvement Plan is produced.

Full Scale Exercise: Operational Exercise in which the EOC portion of the exercise is augmented by field activities, typically involving Law, Fire and Public Works responding to the same scenario.

My recommendation would be to begin with a Tabletop Exercise after EOC Staff training. Functional exercises would ideally be an annual occurrence. Full-Scale exercises take a considerable amount of planning and coordination and at best might be considered every few years.

#### **4) Transition Opportunities**

Following a review of this evaluation, I would recommend that the Town of Ross develop a plan to implement the recommendations against a timeline.

a) Timeline recommendations:

1) Initial Phase

Update Emergency Operations Plan, to include EOC organization

Update Emergency Operations Center and Secondary Site, to include forms, displays and technologies

Update Town Ordinance

2) Secondary Phase

Initiate on-line EOC training for EOC Staff

Seek in-person EOC training for key EOC staff positions

Conduct custom EOC in-person session for all EOC Staff

Conduct a Tabletop Exercise in the first twelve months

3) Third Phase

Consider development of a COOP/COG plan.

Seek opportunities to participate in a County or Regional Functional/Full Scale exercise.

#### **5) Fiscal Considerations**

a) Training: Most of the training described above is offered for free, although any courses requiring travel do not usually cover travel, room and board. The custom courses require 3-4 hours preparation for each two-hour course, in addition to course delivery.

b) Exercises: Stand-alone exercises do require development time, with a tabletop requiring approx. 12-15 hours for a four-hour exercise. A functional exercise would involve 30-35 hours for a typical exercise. Participation in a County or Regional exercise can be accomplished with less preparation as the scenario and much of the other materials are developed at a higher level.

c) Plan and Ordinance updates: These are usually a blend of staff time and consultant time. Estimates should be obtained before making any final commitment.

d) Emergency Operations Center updates: This would be primarily one-time costs for any durable items, periodic technology upgrades and duplication and copying of any paper based or printed documents.



## **CLOSING**

I appreciate the opportunity to evaluate your Emergency Management program and to offer these observations and recommendations. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss this in greater depth.

Sincerely,

**Dave Jeffries, MA, CEM, CA-PEM**

Owner

*Jeffries Public Safety Consulting*