



Legislation Text

File #: 18-312, **Version:** 1

TO: Honorable Mayor & Members of the North Port Commission

FROM: Peter D. Lear, CPA, CGMA, City Manager

TITLE: An application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a grant to hire new firefighters under the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response program and to authorize the City Manager to approve the funding agreement should the grant be awarded to the City.

Recommended Action

Approve the application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for a grant to hire new firefighters under the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response program and authorize the City Manager to approve the funding agreement should the grant be awarded to the City.

Background Information

Fire Rescue has applied for a FEMA grant for 21 new firefighters to backfill existing positions which will be reassigned to staff a paramedic-quint and ambulance to enable North Port Fire Rescue's provision of fire and Emergency Medical Services in the West Villages. Due to the short, month-long application period, staff was unable to present this application to Commission prior to submission of the application.

The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program is to provide funding directly to fire departments to assist departments to improve staffing levels to ensure they have adequate personnel to respond and safely perform at incident scenes, providing protection from fire and fire-related hazards in their communities. This activity provides three-year grants to assist fire departments by paying the salaries and benefits of the SAFER-funded positions. This grant requires a 25% local match for the first and second years and 65% local match the third (final) year.

If awarded, staff believes the funding proposed in the FY 2018-19 budget for the initial staffing of personnel for the West Villages' station would be sufficient to meet the first 12-month period local match and operational expenses such as: protective equipment and uniforms.

Funding Schedule:

Funding/Time Period	First 12- Month Period	Second 12-Month Period	Third 12- Month Period	Total
Personnel	\$ 949,515	\$ 949,515	\$ 949,415	\$2,848,545
Benefits	464,100	464,100	464,100	1,392,300
Total	\$1,413,615	\$1,413,615	\$1,413,615	\$4,240,845
City Share	353,403	353,403	918,849	1,625,655
Federal Share	1,060,212	1,060,212	494,766	2,615,190

These positions will allow the reassignment of current personnel to provide a new, three-person staffing for a paramedic-quint, two-person staffing for an ambulance, a Battalion Chief, and an added firefighter to backfill time-off and reduce associated overtime. Positions must be hired within a 180-day recruitment period which starts at grant award, which is

the date that the award notification letter is sent to the applicant in the FEMA eGrants system.

FEMA will initially process and score the application through an automated system looking for answers which are aligned with the program's priorities. Applications scoring the highest score will be submitted for a peer review by at least three fire service panelists to evaluate the narrative portion, along with the answers to the general questions and the activity-specific questions, to determine the worthiness of the request for an award. Each application is judged on its own merits against established criteria and is not compared to other applications. Applications that best address the grant funding priorities will score higher than those that are inconsistent with the priorities. Once the review process is complete, each application's cumulative score will be determined, and a final ranking of applications will be created. FEMA will award grants based on this final ranking and the ability to meet statutorily required funding limitations.

Once an award has been approved and recorded in the system, an award package is sent to the grant official authorized by the recipient - in our case, and if authorized by Commission, this would be the City Manager. The offered award will remain on hold and be available for a maximum of 30 days until the recipient either accepts or declines the award via the online FEMA eGrants system. Failure to accept the grant award within 30 days of an offer of award may result in a loss of funds -- which is the reason behind our requesting Commission granting the City Manager authority to accept the award. We may request additional time to accept the award if needed.

Extensions to the three-year period-of-performance are not allowable under the grant. Therefore, to maximize the available federal share of funds, this department will take the necessary steps to ensure all SAFER-funded positions are hired within the 180-day recruitment period or as close to the start of the period of performance as possible. We will also take active and timely steps to fill any SAFER positions that become vacated during the grant period of performance.

Once awarded, grant recipients must submit a current (pre-SAFER) roster listing all paid firefighting personnel who are in full-time positions on the date of the award offer. Grant recipients must agree to maintain this number throughout the grant period of performance by taking active and timely steps to fill any vacancies.

If awarded the SAFER grant, the financial benefits to our community and to our department would be numerous. This grant would provide a more gradually fiscal impact on the citizens and the department by providing a means to slowly absorb the additional cost of the new firefighters.

Announcement of successful applicants is expected in July.

Strategic Plan

Financially Responsible City Providing Quality Municipal Services.

Financial Impact

First and second year impacts are the \$353,403 local match, and \$918.849 third-year local match. Funding would be split 63% Fire Rescue District and 37% General Fund.

Procurement

Not applicable.

Attachments:

1. SAFER Grant Application

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Department Director: Scott Titus