



City Council

ADDED - Acceptance of Grant for a Downtown Adaptive Response Unit

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Title

ADDED - Acceptance of Grant for a Downtown Adaptive Response Unit

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Authorize the City Manager to accept the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant awarded by FEMA.

Report

Issue:

Whether to accept the FEMA grant awarding Olympia's Fire Department \$1.34 million over two years to fund staffing for a Downtown Adaptive Response Unit.

Staff Contact:

Greg Wright, Deputy Chief, 753.8466

Presenter(s):

Larry Dibble, Fire Chief
Greg Wright, Deputy Chief
Mike Buchanan, Assistant Chief
Shelley Flaherty, Line of Business Director
Kate McDonald, Captain-Grant Writer

Background and Analysis:

Background and analysis has not changed from the Study Session to the Consent Calendar.

The Fire Department has been looking for ways to address a growing number of calls for service where there may or may not be a time-sensitive emergency. These calls, typically called low acuity calls, take fire resources away from other responses causing degraded response time for fire units city wide.

In an attempt to relieve the fire engines and ladder truck from these calls and preserve response times, the Fire Department applied for a grant from the federal government through FEMA. This grant called Staffing For Adequate Fire and Emergency Response, (SAFER), provides full reimbursement for the wages and benefits of firefighters for two (2) years. The Fire Department has been notified that FEMA is ready to grant the City funding for six (6) new firefighters for two (2) years

These firefighters will be used to staff an Adaptive Response Unit, or Aid Unit, which can respond in place of larger apparatus and deal with the same emergency medical calls a larger unit has responded to in the past. Working primarily in the downtown area, this unit can deal with the low acuity patients that are frequently being seen.

The unit would respond in the downtown core, north of Interstate 5 and Highway 101 and east to about Ralph's Thriftway and west to about Eagan's. The two years of federal funding will allow data collection to determine how and if the unit should be continued after the two year funding is expended.

The presentation will include the reasons behind the unit, the process that was used to secure the grant award, the process for accepting the grant and the expected outcomes and tracking measures that could be reasonably expected from this unit working primarily in the downtown core. Due to process, hiring and training times, it is expected that the unit would be responding by summer of 2017 with funding through mid 2019.

This program can work with the Police Department's desire to have a mental/social health worker responding in the downtown core. The two-year period will allow both departments to determine what is needed in the downtown core to best meet the needs of the population requiring services. The Fire Department has met with the Police Department to explain the grant and receive input on how the unit can assist both departments in meeting their respective missions for the citizens. We expect these discussions to continue as we begin to collect data.

The department is working with the union to assure that the new positions and unit is filled with quality firefighter/EMTs to carry out the mission of the department and collect data that can support future deployment decisions. As the process moves forward, additional City Council action may be required by the Federal Government to accept the grant.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

N/A

Options:

N/A

Financial Impact:

Zero cost for the wages and benefits for six (6) firefighters for the two (2) year performance period. Hiring, training and equipment costs will be borne by the city. There is already an EMS vehicle in the fire department's fleet that can handle this mission.

Attachments:

None