

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
SUBJECT: ACCEPTANCE AND APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM
THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
AGENCY (FEMA) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$853,356 FOR THE
HIRING OF (3) FTE FIREFIGHTER POSITIONS FOR THE
TWO YEAR GRANT PERFORMANCE PERIOD AND
AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO IMPLEMENT
THESE CHANGES
STAFF PRESENTER: TONY GOSSNER, DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF
AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

ISSUE(S)

Shall City Council authorize, by resolution, the acceptance of FEMA grant funds in the amount of \$853,356 for hiring (3) FTE firefighter positions for the two year grant performance period, authorize the City Manager to execute documents on behalf of the City and authorize the Chief Financial Officer to appropriate FEMA 2013 SAFER Grant funds in the amount of \$853,356 into JL Key 05089, entitled FEMA 2013 SAFER Grant? The revenue account for deposit is 001100-4411.



COUNCIL GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The Grant relates to Council Goal 2 and Goal 6;

Goal 2: Promote a City Organization that is Sustainable and Maintains Employee Morale, Productivity and Effectiveness.

Goal 6: Committed to Making Santa Rosa a Community Where People Feel Safe to Live, Work and Play

BACKGROUND

1. In 2005, the City applied for and received a five year, \$300,000 FEMA "Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response" (SAFER) grant for a second firefighter (in addition to Captain, Engineer and firefighter) on Engine 6 located at Calistoga Road.
2. In 2010, due to economic hardship, that second firefighter was moved to vacant firefighter positions within the department.

3. The Fire Department currently has 114 filled operational General Fund positions and 9 FEMA SAFER grant funded authorized operational line positions. There is currently one vacant position.
4. The Fire Department submitted an application for a FEMA SAFER grant on August 30, 2013 and on November 29, 2013 was notified that the City is being awarded a grant in the amount of \$853,356 to hire (3) FTE firefighter positions for a 2-year period.
5. FEMA has eliminated any matching funds requirement and there is no requirement to extend the improved response service past the two-year grant performance period. The City is required to accept or reject the grant within 30-days of notification and no later than December 29, 2013.
6. The grant restricts current filled firefighter positions, on the date of the grant notification, from being laid off during the two-year grant performance period unless a citywide economic hardship waiver is approved.

ANALYSIS

1. The Calistoga Road Station is an outlying station that covers the largest cumulative geographical area of the City to include expansive wild land urban interface. Due to the location of Engine 6 and the current three person staffing, establishment of the OSHA requirement "two-in, two out" can be delayed as this engine must wait an extended period of time for a second company to arrive.
2. The grant funds, if accepted, will be used for the hiring of (3) FTE firefighter positions (one additional firefighter per shift) which will need to be authorized within the Fire Department budget.
3. It is not anticipated that General Fund revenues will be available to sustain the grant staffing of the fire station after the 2-year grant performance period.
4. The Fire Department will continue to work on alternative funding options for a permanent solution to staffing needs.
5. In the event funding is not available after the 2-year grant performance period the (3) FTE positions would be utilized to fill vacancies due to anticipated retirements.
6. The Fire Department anticipates the likely retirement of an additional 12 positions during the 2-year grant performance period. These vacancies will allow, if the City chooses, to return to current staffing levels of 3 firefighters on Engine 6 after the grant performance period.

7. In response to Council Goal 2 and 6: The additional (3) FTE firefighter positions will enhance compliance with OSHA's requirement of "two- in, two -out" and improve initial interior fire attack times to save lives and reduce property damage.
8. The grant requires maintenance of filled operational positions during the grant term. The Fire Department currently has 114 filled operational General Fund positions and 9 FEMA SAFER grant funded positions which will be considered the base as of December 29, 2013. These positions will be required to be maintained, with no layoffs of these positions during the term of the grants. The no layoff provision is specific to the grant performance period and does not set a precedent for labor policy. It is common for federal grants to include a requirement to prevent supplanting of grant funds.

The grant is funded quarterly after each 3-month performance period and the submittal of expenditures. In the event the City is unable to meet the position maintenance requirement due to an economic hardship that affects public safety, the City may request a waiver to eliminate positions or terminate the grant.

9. Options:
 - a. Accept the FEMA SAFER grant for the two-year period:
 - i. Improve initial interior fire attack times to save lives and reduce property damage.
 - ii. Projected retirements vacancies will allow, if the City chooses, to return to normal staffing of 3 firefighters on Engine 6 after the grant performance period.
 - iii. In the event there is a citywide economic hardship identified, a waiver may be requested to reduce positions or the grant may be terminated.
 - b. Reject the FEMA SAFER grant and continue three person staffing for Engine 6.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Fire Department that the Council, by resolution, authorize the acceptance of FEMA grant funds, authorize the addition of (3) FTE firefighter positions, authorize the City Manager to execute documents on behalf of the City and authorize the Chief Financial Officer to appropriate FEMA 2013 SAFER Grant funds in the amount of \$853,356 into JL Key 05089, entitled FEMA 2013 SAFER Grant. The revenue account for deposit is 001100-4411.

Author: Tony Gossner

Attachments: none