



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Fire Protection District
Department No.: 031
For Agenda Of: November 7, 2023
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: 4/5

TO: County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors
FROM: Fire Protection District: Mark A Hartwig, Fire Chief/Fire Warden
Contact Info: Shawna Jorgensen, Deputy Director/CFO x15506
Anthony Stornetta, Fire Operations Deputy Chief x14202
Garrett Huff, EMS and Training Division Chief x15503
SUBJECT: EMS Ambulance Transportation Implementation Plan and Funding; Salary Resolution Amendment

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Risk Management, CEO Budget

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Receive and file the EMS Ambulance Transport Implementation Plan for the Fire District (Attachment A); and
- b) Approve Budget Revision BJE-0009421 in the amount of \$18,650,600 from ambulance transport revenues and a reduction in Other Financing Uses to fund the startup and FY 2023-24 operational costs associated with the EMS Ambulance Transportation System (Attachment B); and
- c) Adopt a Resolution (Attachment C) amending the Salary Resolution, which adds one hundred twenty-three (123.0) full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, to include 36.0 FTE Ambulance Operator EMTs (24 Hour Shift), 26.0 FTE Ambulance Operator EMTs, 39.0 FTE Ambulance Operator Paramedics (24 Hour Shift), 18.0 FTE Ambulance Operator Paramedics 3.0 FTE Senior Staff Nurse, and 1.0 FTE Enterprise Leader to the Fire Department, effective November 7, 2023; and
- d) Determine that the above action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15378(b)(4) and 15378(b)(5) because it consists of government administrative or fiscal activities that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

Summary Text:

This update outlines the Fire District's progress toward launching the EMS Ambulance Transportation System on March 1, 2024, and the essential budgetary approval required for a successful implementation. All startup costs will be funded from the Fire District's fund balance reserves. The Fire District seeks budgetary approval to support the essential Fire District's start-up costs associated with the EMS Ambulance Transport system launch. While the formal EMS Ambulance Transport contracts are underway with the Public Health Department, the Board of Supervisors approved ambulance provider permits and the Fire District must obtain Board approval to initiate essential activities to add key frontline staff, consulting services, and various start-up costs/acquisitions necessary to successfully meet all deliverables.

Background:

On September 19, 2023, the County Board of Supervisors approved three Ambulance Provider Permits for the Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District (Fire District): Emergency Medical Calls; Interfacility Transports and Special Event Standby; and Critical Care Transport. The approval of the permits provided the Fire District the opportunity to expand its Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for ambulance transport across the County of Santa Barbara. The new permits integrate paramedic first response with ambulance transport, ensuring seamless care from '9-1-1 call' to hospital arrival. Under the current contract, American Medical Response will continue to be the ambulance service provider for the County through the end of February 2024. The Fire District will implement its expanded Emergency Medical Services Ambulance Transport on March 1, 2024.

In an effort to ensure effective delivery of the Fire District's EMS Transportation Services on March 1st, A.P. Triton's consulting services were engaged to develop the go-live transition plan and provide project management services to track all key milestones. Below is a summary of the Implementation Plan (see Attachment A – EMS Ambulance Transport Implementation Plan for further details).

EMS Ambulance Transportation System Implementation Plan

The EMS Ambulance Transportation Implementation Plan is operative from October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024. This plan aims to ensure the EMS Ambulance Transportation division's smooth transition into our organization and to provide exceptional service to our community and stakeholders. Phase 1 is intensive and ran from October 1, 2023, to October 31, 2023. Phase 2 begins November 7, 2023, and ends December 31, 2023, while Phase 3 runs from January 1, 2024, to February 29, 2024. Phase 4 is the go-live, monitoring, and adjustment phase. It runs from March 1, 2024, to September 30, 2024.

Phase 1

During Phase 1 of the Ground Ambulance Transport System Implementation Plan, divisions of labor are identified and implemented to meet our go-live date of March 1, 2024. Several existing organization members are involved in this initial ramp-up phase. Specific sections of our organization and their roles/tasks are identified in Attachment 1.

Key milestones achieved during Phase 1 include developing the employee hiring timeline, and finalizing the ambulance deployment plan. We also initiated discussions with our local fire agency partners, healthcare providers, and the LEMSA.

Phase 2

During Phase 2, after Board approval, we will begin hiring and training EMS Division staff members and other necessary support positions in the organization. We will also conduct a Fee Study to validate the ambulance rate structure. Other key milestones include establishing the accounting structure of the EMS Transport Contract, completing the ambulance fleet buildout, the development of a compassionate billing policy and ambulance collections policy for Board consideration, finalizing equipment stocking, and agreements for the fixed ambulance stations and comfort stations. We will also integrate our deployment models for emergency response, interfacility transfers (IFT), and critical care transfers (CCT) into the computer-aided dispatch system (CAD) in collaboration with the LEMSA during Phase 2.

Phase 3

Phase 3 marks the final ramp-up period before going live on March 1, 2024. In preparation for the go-live date, we will continue to hire and train staff members and finalize our expanded quality improvement program. We will present our billing policies and agreements for final approval and finish the build-out and testing of our ambulance fleet. Final CAD validation tests will be conducted on our emergency response, IFT, CCT, surge, and move-up and cover plans. Training of the existing dispatch workforce will be completed, and County service contracts will be presented to the Board for approval. During this final phase, before going live, we will continue to work with the LEMSA to develop the parameters of contract compliance.

Phase 4

The final phase of our implementation plan begins on March 1, 2024, and concludes on September 30, 2024. Activities during this phase are directed at ensuring that we are providing and supporting exceptional ambulance service to our community and healthcare providers. Our Finance staff members will closely monitor our billing and collections data to ensure the accuracy of our financial projections and billing policies. We will implement preventative maintenance and ambulance rotation plans to maximize vehicle service life. Our deployment plans for all permits will be monitored closely and adjusted as required to ensure we are exceeding response time requirements. We will also continue to work closely with the LEMSA on developing the EMS Plan.

Performance Measure:

Enhanced patient outcome-driven performance measures are being developed in collaboration with the County Public Health Department Local Emergency Medical Services Agency to ensure transparency, patient outcomes, integration, and system efficiency. Detailed performance metrics will be presented to the Board soon.

Contract Renewals and Performance Outcomes:

Per Chapter 5, Ambulances, of the County Code Sec. 5-12. Term and Transferability of Provider Permits: (A) The term of each initial Permit issued pursuant to this Chapter shall be one (1) year. Upon renewal, each Permit shall be valid for two (2) years.

Fiscal Impact:

Budgeted: No. The Budget Revision (Attachment B) provides the necessary appropriations for the Santa Barbara County Fire Department to provide Emergency Medical Service (EMS) ambulance transport services effective March 1, 2024 as approved by the Board of Supervisors on September 19th 2023. This budget revision appropriates \$18,650,600 for the majority of the additional FY 2023-24 budget necessary to implement the three permit programs issued by the Board of Supervisors. The budget revision does not include necessary administrative support staff and it is anticipated that another budget revision and salary resolution will be brought forth to the Board of Supervisors on November 28, 2023 to approve the additional positions.

| <u>Funding Sources</u> | <u>Current FY Cost:</u> | <u>Annualized On-going Cost:</u> | <u>Total One-Time Project Cost</u> |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|
| General Fund | | | |
| State | | | |
| Federal | | | |
| Fees | | | |
| Other: | \$ 18,650,000.00 | | |
| Total | \$ 18,650,000.00 | \$ - | \$ - |

Fiscal Analysis:

This update underscores the Fire District's commitment to seamless, exceptional ambulance service for the Santa Barbara County community and healthcare providers.

Due to the agreement negotiations currently underway, the Fire District will return to the Board on November 28th to provide a go-live budget request covering the administrative support positions. This initial funding request is inclusive of frontline positions, consulting services, fleet acquisition, medical equipment, medical supplies, furniture and fixtures, communication equipment, IT hardware, capital assets and other expenditures projected through June 30, 2024 with the exception of the administrative support positions. The total funding request in BJE-0009421 is \$18,650,600. This request is funded by projected ambulance transport revenues of \$11.6M and a reduction of \$7,050,600 for the Regional Fire Communications Center (RFCC) project operating transfer to General Services. The RFCC appropriation is available due to impending debt financing for that project, which will allow the Fire Department to transfer the use of Fire District funding to the EMS Transport Contracts program.

Staffing Impacts:

Once approved, recruitment efforts to hire 123.0 FTEs will begin immediately. The first positions to be filled will include the Emergency Medical Service Ambulance Operations Manager and frontline positions. For training purposes, the frontline positions (EMTs, paramedics, and registered nurses) will be onboarded as extra help in early January. This will allow candidates to retain their current positions until March 1st, 2024. The training plan includes 80-380 hours of clinical and driver training, depending on candidate qualifications, and will be offered virtually and in person. The District has considered the unique needs of the candidate pool for training and will provide various courses throughout the county at various times and dates. These positions will transition to full-time positions effective March 1, 2024, at 12:01 A.M.

| Job Classification | Working Title | Legal Positions | Funded FTE's |
|--|---|------------------------|---------------------|
| Enterprise Leader | Emergency Medical Service- Ambulance Operations Manager | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| Senior Staff Nurse | Critical Care Transport Nurse | 3.0 | 3.0 |
| Ambulance Operator -Paramedic/Field Supervisor | Ambulance Transport Field Supervisor | 6.0 | 6.0 |
| Ambulance Operator -Paramedic | Ambulance Transport Paramedic | 18.0 | 18.0 |
| Ambulance Operator -Paramedic (24hr Shift) | Ambulance Transport Paramedic (24hr Shift) | 33.0 | 33.0 |
| Ambulance Operator -EMT | Ambulance Transport EMT | 26.0 | 26.0 |
| Ambulance Operator -EMT (24hr Shift) | Ambulance Transport EMT (24hr Shift) | 36.0 | 36.0 |
| | | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| | | 123.0 | 123.0 |
| | | <hr/> | <hr/> |

Special Instructions:

Please email one (1) copy of the minute order and one (1) copy of the fully executed resolution to Tracy Rogers, Workforce Planning Analyst, Human Resources Department at trogers@countyofsb.org.

Attachments:

- A. EMS Ambulance Transport Implementation Plan
- B. Budget Revision BJE-009421
- C. Salary Resolution

Authored by:

Shawna Jorgensen, Deputy Director/CFO

cc:

Mark Hartwig, Fire Chief/Fire Warden, Fire District
 Anthony Stornetta, Operations Deputy Chief, Fire District
 Garrett Huff, EMS and Training Division Chief, Fire District