



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: February 25, 2020
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: N/A
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: 4/5

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Mark Hartwig, Fire Chief, 805-681-5500
Director(s)
Contact Info: Shawna Jorgensen, Chief Financial Officer, 805-681-5506

SUBJECT: Acceptance of Non-Cash Donation of \$47,763 from the Santa Barbara Firefighters Alliance to the Santa Barbara County Fire Department Peer Support Team

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Risk Management

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board Supervisors:

- a) Authorize the Fire Department to accept a non-cash donation of \$47,763, from the Santa Barbara Firefighters Alliance, a non-profit organization;
- b) Approve Budget Revision Request #BJE-0006788 (attached); and
- c) Determine that the above recommended actions do not constitute a project subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4), finding that the actions are the creation of a governmental funding mechanism or other government fiscal activity, which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment.

Summary Text:

The donation is a pickup truck with shell, valued at \$47,763. It will be used by the Santa Barbara County Fire Department Peer Support Team for the sole transportation of an emotional support canine to provide emotional support to firefighters following a traumatic/emotional emergency response.

The recommended action by the Board of Supervisors to accept the non-cash donation is in accordance with California Government Code Section 25355, and Policies & Procedures for the Acceptance of Donations and Gifts to the County.

Background:

On January 6, 2020, the Fire Department submitted a donation request to the Santa Barbara Firefighters Alliance for a 2019 Ford F150 XL pickup truck to support the Peer Support Team’s canine program. On January 13, 2020, the donation request was approved with a do not exceed amount of \$50,000.

Fire Department personnel are subject to exposure of extreme human suffering, strong emotional involvement, sporadic high intensity situations and extended work periods. These factors impose high stress levels on fire personnel. The need for behavioral health support services continues to grow in the fire service. Along with many of the traditional clinical programs, a shift to what could be characterized as nontraditional, has proven to be beneficial; canine comfort and therapy services.

The International Association of Firefighters released a 2016 report stating “firefighters experience post-traumatic stress disorder at rates similar to what’s seen among combat veterans. Almost 20% of firefighters and paramedics had PTSD, compared with the general population’s rate of 3.5%.

The Ruderman Family Foundation released a report in early 2018 stating “more firefighters died by suicide in 2017 than all line of duty deaths combined.” The Santa Barbara County Fire Department, along with almost every other public safety entity in Santa Barbara County, has begun efforts to address the needs for mental health support for our firefighters with the development of the Santa Barbara County Fire Peer Support Team and the “At Ease” services.

Service dogs, particularly emotional support dogs, have been proven by multiple studies to reduce PTSD in war veterans. Specifically, Purdue University studied two groups of Veterans suffering from PTSD, one group with comfort dogs and one group without such dogs. The results show lower levels of depression, higher levels of life satisfaction, higher overall psychological well-being, and less absenteeism from work due to health among those who were employed and who had access to dogs.

The use of emotional support dogs to help firefighters has been used locally during the following recent events:

- Thomas Fire
- Montecito Floods
- Conception Boat Fire

Dog handlers assigned with these dogs have reported admirable results.

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>
Other: Donation			\$ 47,763.00
Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 47,763.00

Narrative: The referenced donation is not budgeted and will be an increase in appropriations. The associated Budget Revision is attached. The vehicle donation of \$47,763, will be accounted for as a one-time appropriation of Miscellaneous Revenue-Other Donations.

Special Instructions:

Attachments:

- A. Santa Barbara Firefighter Alliance Support Proposal and Donation Backup
- B. Budget Revision Request #BJE-0006788

Authored by:

Shawna Jorgensen, Chief Financial Officer, County of Santa Barbara Fire Department

cc:

Rob Heckman, Deputy Fire Chief, Administration
Woody Enos, Deputy Fire Chief, Operations
Matthew Farris, Division Chief