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Town may approve grazing animals as fuel reduction measure

By **RICK SILVA** | rsilva@paradisepost.com | Paradise Post
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The Paradise Town Council will have a light agenda on Tuesday night, as relates to agenda action items.

Councilors will consider if they should authorize the town's attorney to review and approve a draft memorandum of understanding with the Butte County Fire Safe Council.

The MOU is part of the long-term community recovery program that the town adopted as presented in 2019 by the Urban Design Associate.

The Fire Safe Council is planning fire prevention-related vegetation management activities on properties located throughout town as part of an awarded Cal Fire grant for Camp Fire fuels reduction. Activities will include fuel reduction through mastication, hand-cut and chip, lop and scatter, removal of dead and dying trees 10" dbh and smaller, as well as animal grazing. If the town approves the MOU, it will receive \$4000 to cover staff time for the processing of the CEQA document as well as filing the notice of determination.

Then counsel will be asked to increase the town's contract with Ernst & Young by \$250,000, which will increase the total cost of the contract with a company to \$2.250 million.

The company assists the town with insurance and FEMA claim preparation of financial recovery. This will be the fourth extension of the contract with the company. The other three extensions were for \$500,000 each granted in May 2019, November 2019, and April 2020.

The council will also be asked to approve a draft letter to Scott Reiner, chief executive officer of Adventist Health in relation to the emergency services within the town of Paradise.

The letter notes that the passage of SB 156 in October 2019 was a victory for the town of Paradise and was a bill that both the town and all of Paradise's elected representatives supported.

The letter from the town to the company offers support to get the project started and notes that the bill will expire on January 1, 2028, and urges that now is the time to get moving on this project.

After the town council addresses emergency services on the ridge, it will be asked to consider amending Paradise Municipal Code Section 8.58.060 relating to Defensible Space and Hazardous Fuel Management.

The council can approve that change or provide alternative direction to town staff.

The amendments would allow for the owner of any property to transfer ownership, but the seller shall provide documentation to a buyer that the property is in compliance with defensible space and field management.

The change also allows for grazing animals (limited to goats and/or sheep) to be utilized for weed abatement. They would graze open and other appropriate areas of natural vegetation for a period not to exceed 60 days in a calendar year.

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Rick Silva | Managing editor

Rick Silva has been with the Paradise Post since June 1994 as sports editor. In April 2002, he was named Managing