

TO: James L. App, City Manager
FROM: Ken Johnson, ES Chief 
SUBJECT: Firefighter Health and Safety
DATE: January 20, 2004

NEEDS: For the City Council to consider a Federal grant intended to improve firefighter health and safety.

- FACTS:**
1. Fire fighting is a physically demanding activity.
 2. Proper physical conditioning of fire employees is necessary to reduce City liability, gain maximum work effort, and reduce workplace injuries.
 3. Appropriate physical fitness equipment and licensed medical service providers are necessary to the success of a firefighter health and safety program.
 4. A successful firefighter health and safety program must also work to eliminate or reduce workplace hazards, including those found in fire stations.
 5. Fire station #2 does not utilize a diesel exhaust removal system, thereby causing some amount of diesel smoke and soot to remain in the station. This remaining smoke and soot is inhaled by employees in small amounts over long periods of time. Diesel exhaust is a known carcinogen and therefore has the potential to compromise employee health.
 6. The City was notified of its successful Federal grant application in the amount of \$84,375 for the purpose of improving firefighter health and safety.
 7. The adopted budget provides an appropriation for federally mandated firefighter physicals (specific to respirator use) in an amount sufficient to cover the grant's matching fund requirement.

ANALYSIS &

CONCLUSION: Emergency Services' workers are routinely subjected to periods of intense physical activity. The nature of the work, including frequent and prolific adrenaline releases, results in an unusually high number of heart attacks throughout the fire service. It has been proven that the likelihood of these occurrences can be reduced through proper medical management.

A general fund budget request was approved, to improve firefighter safety through respirator fit testing. While this measure fell short of a comprehensive health and wellness program, it met federal requirements for workers utilizing respirators (self-contained breathing apparatus).

Recognizing the need and fiscal inability to institute a complete program, the City submitted a grant request to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The City was successful in winning approval for \$84,375 to initiate a full program and install an exhaust removal system at fire station #2.

The City recognized the problem of not having a diesel exhaust removal system at one of its staffed stations. As fire trucks move in and out of the station, diesel smoke and soot is left behind. This migrates throughout the building and creates a health hazard to firefighters working there. The installation of an exhaust removal system therefore became part of the grant request.

The program will include a number of elements to either improve or maintain firefighter health and safety. It begins with a baseline measurement to determine current health and fitness levels. It will then provide for individual specific recommendations for improvement. Physical fitness equipment is included as a part of aerobic and strength conditioning. The ultimate goal is to identify and/or eliminate job debilitating conditions.

Approximate cost apportionment will be; diesel exhaust system - \$19,000, exercise equipment - \$16,000, and professional services (physician, consultant) – \$60,000.

POLICY

REFERENCE: Purchasing and Payment Procedures Manual, Section 7.0

FISCAL

IMPACT: None. The Council approved a reoccurring budget appropriation in the fiscal year 2001-02/2002-03 two-year budget for SCBA training and testing. In fiscal year 2002, the authorized budget was \$15,000 and then each subsequent fiscal year the amount was set at \$13,000. It is these funds that will be utilized for the required grant match of \$9,375 should the Council accept the grant award.

Since the current budget did not anticipate an application for grant funds and its subsequent approval, the current budget does not contain an appropriation for the grant expenditures. Thus, a budget appropriation is required for \$84,375 expenditure of grant funds to be reimbursed from grant proceeds in an equal amount.

OPTIONS:

- a. Adopt Resolution No. 04-xx accepting the award of a Federal grant for a diesel exhaust system, physical fitness equipment, and professional services to increase firefighter health and safety and making the corresponding budget appropriation; or
- b. Amend, modify or reject above option.

RESOLUTION NO. 04-

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASO ROBLES
AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A FEDERAL GRANT
AND DIRECTING ITS EXPENDITURE

WHEREAS, the City recognizes the importance of firefighter health and safety; and

WHEREAS, the Emergency Services Department submitted a grant application to Federal Emergency Management Agency to purchase an exhaust system for the Sherwood Fire Station, exercise equipment and physical testing services; and

WHEREAS, the City was notified by Federal Emergency Management Agency of its grant award in the amount of the \$84,375 for firefighter safety equipment and services; and

WHEREAS, the Council previously authorized a reoccurring base budget adjustment in the amount of \$13,000 to begin making improvements in firefighter health and safety.

THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of El Paso de Robles as follows:

SECTION 1. Authorizes the acceptance of a Federal Emergency Management Agency grant in the amount of \$84,375.

SECTION 2. Approves one time budget appropriations as follows:.

100-220-5454-150	\$34,300
100-220-5235-150	\$50,100

SECTION 3. Authorizes the Emergency Services Chief to begin the acquisition process for a diesel exhaust removal system, physical fitness equipment, and professional services, not to exceed \$97,400.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Paso Robles this 20th day of January 2004 by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

Frank R. Mecham, Mayor

ATTEST:

Sharilyn M. Ryan, Deputy City Clerk