



DATE:	May 1, 2023
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TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council through City Manager

FROM: Chad Costa, Assistant Fire Chief
David Catalinotto, Senior Management Analyst

SUBJECT: Resolution Authorizing the City of Petaluma to Accept a U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) 2021 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Award for the replacement of Communications Equipment in the amount of \$126,909.09 and to purchase said Communications Equipment through a cooperative purchasing agreement for a total amount of \$138,100.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council approve the attached Resolution Authorizing the City of Petaluma to Accept a U.S. Department of Homeland Security FY 2021 Assistance to Firefighter's Grant (AFG) Award for replacement of Communications Equipment in the amount of \$126,909.09. It is also recommended that the City authorize the purchase of replacement Communications Equipment through a cooperative purchasing agreement in the amount of \$138,100, with a net total cost to the City of \$11,190.91.

BACKGROUND

The Petaluma Fire Department currently has 24 BK Commander VHF portable radios, all of which are at least 20 years old and out of compliance with APCO-25 industry standards. These units are no longer produced, and the manufacturer stopped supporting them in 2016, making the portable radios no longer repairable or replaceable. The Department previously outfitted each apparatus with 4 portable radios, but as the portable radios have been taken out of service the number has been reduced to 3 portable radios per apparatus.

Petaluma firefighters regularly get deployed to wildland fire incidents throughout California and occasionally in nearby states. CAL FIRE requires all personnel deployed at wildland incidents to have their own radios for life safety and fireground communication purposes. The Department can no longer guarantee that on deployments. During the 2021 Dixie Fire, the Department encountered more than one instance of crew's radios failing and crews unable to communicate with other units or Incident Command, leaving them in a dangerous and life-threatening situation.

In addition to the portable radios that are carried by firefighters, the Department has 16 mobile radio units located on responding apparatus. These mobile units also do not comply with 2021 industry standards. Moreover, FIREScope (a statewide multi-agency partnership) recently issued an unfunded mandate that effective January 2024, all mobile and portable radios in all responding units must be capable of 400 channel capacities for all types of operations and incidents (including wildland). None of the Department's current radios even come close to this capacity and cannot be cloned or programmed for those channel capacities.

DISCUSSION

Each year, the U.S Department of Homeland Security through FEMA sets funds aside for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) award program. Since 2001, AFG has helped firefighters and other first responders obtain critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training, and other resources necessary for protecting the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards. This federal funding is for critically needed resources to equip and train emergency personnel to recognized standards, enhance operations efficiencies, foster interoperability, and support community resilience.

The Petaluma Fire Department applied for FY2021 AFG funding in early 2022 and recently was awarded a grant for the replacement of mobile communications equipment. The new portable and mobile radios will enhance the Department's ability to perform its daily operations and increase its ability to protect life and property within its first due district as well as the entire state and region. In addition to the local responses, new mobile and portable radios will enable the Department to provide wildland fire assistance with confidence that their communications equipment is the most effective and safest in the industry.

The Department recommends the purchase of BK Technologies-brand wildland portable radios (for firefighters) and mobile radios (for apparatus) from vendor Cross Connections. BK Technologies' products are available at a reduced cost through the NASPO ValuePoint cooperative purchasing program. All contracts available through NASPO ValuePoint have been awarded through a public competitive procurement process compliant with state statutes. Specifically, NASPO Contract 00318 State of California Participating Addendum Number 7-22-70-49-18 with BK Technologies, Inc. is available for use by California state agencies and local governments, and Cross Connections is an approved authorized dealer under the contract. This cooperative purchasing program meets the criteria for competitively awarded purchasing and meets the Petaluma City Municipal Code and State of California purchasing requirements for grant fund purchases.

FEMA advanced the grant award of \$126,909.09 on April 17, 2023 with the expectation of a prompt purchase. The 2021 AFG grant performance period ends February 27, 2025.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This agenda item was noticed in compliance with the California Brown Act.

COUNCIL GOAL ALIGNMENT

The proposed action supports the following City Council Goals, Objectives, and Workplan Items:

A City that Works

OBJECTIVE 7: leverage local, regional, and state programs and resources to maximize city revenues.

CLIMATE ACTION/SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

There are no climate action or sustainability impacts associated with this item.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed Project is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15061 (b)(3) (Common Sense Exemption). The activity is covered by the Common Sense Exemption as it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that accepting a grant to purchase replacement portable and mobile radios may have a significant effect on the environment.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

In the grant application, the City of Petaluma asked for and received \$126,909.09 as an advance. The total price for the equipment comes to \$138,100. The remaining \$11,190.91 plus \$1,500 previously paid for grant writer fees constitute the required \$12,690.91 in local matching funds. Sufficient budget exists within the Fire Department budget to cover the City portion of the cost of the communications equipment.

ALTERNATIVES

City Council could decide not to approve the resolution, upon which the City would return the payment advance and continue to use its current portable and mobile radios.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution
2. Grant Agreement
3. Cooperative Purchasing Program Contract
4. Authorized Dealer List
5. Price List
6. Cross Connections Price Quotation