



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 No.: 031
For Agenda Of: December 11, 2018
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: 4/5

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Michael W. Dyer, Interim Fire Chief 805-681-5507
Director(s)
Contact Info: Rob Heckman, Deputy Fire Chief 805-681-5501
SUBJECT: Request for Waiver of Competition in Purchase of Used Fire Helicopter

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

Purchasing, Risk Management

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Authorize the Purchasing Agent to procure one (1) used Sikorsky HH 60L (Blackhawk) helicopter without being required to conduct a formal bid process; and
- b) Approve Budget Revision Request BJE 0006028; and
- c) Determine pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15378(b)(4) that the above fiscal activity is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act.

Summary Text:

Pursuant to County Code Section 2-39, the Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District is requesting that the Board of Supervisors waive the requirement for a competitive bid for the purchase of one (1) used Fire Type I helicopter, in whole or as assembled, from one or multiple sources. The cost is \$1,726,000 based on set GSA pricing of currently available units. The available aircraft is 2002 model with approximately 3,300 flight hours. The aircraft to be purchased is currently operable but will require modifications to be mission ready for the Santa Barbara County Air Support Unit. We are currently researching the options/costs for these modifications and will address that portion during the FY2019/20 budget process. A new commercial aircraft of similar make and model would cost approximately \$15,000,000 to \$20,000,000.

Background:

The recommended action will allow the Fire Protection District to obtain an aircraft that will increase its effectiveness in limiting the spread of wildland fires, provide rescue and medical transport to the most critical and otherwise inaccessible victims, and provide a significantly greater safety margin for the employees who work via this platform.

The Fire Protection District and the Sheriff operate a combined Air Support Unit (ASU) that consist of two (2) OH-58 Law Enforcement Support Office (Federal - LESO) helicopters, one (1) UH-1H LESO helicopter, one (1) UH-1N Model LESO helicopter, and one (1) UH-1H Federal Excess Property Program (FEPP) helicopter. The two OH-58 helicopters are used primarily for law missions, and the other helicopters in the unit are used primarily for fire and search and rescue missions. The N Model LESO helicopter is the only twin engine aircraft and is used for over-water missions such as to the Channel Islands for medical aide.

As a part of the ASU partnership, the Fire Protection District currently operates the one (1) FEPP unit, a Type II helicopter (Copter 308), within the ASU. This helicopter is a 1967 Bell UH1-H that was procured through the FEPP. As such, the aircraft is and always will be owned by the Federal Government, with use restrictions associated with that ownership. Additionally, although upgraded, Copter 308, with over 14,000 flight hours, has performance limitations and maintenance requirements commensurate with a 51-year-old aircraft. The helicopter is reaching a point where it no longer consistently meets the growing needs of the communities served by the Fire Department and Sheriff's Office

The purchase of a used, but newer Type I helicopter achieves four key performance measures:

- 1) Significantly increased lift capacity allows more water to be delivered faster on fires, thereby helping to limit fire spread and associated impacts and costs. The aircraft to be purchased is faster than our current helicopters reducing response time to incidents and reducing return interval time for water dropping. When properly equipped, this helicopter has the ability to carry approximately three to four times as much water as one of the current ASU medium helicopters. It can also carry approximately twice the personnel.
- 2) Provides a higher margin of safety for our employees. While parts can be replaced on an aircraft, the airframe cannot. Copter 308 is 51 years old and flew in the Vietnam War. Identifying weaknesses in an aging airframe proves to be very complex. The aircraft to be purchased is a twin-engine helicopter with power reserves that greatly exceed any aircraft currently in the ASU fleet.
- 3) Provides better aircraft availability for all county missions. The ASU's stated objective is to have two Type II helicopters available seven days a week during high fire season. This objective has been difficult to meet due in large part to required maintenance of the fleet.
- 4) Extend the service life of Copter 308 by placing it in auxiliary status and reducing the number of hours placed on the aircraft in a given year.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: Fire Protection District Fund Balance is available this fiscal year to fund this one-time capital helicopter purchase. Budget Revision Request BJE 0006028 is attached. The Fund Balance is available as a result of the Fire Protection District purchasing an existing building in Solvang as opposed to the previously planned construction of the Buellton Operations Center.

Fiscal Analysis:

Funding Sources	Current FY Cost:	Annualized On-going Cost:	Total One-Time Project Cost
General Fund		\$200,000.00	
State			
Federal			
Fire Protection District Fund Balance			\$ 1,726,000.00
Fire Protection District Fund		\$ 200,000.00	
Total	\$ -	\$ 400,000.00	\$ 1,726,000.00

Narrative: In addition to the one-time purchase price of the helicopter, there will be on-going maintenance and inspections needed, per the table below. Maintenance up to and including 100 hour services are currently performed in house by salaried ASU mechanics. An outsourced Inspection/Maintenance is required every 480 flight hours at a cost of \$300,000 -\$400,000. Cost can vary depending on the need for replacement parts or additional items. This service would be required approximately once every four years at our current flight levels. Hull insurance for the new aircraft is estimated at \$30,000 annually. Considering maintenance, fuel, and insurance, it is estimated that this aircraft will cost \$200,000 more annually than one of the existing smaller Bell helicopters.

Maintenance Interval	ASU Mechanic	Outside Contractor
10hr/14 day	1 day	
50 hour	2 days + parts	
100 hour	10 days + parts	
480 hour		\$302,280
960 hour		\$396,905
Hull Insurance		\$30,000

The medium aircraft in the ASU fleet average about 100 flight hours each per year. The three-year average annual operating cost, excluding anomalies, is approximately \$200,000 per medium helicopter, or \$1,884 per flight hour, which includes fuel costs.

Operating costs of the newly purchased, used helicopter will increase to approximately \$2,500/hr.

The acquisition of an additional aircraft would not result in a linear increase in flight hours for the unit. There will be increased hours required for pilot training (primarily in year one) and we anticipate an overall increase due to more comprehensive helicopter availability. Helicopter maintenance varies greatly year to year due to component times but is primarily driven by flight hours. Spreading our current flight time over a fleet including an additional helicopter should not significantly increase our maintenance costs with the exception of the above stated items.

Discussions have taken place with the Sheriff's Office regarding maintenance and usage of the newer aircraft, which is to be added to the ASU fleet and covered under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), as agreed upon by Sheriff and Fire. The Sheriff's Office and Fire Department are in concurrence with this proposed addition to the ASU fleet. Continued discussions will chart the course for future maintenance agreements.

Special Instructions:

Please provide a certified copy of the minute order to Lynne Dible, Fire Department and Purchasing.

Attachments:

A. Budget Revision Request – BJE - 0006028

Authored by:

Rob Heckman, Deputy Fire Chief

cc:

Sol Linver, Undersheriff

Rob Heckman, Deputy Fire Chief

Woody Enos, Division Chief

Matthew Farris, Division Chief