



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 Department
Department No.: 031
For Agenda Of: November 16, 2021
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Directors, Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District

FROM: Select_From Mark A. Hartwig, Fire Chief / Fire Warden
Contact Info: Garrett Huff, EMS and Training Division Chief
Shawna Jorgensen, Chief Financial Officer

SUBJECT: Consent to the Voluntary Transfer of District Ambulance Transport Responsibilities and Authority to the County of Santa Barbara in New Cuyama (Exclusive Operating Area Three)

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Risk Management

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

Acting as the Board of Directors for the Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District (District):

- a) Approve the attached Resolution (Attachment A) authorizing consenting to the voluntary transfer of ambulance transport responsibilities for the New Cuyama community (currently designated Exclusive Operating Area EOA 3) to the County of Santa Barbara;
- b) Determine this action is exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15378(b)(5), finding that the action is an organizational or administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

Summary Text:

The District is the primary provider of pre-hospital emergency medical care and ambulance service in the community of New Cuyama. For over 47 years, the District has diligently provided dependable emergency medical services to include ambulance transport to visitors and residents of the communities it serves. The District is requesting the Board consent to the District's voluntary transfer of existing responsibility and authority for Exclusive Operating Area (EOA) 3 pursuant to provisions contained within section 1797.201 et. al. of Division 2.5 of the California Health and Safety Code (also referred to as the EMS Act of 1980) to the County. If the Santa Barbara County Local Emergency Services Agency's (LEMSA) request for proposals (RFP) for Countywide ambulance services and the resulting

ambulance services contract includes the provision of ambulance transport services in EOA 3, the District voluntarily consents to this inclusion of its Section 1797.201 transport rights from EOA 3 and resolves to not challenge the RFP or resulting contract on this basis. This transfer only applies to transport responsibilities within the currently designated EOA 3. The District strongly encourages the LEMSA to maintain the existing level of ambulance transport services provided to the Cuyama community in the Request for Proposals for the emergency services contract, and in the resulting contract.

Background:

The District is an all-risk public safety agency that provides ambulance services in certain areas of the County under its authority via Health and Safety Code sec. 1797.201. The District currently provides Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) services via engine companies, truck companies, and ambulances from 16 strategically located fire stations throughout the County, responding to over 15,000 incidents a year.

On May 2, 1973, the District started providing ambulance transport service to the New Cuyama area of the County. The Arco Oil Company delivered a sedan ambulance to Fire Station 41 located in New Cuyama and turned over the keys to the “Arco Ambulance.” They informed the District that they would no longer be providing ambulance transport service. From that point, the District provided ambulance transport service in the Cuyama Valley, which is synonymous with the EOA 3 identified by the LEMSA.

The District started providing ALS care in 1974 in some parts of the District, however the ambulance transport service did not begin ALS in the Cuyama Valley (EOA 3) until June 7, 1993 because there was no ability to connect cardiac telemetry with Goleta Valley Hospital (only base station in Santa Barbara County prior to 1993).

The Emergency Medical Services System and the Prehospital Emergency Medical Care Personnel Act (EMS Act) was enacted in 1980 and created a comprehensive system governing virtually every aspect of prehospital emergency medical services. Section 1797.201 of the EMS Act specifies, in part, that upon request, a county shall enter into a written agreement upon the request of a city or fire district regarding the level of prehospital emergency medical services, and that the city or fire district must maintain “not less than the existing level of service” until such an agreement is reached. No such written agreement is in place in EOA 3, thus the District presently has the legal responsibility to continue to provide the current level of service unless and until an agreement is reached with the County of Santa Barbara to provide otherwise or the District transfers its Section 1797.201 rights.

A Section 1797.201 provider loses its rights to continue providing the same services in the same area only by voluntary express written consent or acquiescence. The District proposes to transfer the responsibility and authority to provide transport ambulance service in EOA 3 to the County and resolving to not challenge LEMSA’s inclusion of ambulance transport rights in EOA 3 in the RFP for Countywide ambulance services and the resulting contract.

The District proposes this in order to:

- Reduce the operating deficit incurred in the operation of the Cuyama Fire Station; and
- Provide four-person engine company staffing as recommended by the Citygate Report; and

- Allow the Local Emergency Medical Services Agency (LEMSA) the ability to include the described area into a revenue generating service area.

Separately from the transport services, the District will continue to support the New Cuyama community with a 24/7/365 advanced life support (ALS) non-transport unit (fire engine). If the LEMSA includes the EOA 3 transport rights in the RFP and resulting contract, the District will continue to provide ambulance transport services in EOA 3 until the resulting contract for Countywide ambulance services becomes operative.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: No

Fiscal Analysis:

| <u>Funding Sources</u> | <u>Current FY Cost:</u> | <u>Annualized On-going Cost:</u> | <u>Total One-Time Project Cost</u> |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|
| 2280-Fire Protection District | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - |
| State | - | - | - |
| Federal | - | - | - |
| Fees | - | - | - |
| Other: | - | - | - |
| Total | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - |

Narrative:

The net fiscal impact associated with this Board action is budgetary neutral. A study commissioned by the LEMSA determined that as much as 99% of the ambulance revenue generated within the County is generated outside of EOA 3. The District operates the ambulance for transport in the Cuyama community (EOA 3) at a loss of over \$705K. This amount includes the cost of one firefighter paramedic post.

The salary savings that would result from the 1797.201 transfer will allow the District to expedite the conversion from a three-person engine company to a dedicated four-person engine company in New Cuyama, as recommended by the 2020 Citygate Report. This enhancement will be beneficial to Station 27 and their capacity to respond to incidents within the rural community of New Cuyama. As such, the net fiscal impact of this transfer will be \$705K but the operational enhancement will be significant.

Staffing Impacts: None

Legal Positions: 0.0

FTEs: 0.0

Attachments:

- A. Resolution

Authored by:

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Shawna Jorgensen, Chief Financial Officer, Fire District

cc:

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Nick Clay, LEMSA Director, Public Health Department