



DATE: January 27, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council through City Manager

FROM: Jeff Schach, Fire Chief
David Catalinotto, Senior Management Analyst

SUBJECT: Resolution Accepting the Donation of a Pre-Owned Type 3 Wildland Fire Engine from Marin County Fire Department

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council adopt the attached Resolution accepting the donation of a pre-owned Type 3 fire engine from Marin County Fire Department.

BACKGROUND

Firefighting vehicles in the United States are classified by type, with each fire engine type defined by standards set by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG).

Petaluma Fire Department has three front-line Type 1 fire engines serving the city at all times, plus two reserve Type 1 engines. These fire engines are optimal for urban and suburban areas, with capacity for all needed firefighting operations - including ample water storage and high pumping speed. Type 1 engines can and do respond to wildland fires, but their large size and lack of four-wheel drive limits where they can be deployed.

The Department also has a Type 6 fire engine, which is much smaller than a Type 1 and can maneuver to locations that larger engines cannot reach. Type 6 engines are optimal for initial fire suppression operations (including for wildland fires), but they have limited water storage and low pumping speed.

For wildland fires, another commonly used vehicle is a Type 3 fire engine. These vehicles have greater maneuverability than a Type 1 and higher water storage and pumping capacity than a Type 6. Several nearby agencies have made recent purchases of one or more Type 3 engine, including the Santa Rosa Fire Department following the 2017 wildfires there.

To date, the Department does not have a Type 3 fire engine, having previously submitted an unsuccessful grant application for purchasing one. The Center for Public Safety Management's (CPSM) Operational and Administrative analysis of the Fire Department, dated November 2022, included this recommendation:

As the city has wildland/urban interface and substantial wildland fire hazard areas within proximity to the city, CPSM recommends the PFD explore additional wildland apparatus resources such as a Type 3 or an additional Type 6 apparatus. A Type 3 brush/wildland engine is built on a commercial chassis designed for rugged terrain, typically has a water tank of 500 gallons, fire pump, bumper and top mounted fire nozzles, and assorted hose and hand tools.

In 2023, the Marin County Fire Department notified nearby agencies of its intention to retire one of its Type 3 fire engines in the near future and subsequently agreed to hold the engine for donation to Petaluma. Marin County plans to declare the Type 3 fire engine as surplus on January 28, 2025, after which it will be donated.

DISCUSSION

The Marin County Fire Department is donating a 2006 model year fire engine. The manufacturer is Illinois-based Navistar International Corporation ("International") using its 7400-series truck, with a build-up from California-based Hi-Tech Emergency Vehicle Service, Inc. for use as a Type 3 fire engine. The engine currently has traveled nearly 87,000 miles.

Once the City Council has authorized the donation and the Marin County Board of Supervisors has declared the engine as surplus, staff will collect the fire engine and will begin the process of preparing the engine to be brought into service here in Petaluma. The engine will be inspected, registered, insured, and outfitted. Additional costs for outfitting can be funded via the \$68,000 of unspent appropriations for the Type 1 fire engine ordered in October 2024 for anticipated delivery in 2028.

Purchasing a new Type 3 fire engine can cost in excess of \$500,000 with build times of a minimum of three years. Accepting this donation will enable the Department to provide additional wildland firefighting capabilities to Petaluma and neighboring jurisdictions in the timeliest and most cost-effective way known.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This agenda item appeared on the City's tentative agenda document on January 6, 2025 which was a publicly noticed meeting.

COUNCIL GOAL ALIGNMENT

The City Council has identified "A City That Works" as one of its key strategic initiatives. This purchase would support the objective of "ensur[ing] a fiscally and organizationally sustainable City" by providing cost savings for a donated Type 3 fire engine of purchasing a new engine.

CLIMATE ACTION/SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

The donated International 7400 Type 3 fire engine is powered by a standard diesel engine. To date, there are no commercially manufactured or sold electric-powered Type 3 fire engines. Once electric-powered Type 3 fire engines are made available, staff will strongly consider making a replacement.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed action is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15378, in that accepting a donated Fire Engine does not meet CEQA's definition of a "project," because the action does not have the potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, and because the action constitutes organizational or administrative activities of governments that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. Relatedly, if the proposed action did constitute a project under CEQA the action is exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 as the operation of a public mechanical equipment involving negligible or no expansion of use.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

Staff anticipates that accepting donation of a pre-owned Type 3 fire engine and preparing it to be brought into service will be funded via unspent Vehicle and Equipment Replace Fund appropriations for the Type 1 fire engine ordered in October 2024 for anticipated delivery in 2028. No additional appropriations are requested at this time.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution