

Agenda Report

April 16, 2012

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
THROUGH: Finance Committee (April 16, 2012)
FROM: Assistant City Manager
SUBJECT: November/December 2011 Windstorm After Action Report

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council

1. Approve a journal voucher recognizing and appropriating a total of \$2,399,607 from the respective fund balances as follows:
 - a. A total of \$1,250,000 from the unappropriated Power Fund balance for various programs in the FY 2012 Power operating budget ;
 - b. A total of \$260,000 from the unappropriated Water Fund balance for various programs in the FY 2012 Water operating budget;
 - c. A total of \$889,607 from the unappropriated General Fund balance for various programs in FY 2012 Public Works operating budget; and
2. Approve a journal voucher to increase the FY 2012 Refuse Operating Budget by \$3,616,549 for various programs in the Refuse Fund.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

It has been over four months since the City of Pasadena was devastated by one of the most powerful windstorms to hit Pasadena in recent memory. Power lines and traffic signal poles were knocked down, trees were uprooted and fell across major corridors, roofs were blown off many residential homes, and residents were evacuated from unsafe buildings. City staff quickly responded by establishing the Emergency Operation Center (EOC), first at a fire station and then at City Hall. The City reached out to the community through press conferences, press releases, websites, and other social media. The goal was to communicate the status of the event impacts and identify where residents could get assistance. As we look back at this major event we clearly can see ways in which we can improve our emergency processes for the next large

disaster. This report provides a recap of the windstorm events, lays out a funding plan to pay for these unanticipated expenses, and identifies issues that were raised and solutions that address them.

BACKGROUND:

On the evening of November 30, 2011, the City of Pasadena experienced unprecedented hurricane force winds that caused major damages throughout the city. In the aftermath, the City of Pasadena was labeled as “ground zero” to the twelve other affected cities. The following report gives an overview of the windstorm event, how the City will pay for the costs incurred as a result of this unanticipated event, and what are the lessons learned and how can they be addressed.

A Technical After Action Report will be submitted to the County Office of Emergency Management following the receipt of the final format or official due date for this report.

Windstorm Overview

In anticipation of these forecasted conditions and as the result of the high influx to emergency calls being received on the evening of November 30th, the Pasadena Fire Department activated their Department Operations Center (DOC) to coordinate and prioritize 9-1-1 calls. Executive Leadership from Fire, Police, Water and Power, Public Works, Planning and the City Manager’s Office responded to the DOC which was established at Fire Station 33.

As the 9-1-1 calls rapidly increased the City Manager conducted a citywide assessment and ultimately made the decision to declare a Local State of Emergency and activate the City’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to bring personnel together to coordinate, communicate and strategize in support of the tactical operations in the field. Pursuant to Chapter 2.370 of the Pasadena Municipal Code, the City Manager, as the Director of Emergency Services, may issue a Declaration of Local Emergency. Simultaneously, the Police Department increased staffing (21 officers, 9 Communications and 25 volunteers) and the Fire Department staffed four additional engines and a patrol vehicle in addition to mutual aid resources from neighboring communities to respond to 386 calls, eight times the normal call volume from 8:00 p.m. November 30th to 9:00 p.m. on December 1st.

Early morning on December 1st at first light and after assessing the extensive damage in Pasadena, the decision was made to hold a press conference at City Hall to notify the public of our initial damage assessment, recommendation to stay off the streets and closure of some City facilities and the Pasadena Unified School District. Dissemination of updated information to the community was made through the Nixle alerting system by the Police Department, the City’s website, and extensive media outreach. In a further effort to get out vital information, the City’s Public Information Officer posted messages on Facebook, a blog and Twitter.

In the initial hours of the windstorm, the Fire Department responded to numerous calls for service involving wires down which had caused small fires, requests for clearing trees and debris, residential and commercial buildings with damage/collapses, and structure fires including one with four burn victims. Additionally, there was major damage to Hudson Gardens Apartments where a large tree fell through the building and ruptured the main gas and water lines. The building was red-tagged and residents were transported via Pasadena ARTS buses to an emergency shelter established at Jackie Robinson Center. Several Human Services staff members trained in shelter management supplemented Red Cross volunteers in operating the shelter. A total of 54 housing units were red tagged (41 at the Hudson Apartment Building, plus 13 other structures), 38 yellow-tagged, and over 200 structures sustained damage citywide. Five City Building Inspectors surveyed the damaged homes and businesses.

The Police Department Communications Center processed 4,650 calls for service between 10:00 p.m. November 30th and 1:00 p.m. on December 1st. A total of 2,113 were incoming 9-1-1 calls and 2,537 non-emergency lines calls. Police officers were also deployed during the windstorm to identify and report damage to city property.

The power system in Pasadena was severely compromised as a result of the storm. An estimated 6,330 customers lost power (10 percent of our electric customers). A majority of power system damage was caused by broken trees and branches contacting wires, transformers and poles. The City lost one of two primary import supply connections to Cal ISO eliminating our redundancy. A total of 19 of 112 primary circuits were affected. 100 transformers 40,000 feet (7.5 miles) of damaged cable, and 30 poles required temporary and/or permanent replacement.

The Pasadena Public Works Department logged 1,382 incidents thru Friday, December 1st with 6,407 total incidents. Fifty traffic signals were damaged (eight were Caltrans signals), 55 street lights were structurally damaged and 375 street lights required repair. The City's urban forest suffered the most damage with 1,500 mature street and park trees downed, uprooted or ruled unstable along with an additional 525 mature street and park trees severely damaged and required removal.

Other City infrastructure did not go unscathed. Twenty-five City buildings and 16 parks sustained wind related damage. There was heavy damage to the power plant cooling tower, the Sunset Reservoir roof sustained damage causing an emergency shutdown, and minor damage to roofs at three other reservoirs.

The commitment of City personnel to response and recovery efforts was unwavering. Initially 175 Public Works employees, plus contract resources were called in to address hazards and clear nearly 325 miles of streets. By the evening of December 1st, these teams were able to enable emergency access to 100% of the City arterial streets and 50% of the secondary and residential roads by the evening of December 1st. Within the first week 100% of secondary streets and 100% of residential streets were passable.

Up to 200 personnel, including Los Angeles County Public Works employees, worked 12-hour shifts, seven days a week to complete street clean-up. It was important to clean up the streets to restore our neighborhood quality of life and ensure Pasadena was prepared for the annual New Year's Day activities.

An estimated 50,000 tons (100 million pounds) of trees, limbs and debris was collected from City streets. One-hundred percent of the green waste material collected was recycled. Approximately 29,000 pounds of the recycled material was put to good use by our residents in the form of mulch that was made available a special pick up locations.

Water and Power along with contract crews worked 32 hour shifts respectively to make temporary and permanent repairs. When downed trees presented access issues, Public Works crews were called in to clear large limbs and debris. Employees from Water and Power and a contract call center handled over 8,000 calls. Fortunately, Water and Power had recently stocked an extra cache of materials, which enable them to respond quickly to supply needs. There could have been a significant delay in restoring power if these resources had not been readily available. Power was restored to 95% of impacted customers by 6:00 p.m. on December 2nd.

Mutual Aid from our neighboring communities proved invaluable to our response and recovery. Eleven fire agencies responded to 92 calls; Los Angeles County Public Works responded with 30 personnel and heavy equipment; and the cities of Burbank, Anaheim, Los Angeles and Glendale power crews assisted with power restoration.

Cost

When the EOC was opened, the Finance Department created a temporary account so that all windstorm related costs could be easily tracked and identified for future reimbursement. The total cost for response, recovery, and damage to City facilities is estimated at \$14.5 million. This does not include the cost to private property owners for damage to facilities, vehicles, and corresponding clean up and repairs. From the beginning it was expected that the disaster would qualify for federal and state disaster funds, reducing the fiscal impact on the city, businesses, and residents.

As a result of the damage sustained in Southern California due to the wind incident, Cal EMA submitted a recommendation on December 9, 2011 to Governor Brown requesting that he declare a State of Emergency. The Governor Proclaimed a State of Emergency on December 10, 2011. Cal EMA requested that the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) declare a disaster for Los Angeles County, which it granted on December 19, 2011, and made available low-interest federal disaster loans to residents and business owners affected by the Los Angeles County High Winds. The Pasadena Fire Department provided office space (free of charge) to the SBA for a four week period to assist our residents and businesses and those in neighboring communities.

In efforts to seek a presidential major disaster declaration, a joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) for Los Angeles County and the City of Rancho Cucamonga was developed and agreed upon by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and CalEMA. The combined damage estimate to public agencies was \$34,132,162. Unfortunately, this figure failed to meet the established \$50,292,841 federal threshold for assistance.

Acting Secretary Michael Dayton discussed the damages and the situation with FEMA's regional administrator, who advised that if the state FEMA threshold was not met, then there was no basis for California to seek a presidential disaster declaration. Based upon the eligible damages, and upon consultation with FEMA, seeking a presidential major disaster declaration for this incident, unfortunately was unwarranted. And as a result of the State's current fiscal challenges, the Governor refused to issue a California State of Emergency, which would have provided CalEMA disaster funding to local jurisdictions impacted by the windstorm.

There have been numerous subsequent conversations with City officials and CalEMA and FEMA management to advocate for funds and understand the process for future disasters. Additionally, City Management coordinated tours of the affected areas throughout the City for Congressman Adam Schiff, Assemblyman Anthony Portantino, Senator Carol Liu, Congresswoman Judy Chu, representative from United States Senator Barbara Boxer's Office and several media outlets.

Since both the State and Federal governments denied Pasadena windstorm cost reimbursement, the full burden of the cost is left to the City to fund. Given the City's current financial struggles, the burden to fund \$14.5 million in windstorm costs is that much more challenging to resolve. As part of this report, staff will recommend how the unanticipated costs will be addressed.

The total estimated cost of the windstorm is estimated at \$9.3 million for Public Works, \$1 million in the Water Division and \$4 million in the Power Division. Future capital expenditures for the Water and Power funds are included in these estimates and may be lower when actually incurred.

On February 6, 2012 the City Council terminated the declaration of emergency and at that time several funding strategies were being analyzed.

The vast majority of windstorm costs were incurred by the Public Works Department. As shown in Attachment A, of the \$9.3 million in costs, it was determined that \$3.2 million in costs related to regular time spent on the windstorm versus overtime and could be absorbed through the current operating budget. A total of \$4.5 million could not be absorbed in the department and is attributed to staff over time, contractor costs, tree trimming, park clean-up and repairs, building repairs, and debris disposal and removal from City streets. Given that under normal circumstances debris removal and disposal costs related to the cleaning of our public roads would have been charged to

the Refuse Fund as part of trash pickup and green waste disposal, staff proposes that \$3.6 million be expended from the Refuse Fund. A study had recently determined that refuse rates were not sufficient to cover the costs of operating the program and the increased green waste costs further exacerbated the problem. The Fund does not have sufficient fund balance to absorb these costs, so staff recommends rate increases to cover the cost of the refuse operation, including the spike caused by the additional green waste costs.

The \$3.6 million cost is proposed to be shared proportionately by the residential refuse customers through a monthly increase in refuse rates and by commercial haulers through an increase in the Franchise Fee. Because all property related fee increases are subject to the requirements of Proposition 218, the City Council is being asked to set a public hearing under a separate report to the City Council, which provides greater detail on the rates, the impact to customers, and justification for other rate related increases for the Refuse Fund.

The remaining General Fund costs in the amount of \$889,607 from the Public Works department will require an appropriation from the unappropriated General Fund balance. This amount includes \$86,779 to offset the Building Maintenance Fund which has been running in the red for the past several years. It should be noted that the Public Works Department is also working with Caltrans to qualify for FHWA reimbursement for applicable windstorm expenses. At this time staff estimates that \$570,722 may be eligible for reimbursement and if the city receives these revenues, they will be credited to the General Fund.

Public Works also incurred costs in the Sewer Fund, Gas Tax Fund, and the Fleet Maintenance Fund. These are minor costs and will be absorbed in their respective operating budgets.

The Fire and Police departments incurred \$180,006 and this will be absorbed in their respective operating budgets.

For Water and Power funds, staff recommends that the immediate costs be funded through unappropriated fund balances from both the Water Fund and the Power fund. PWP incurred significant costs in its response to the damage caused by the windstorm. These initial costs were primarily labor, general material and contractor charges, including charges for mutual aid provided by crews from Anaheim, Burbank, Glendale, and Los Angeles. These charges were captured as part of operations and are included in the recommended budget amendment. Additional operating costs may be realized for labor, vehicle and fuel costs when those charges are reported in the City's financial system. Funding for the additional costs is available in the operating reserves for the Water Fund and the Power Fund.

Additional costs will be incurred and recorded as capital expenditures when PWP crews make permanent repairs to the temporary restoration work that was performed in the

immediate aftermath of the storm. These capital expenditures are ongoing and will result in permanent improvements and extension of the useful life of assets in both the electric and water distribution systems. These expenditures are captured in appropriate capital projects and may result in the need for additional capital appropriations in the future.

Attachment A provides a detail of the 2011 windstorm costs by department and by fund.

Lessons Learned:

The City of Pasadena is committed to preparing and training for disaster events. The City conducts a minimum of two disaster exercises per year in conjunction with our community partners. Respective staffs are trained in their specific roles and responsibilities in the EOC in addition to every Department maintaining a Disaster Plan. Additionally, the City sends EOC and emergency personnel to ongoing training to prevent, prepare for and respond to large scale emergency's/disasters to better prepare ourselves and our community for disaster preparedness.

The City Emergency Operations Plan is updated and approved by the California Emergency Management Association (CalEMA) every three years and abides by all State and Federal guidelines. The last update was completed and approved in September 2011.

Following a major disaster such as the windstorm, the City undertakes an after action assessment to better understand how we can improve our response in future events. As part of this process, three community meetings were held following the windstorms. The City Manager gave a 15-minute summary and solicited comments from the audience. The City also established an on-line process from the City website to receive feedback. Key lessons learned are summarized below.

1. **Contacting City Hall.** Community and staff expressed frustration with the multiple phone numbers provided to report issues to the city, such as power outages. The public seemed confused as to which number they should call and therefore many ended up reporting the same information to different staff answering the different numbers.

Solution: Staff proposes the development of a 311 Call Center whereby the public would call a single number to request service or seek information. The Call Center and corresponding phone system technology would reduce, if not prevent, callers from receiving a busy signal and could also provide on hold messages with updated emergency information that might reduce the number of questions callers have once they are able to connect with an operator.

2. **Decentralized call locations.** Related to the issue noted above whereby residents felt frustrated over which number to call, they were further frustrated by the fact that when they provided a repeat call there did not seem to be a record of the previous call resulting the repeat customer calls and a reduction in confidence that the City was aware of the customer issue.

Solution: *Similar to the solution in issue #1, the implementation of the 311 Call Center would include a constituent relations management (CRM) system that would track calls, assign a tracking number and more easily allow for issue tracking and customer follow up if necessary.*

3. **Power Outage Notification;** A common complaint expressed on our website, Facebook pages, and at community meetings following the storm, related to the overly optimistic estimate or lack of estimate to restore power.

Solution: *PWP has been planning to invest in an Outage Management System for many years, but other priorities have taken precedent over proceeding. The windstorm heightened the reality that an Outage Management System needs to be moved up in the priority list, it is now proposed to be funded in the 2013 CIP. An Outage Management System would allow for more accurate tracking of outages and allow for better predictability as to how long it will take to restore power. Interim steps will be taken to improve access to information by telephone and internet communication prior to full implementation of an Outage Management System*

4. **Communicating with residents without power.** If a resident loses power, they are not able to obtain information via television news programs, the internet, and possibly the radio and or wireless devices that require recharging. During the windstorm event, City Hall worked hard to communicate with residents through the City's website and through electronic media; however, many of our residents were not able to receive the information since their power was out. During a major earthquake it is also likely that power would be out to a large segment of our population and they may not be able to receive critical information being disseminated via the electronic media.

Solution: *Steps have been made to coordinate the mobilization of community resources to disseminate information to residents without phone service, power, computers, television, radio, etc. The utilization of "on the ground communications" through established neighborhood groups such as Neighborhood Watch, Neighborhood Connections, Pasadena Emergency Response Team trained volunteers and the Pasadena Police Department volunteers will help assess damage and get information to households. The neighborhood organizations could organize their members to go door to door to share important information with residents and make sure they are safe. Additionally, coordinating with the United States Postal Service to get information*

out along their designated routes could be a valuable solution for prolonged events.

- 5. Private property clean-up.** Some residents expressed confusion over how they were to properly handle their private property debris. Information provided to residents regarding clean-up of debris in City streets was not clear to all residents as the media reported different instructions. Debris removal maps designed to help communicate to residents which streets were cleaned were not always accurate prompting residents to make multiple calls to the city. This was compounded by resident's disposing of private property waste onto City streets that had already been cleared causing secondary calls for service. Several residents suggested the utilization of dumpsters strategically placed throughout residential areas allowing them to dispose of debris from their property because they had no means to haul it to designated disposal sites.

***Solution:** With the implementation of some of the enhanced communication methods mentioned above, much of the confusion over timing and process of debris removal could be resolved in future events.*

- 6. Residents were unprepared.** Disaster preparedness awareness has been a priority for the City for years, with successful PERT training sessions being held across the city. However, the windstorm demonstrated that residents need to be much better prepared for future disasters.

***Solution:** The Fire Department has reinforced key messages such as building a disaster kit, developing family reunification plans and taking the Pasadena Emergency Response Team (PERT) training to learn valuable tips and training to self-sustain for several days.*

- 7. Insufficient resident registration of NIXLE and PLEASE alerting systems.** The NIXLE alerting system provides text and email updates from the Pasadena Police Department and other agencies about emergency information. Individuals can sign up for NIXLE service from their website, a link can also be found on the City's website. NIXLE proved to be an extremely effective way to quickly distribute information to residents.

***Solution:** Increased public education to remind residents to sign-up to receive emergency notifications via NIXLE is in the works. Residents should also sign up for PLEASE—the City's reverse 911 robo-calling system utilized for critical emergency notifications. The City receives current residential phone numbers from the phone company, but if residents are not home or they have lost power, they may not receive the message. Residents can sign up for PLEASE via the City's website and register their cell phone to ensure they receive the notification.*

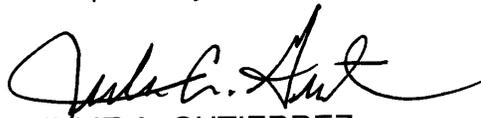
COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

Following the emergency operations plan for the City is consistent with the City Council goal for ensuring public safety. This includes providing effective life safety measures; reducing property loss; and ensuring the rapid resumption of impacted businesses and community services.

FISCAL IMPACT:

As noted above in the fiscal strategy, a total of \$889,607 will need to be appropriated from the unappropriated General Fund balance to cover the cost for Public Works windstorm related expenses. Staff still anticipates that \$570,722 will be reimbursed from from the Federal Highways Administration at which time that revenue will be credited to the General Fund. The Refuse Fund through a proposed rate increase will cover the Public Works expenses in the amount of \$3,616,549. Other Public Works non-general funds will be able to absorb \$60,181. There is sufficient funding in the respective Water and Power funds to cover the windstorm expenses of \$1,510,000. Attachment A details the funding for the windstorm costs.

Respectfully submitted,



JULIE A. GUTIERREZ
Assistant City Manager

Approved by:



MICHAEL J. BECK
City Manager

