



STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Discussion and Consideration of Ordinance NO. 275-2024, An Ordinance Adding Chapter 13-3 of the Clearlake Municipal Code Establishing Fire Hydrant Inspection and Testing Requirements

MEETING DATE: Nov. 21, 2024

SUBMITTED BY: Alan D. Flora, City Manager

PURPOSE OF REPORT: Information only Discussion Action Item

WHAT IS BEING ASKED OF THE CITY COUNCIL:

Consideration of regulation related to inspection, testing, maintenance, and marking of fire hydrants as recommended by staff and the City's Water Ad Hoc Committee made up of Councilmembers Dirk Slooten and Russ Cremer.

BACKGROUND/ DISCUSSION:

Wildfire has unfortunately caused frequent and significant harm to our community, particularly in the past decade. Significant disasters have resulted from the Sulphur Fire in 2017, Cache Fire in 2021 and Boyles Fire in 2024, ultimately resulting in over 230 lost homes in the City. While mitigation of wildfire is a multifaceted approach, ensuring first responders have adequate available water for response is a key. The City's somewhat haphazard development, which started long before incorporation, resulted in water supplied by various entities. Currently the three water providers in the City are Highlands Mutual Water Company, Golden State Water Company and Konocti County Water District. The entities each have different standards, procedures and regulatory oversight of operations. It is in the community's best interest that there is a clear understanding of fire hydrant capability.

In 2021, as part of the Konocti County Water District Sphere of Influence Update and Municipal Service Review, the Lake Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) reviewed fire flow data from all three districts in Clearlake, as well as Lower Lake County Water District. More recently some of the districts have indicated the fire flow data that they provided to LAFCo is incomplete or inaccurate, but updated data has not been made available. Mutual water companies are already required to perform and record annual flow tests pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 10, Section 260.140.71.8. The recorded test results become a part of the mutual water company's books and records. In most jurisdictions this lack of reliable data is not a concern as the municipality is also the utility provider.

There are various standards for testing, but the recommended baseline is NFPA 291 (National Fire Protection Association) – *Recommended Practice for Water Flow Testing and Marking of Hydrants*. This standard outlines the practice for conducting an acceptable fire hydrant flow test, including the test reports, hydraulic graphing, etc.

In addition to fire flow requirements the inspection and operation of hydrants is critical to ensuring they are ready and operable during an emergency. This is addressed more completely in the California Fire Code, which has already been adopted by the City.

Finally, the NFPA 291 standards also delineate a marking system for hydrants that indicate the hydrant capacity with color coding. This way first responders can rapidly identify the hydrant capacity.

The City, as an authority having jurisdiction, can require the tests and inspections be completed and reported to the City and Fire District. This is a critical step in understanding the capability of the water systems in responding to emergencies and informing the districts and City in planning for growth and needed infrastructure upgrades. This ordinance is a critical step in ensuring community resilience and protecting public health and safety.

The proposed ordinance requires all hydrants to be inspected and operated each year, with flow testing of each hydrant required by July 1, 2025 and then every five years.

OPTIONS:

1. Introduce the Ordinance and Hold a First Reading, and Schedule Second Reading and Adoption at a subsequent Council meeting.
2. Direction to Staff.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None \$ Budgeted Item? Yes No

Budget Adjustment Needed? Yes No If yes, amount of appropriation increase: \$

Affected fund(s): General Fund Measure P Fund Measure V Fund Other:

Comments: N/A

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT

- Goal #1: Make Clearlake a Visibly Cleaner City
- Goal #2: Make Clearlake a Statistically Safer City
- Goal #3: Improve the Quality of Life in Clearlake with Improved Public Facilities
- Goal #4: Improve the Image of Clearlake
- Goal #5: Ensure Fiscal Sustainability of City
- Goal #6: Update Policies and Procedures to Current Government Standards
- Goal #7: Support Economic Development

Attachments:

1. **Draft Ordinance 275-2024**
2. **NFPA 291 - Recommended Practice for Water Flow Testing and Marking of Hydrants**

