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Finance Committee

Olympia Fire Department Basic Life Support Transport and CARES Programs Recommendation

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Title

Olympia Fire Department Basic Life Support Transport and CARES Programs Recommendation

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve forwarding a recommendation for consideration to the City Council, the Olympia Fire Department Basic Life Support Transport and CARES programs as proposed in the Financial Consulting Services (FCS Group) feasibility study.

Report

Issue:

Whether to approve forwarding a recommendation for consideration to the City Council, the Olympia Fire Department Basic Life Support Transport and CARES programs as proposed in the Financial Consulting Services (FCS Group) feasibility study.

Staff Contact:

Todd Carson, Deputy Fire Chief, 360.753.8460

Presenter(s):

Todd Carson, Deputy Chief, Olympia Fire Department

Mike Buchanan, Assistant Chief, Olympia Fire Department

Kevin Bossard, Assistant Chief, Olympia Fire Department

Steven Busz, Fire Lieutenant, Olympia Fire Department

Adam Cummings, Fleet Operations Supervisor, Olympia Fire Department

Toby Levens, Administrative Supervisor, Olympia Fire Department

Martin Chaw, Financial Consulting Solutions Group (FCS Group)

Skye Jiang, FCS Group

Background and Analysis:

During the fall of 2020, the Olympia Fire Department began to observe an increasing trend of

extended on scene times for EMS based incidents. After conducting data analysis, it became very evident there were significant delays and limited availability of Basic Life Support (BLS) transport units. The result of these delays directly correlates to less Fire Department resource availability, longer response times and finally, poor unit hour utilization, which ultimately compromises service delivery to the community.

Realizing this service delivery gap, and in the spirit of “Reimagining Public Safety”, the Department decided to evaluate the feasibility of providing an internal BLS transport service. With the assistance of a professional financial consultant, Financial Consulting Solutions Group (FCS Group), the Department has concluded that there are several benefits to a City of Olympia Fire Department operated BLS ambulance transport program. The proposed BLS program will require 2 FTEs to manage the program and 18 Firefighter FTEs to staff the transport units. The FCS Group analysis has identified ways to offset staffing costs by generating revenue through user insurance provider billing and through the state funded Ground Emergency Medical Transportation (GEMT) program.

An internal BLS transport program would offer the following benefits:

- Improved overall service levels to the community
- Offset program costs
- Reduction in response times
- Increase in unit availability
- Reduction of service maintenance on larger response apparatus
- Potential to improve the current WSRB rating from 2 to 1 (a higher rating), possibly resulting in decreased insurance premiums

Conversely to the degradation of BLS transport availability, the Department has recognized a notable success with its current Citizens Advocates for Referral and Education Services (CARES) program.

The CARES program is a community outreach and prevention program focused on community risk reduction. The program addresses non-emergent high utilizers of the 911 system and creates more efficient pathways for these patients to connect to resources within the community and diverts them from the high cost of a non-essential Emergency Room visits. The CARES program has demonstrated the ability to keep non-emergent or low acuity calls out of the 911 system which creates more capacity and efficiency to already taxed Fire Department resources.

The Fire Department, along with FCS Group, has recognized, through in-depth feasibility analysis, a promising opportunity to expand the CARES program to better meet community needs. The expanded CARES proposal will require an additional three FTEs to operate the program and will also offset staffing costs by generating revenue through user insurance provider billing and through the state funded GEMT program.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The community has an interest in EMS response times.

Options:

1. Recommend to full Council the BLS Transport and CARES programs as proposed in the FCS Group Feasibility Study.
2. Recommend a modified option of the BLS Transport and CARES programs as proposed in the

FCS Group Feasibility Study.

3. Do not recommend to full Council the BLS Transport and CARES programs as proposed in the FCS Group Feasibility Study.

Financial Impact:

The initial cost of the BLS Transport and CARES programs is estimated at \$4.1 million, including substantial insurance billing and State GEMT revenue to offset the expenditures realized in year two. Analysis completed by FCS Group shows that the programs should be able to fully recompense the initial \$4.1 million investment by year 2029 - 2031.

Attachments:

None