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Title: Authorize the Fire Chief to apply for the 2020 SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) Grant.

Sponsors: Fire Department

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Attachments: 1. SAFER Resolution.pdf, 2. SAFER 5-yr costing.pdf

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

March 4, 2021

FROM: KERRI L. DONIS, Fire Chief
Fire Department

SUBJECT

Authorize the Fire Chief to apply for the 2020 SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) Grant.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended Council authorize the Fire Chief to apply for the 2020 SAFER grant pursuant to the resolution passed by council on September 4, 2020.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On September 4, 2020, the City Council adopted a resolution directing the City Manager to submit applications for all future SAFER grants each fiscal year, unless directed otherwise by the Council.

The 2020 SAFER grant opened on February 8, 2021 and will close on March 12, 2021. Prior to submission of the application, this item is being brought before the council to ensure it remains the will of the Council to apply. With this SAFER application, the Fire Department seeks to hire forty-two (42) firefighter recruits under the grant. The grant pays for all salaries and benefits for all recruits for a period of 36 months. Note: There is no grant requirement to retain the firefighters following the 36-

month performance period.

BACKGROUND

The Fresno Fire Department currently has 287 filled sworn safety positions serving a population of 537,000 residents. This firefighter per capita rate of 0.53 members per 1,000 residents is one of the lowest in the State and country for comparable cities. The increasing population and demand for services requires the Department to expand its capacity to preserve and improve service levels. With the approval of this application, the Department would increase the number of members' on-duty each day from 81 to 95. This will increase the number of filled sworn safety positions to 329, improving the number of firefighters per 1,000 population to .61 and significantly improving the Department's ability to meet the challenges of responding to 43,000 calls for service each year with our growing population.

Under the grant, the Fire Department intends to hold two drill schools. The first drill school would include 24 recruits and would only be available to individuals who are already fire academy graduates with related certifications and an emergency medical technician (EMT) certification. This would require a reduced eight (8) week drill school and is projected to begin in July 2021.

The second drill school would commence approximately 30-60 days following the conclusion of the first drill school and would include 20 recruits (18 SAFER recruits and 2 additional recruits retained as backup members for those who fail drill school, resignations, or attrition upon completion of the school). Recruits for the second drill school would be hired through an open general population recruitment; casting a wider net for a pool of applicants. This will require a sixteen (16) week drill school to ensure adequate training is received.

Once the recruits are ready for service, the department intends to open three (3) Squad Units. Each of these 2-person Squads primary function would be dedicated to medical emergency responses (65% of the Department's calls). Currently, our large fire engines and trucks are deployed on such calls. Squads are much quicker and smaller than engines or trucks providing for more efficient emergency responses to the highest number of calls for service.

The remaining 24 recruits would be added to 3-person companies' thereby converting them into 4-person companies. This would improve the Department's ability to meet the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) 1710 standard regarding appropriate apparatus staffing, which states, "*Personnel assigned to the initial arriving company shall have the capability to implement an initial rapid intervention crew (IRIC).*"

Currently, members in a 3-person company cannot make entry until a second company arrives. However, with a 4-person company, two members can immediately make entry to a structure without the delay of the next arriving apparatus. In many fire emergencies every second can be critical. This staffing improvement would provide for an additional eight (8) fire apparatus to have 4-0 staffing, meeting the "Two-in-Two-out" firefighter safety requirement and result in 16 of the Department's 24 engines or trucks to be staffed with 4-0 staffing.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

This item is not a project as defined by section 15378 of CEQA.

LOCAL PREFERENCE

Local preference was not implemented because this item is directing staff to apply for grant funding.

FISCAL IMPACT

A cost schedule accompanies this report detailing the 5-year expected fiscal impacts to the General Fund. Net of grant reimbursements, and exclusive of future MOU arrangements, the fiscal impacts to the General Fund will be as follows: Fiscal Year 2022 - \$2,304,200; Fiscal Year 2023 - \$1,520,900; Fiscal Year 2024 - \$1,543,100; Fiscal Year 2025 - \$5,554,600; and Fiscal Year 2026 - \$6,205,000

Attachments:
SAFER Resolution
5-yr costing