



# City of Palo Alto

## City Council Staff Report

(ID # 9007)

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**Report Type: Consent Calendar**

**Meeting Date: 3/19/2018**

**Summary Title: Council Donation to North Bay Fire Relief**

**Title: Approval of a Donation of \$25,000 From the City Council Contingency Fund to Support North Bay Fire Relief, Resilience and Recovery**

**From: City Manager**

**Lead Department: Fire**

### **Recommendation**

Approve a donation of \$25,000 from the City Council Contingency to support North Bay Fire relief, resilience and recovery. The recommended recipients and amounts are:

1. The Sonoma County Resilience Fund, administered by the Community Foundation of Sonoma County (Recommended donation: \$15,000);
2. The Napa Valley Community Disaster Relief Fund, administered by the Napa Valley Community Foundation (Recommended donation: \$5,000); and
3. The Disaster Fund for the Redwood/Potter Fires administered by the Community Foundation of Mendocino County (Recommended donation: \$5,000).

### **Background**

On November 13, 2017, Councilmembers Karen Holman and Lydia Kou, and then-Vice Mayor Liz Kniss proposed donating \$25,000 from the City Council Contingency to the Redwood Credit Union's North Bay Fire Relief Fund. As of February 15, 2018, the North Bay Fire Relief Fund discontinued taking donations and recommended three nonprofit and community groups serving the mid and long term recovery needs:

#### **Sonoma County Resilience Fund:**

With 34 years of experience in philanthropy, the Community Foundation of Sonoma County has made strategic and impactful grants to support the well-being of the county. To date they have given out more than \$200 million dollars to Sonoma County organizations addressing issues such as housing, hunger, economic well-being and mental health.

Recovery from these fires will take years, and the Sonoma County Resilience Fund was created to address the mid to long-term needs of those impacted by these devastating fires.

### Napa Valley Community Disaster Relief Fund

The Napa Valley Community Disaster Relief Fund is managed by Napa Valley Community Foundation and was established with a \$10 million lead gift from Napa Valley Vintners following the 2014 South Napa Earthquake. Since the October 2017 fires, nearly \$14 million has been contributed by 20,000 individual, corporate and foundation donors in California, the US and abroad. Thus far, \$4 million has been distributed from the Fund to provide 15,000 fire survivors with services and nearly 1,900 households with direct cash assistance.

### The Disaster Fund for the Redwood/Potter Fires

Administered by the Community Foundation of Mendocino County, the Disaster Fund for the Redwood/Potter Fires has raised \$2.1 million from thousands of donors in the four months since the fires broke out. Business and private sponsorship has covered the 1.5% administrative fee enabling 100% of the funds raised to go to those affected by the fires.

As repopulation and recovery continue, the Fund will address longer-term needs such as temporary housing, replacement of essential household items and medical care or counseling. Housing is a major concern since the City of Ukiah only had a 1% vacancy rate and people will need temporary housing, so they can remain in the community.

From October 8 to October 31, 2017, a series of wind-driven wildfires burned 245,000 acres primarily in Sonoma, Napa and Mendocino Counties. The Northern California fires killed 44 people and hospitalized at least 185, making the week of October 8, 2017, the deadliest week of wildfires in California history. In total, the fires destroyed an estimated 8,900 structures, including 6,200 homes.

In response to this devastation, the City Council expressed sympathy and a desire to support our neighboring communities. Council contacted colleagues in the impacted areas seeking a way to assist.

Staff is recommending the donation amounts based upon the proportion of damage and need in the counties. There was significantly more damage in Sonoma County than Napa and Mendocino Counties.

Council has made similar donations from their contingency fund and these donations comply with City Policy and past practice.

### **Resource Impact**

Funding in the amount of \$225,000 is currently available in the City Council Contingency. This action will reduce the Contingency to \$200,000 in Fiscal Year 2018 which can be used to support other funding needs, subject to City Council approval.