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Details

File #: 2019-7331**Type:** Regular Agenda Item**Body:** [City Council](#)**On agenda:** 10/15/2019**Title:** Recommendation to Accept \$1,600,786.50 Grant EMW-2018-FH-00229 from the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Program; and Adoption of Resolution Amending the Fiscal Year 2019-20 Fire Grants Fund Revenue and Expenditures Budget by \$2,595,870, Each, and the General Fund Expenditures Budget by \$995,084 to Allocate the Required Matching Funds mandated by the SAFER Grant Program. (Fire 220)**Attachments:** 1. [Exhibit 1 - Award Package](#), 2. [Resolution](#)

Text

Title

Recommendation to Accept \$1,600,786.50 Grant EMW-2018-FH-00229 from the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Program; and

Adoption of Resolution Amending the Fiscal Year 2019-20 Fire Grants Fund Revenue and Expenditures Budget by \$2,595,870, Each, and the General Fund Expenditures Budget by \$995,084 to Allocate the Required Matching Funds mandated by the SAFER Grant Program. (Fire 220)

Body

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fire Department has been awarded a new Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant EMW-2018-FH-00229 to hire six limited-term firefighters. These six limited-term positions are in addition to the six firefighter positions currently funded by the SAFER Grant first received in 2009. Under the new conditions of the award, the grant requires a local match of \$995,083.50. The federal share of the grant is \$1,600,786.50 for a total cost of \$2,595,870. The City of Alameda (City) must accept the grant in order for the Fire Department to fund the additional six limited-term firefighter positions.

BACKGROUND

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Grant Programs Directorate implements and administers the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grants. SAFER grants provide financial assistance to help fire departments increase the number of frontline firefighters, rehire firefighters who have been laid off, retain firefighters facing imminent layoffs, or fill positions that were vacated through attrition.

Over the past 11 years, the City Fire Department has applied for five separate SAFER grants for the purpose of funding six limited-term firefighters and was approved for awards in 2009, 2011, 2015 and 2018 totaling over \$8.6 million.

In September 2018, the Fire Department was awarded a \$3,043,494 SAFER grant (\$1,166,671 matching funds and \$1,876,823 federal share). This grant allowed the department to maintain the six existing SAFER positions. In February 2019, the Fire Department hired six (6) Firefighter recruits, to fill the SAFER funded positions, of which five (5) graduated from the training academy in June 2019. These five Firefighter Recruits are now assigned to suppression which staff attributes to an overall reduction in overtime costs.

In March 2019, the Fire Department applied for a new SAFER grant that would provide funding for six additional limited-term positions. On September 18, 2019, the Fire Department was notified by FEMA that the SAFER grant application had been approved. As a condition of this award, the City is required to contribute a total cost match in the amount of \$995,083.50 of non-Federal funds for the duration of the grant period of three years. The Federal share is \$1,600,786.50 of the approved total cost of \$2,595,870.

DISCUSSION

The goal of the SAFER grant is to assist local fire departments with staffing and deployment capabilities in order to respond to emergencies, assuring communities have adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards. The City has been able to fund six

limited-term positions with funding from this grant the new SAFER grant will allow the City to employ six additional trained, frontline firefighters. Without the acceptance of the grant, the City will not be able to fund the six limited-term firefighter positions, which would result in increased overtime to maintain current service levels. The Federal investment will yield a valuable safety benefit for City residents and businesses, the City's critical infrastructure, and the firefighters who serve the community.

Prior to the 2018 grant, the SAFER grants, paid 100% of the firefighter's salaries and benefits (exclusive of overtime, uniform, and ambulance differential pays) for two years and did not require a match. However, the SAFER grant requirements changed in 2017. The 2019 SAFER grant has a three year performance period, which begins November 18, 2019. It also requires a 25% match for years one and two, followed by a 65% match for year three. There is no employee retention requirement when the grant performance period ends. However, the Fire Department must maintain the suppression staffing level for the entire grant performance period.

It is important to note that these are temporary, grant-funded positions. There is no commitment, nor expectation on the part of DHS or FEMA, that these additional positions will continue past the conclusion of the grant.

Six new positions were approved and allocated as part of the 2019-21 Biennial Budget in anticipation of the grant funding. As a result, no additional positions are being requested.

If the 2019-22 grant is accepted, the City will have 12 SAFER grant funded positions.

ALTERNATIVES

- Accept \$1,600,786.50 Grant from the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Program and approve a resolution amending the fiscal year 2019-20 Fire Grants Fund Revenue and Expenditures budget by \$2,595,870, each, and General Fund Expenditures Budget by \$995,084 to allocate the required matching funds
- In the absence of the SAFER Grant, the City Council will have to decide to either fully fund these additional six positions from the General Fund or to eliminate these positions.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The SAFER grant is now a matching grant program whereby the DHS awards a portion of the total project cost and the City must provide a match. The total cost of hiring six firefighters for a three year performance period is \$2,595,870. The grant will pay \$1,600,786.50 of the total cost (exclusive of overtime, uniform and ambulance differential pays, which will be paid by the General Fund in addition to the matching funds). A local match of \$995,083.50 is required.

The local match, grant revenues and expenditures of \$2,595,870 will be budgeted in the Fire Grants Fund (Fund 220). The Fire Department estimates the staffing costs for six firefighters through June 30, 2020 to be \$504,420. The local match portion at 25% for this same period of time is \$126,105 and is expected to be covered by the existing appropriations in the Fire Department Budget. This amount will be used towards a total transfer of \$995,083.50 to the Fire Grants Fund to provide the full required local match funding for the grant period of 3 years. However, the Fire Department may come back at mid-year and ask for funding if unable to absorb these additional current year expenses in the existing budget. Local match funding for the years two and three of the grant will be allocated from the current General Fund available balance. At the end of the each Fiscal Year (FY), any unspent appropriations in the Grants Fund will be re-appropriated. If at the end of the grant period there will be unspent local match money remaining, they will be returned back to the General Fund.

Fund/Account	Amount
General Fund:	
Fire Department Expenditures	(\$126,105)
Fire Department Transfer Out to Fire Grants	\$995,084
Fire Grants:	
Transfer In (local match share)	\$995,084
Grant Revenue	\$1,600,787
Grant Expenditures (salaries and benefits)	\$2,595,871

On an annual basis, using the SAFER grant to rehire six positions, staff anticipates savings in overtime cost of approximately \$500,000, assuming that the present minimum daily staffing of 24 is maintained. The Fire Department overtime is budgeted in the City's General Fund. However, overtime savings will not be achieved until the newly hired firefighters go through an academy training, which lasts 18 weeks, and are fully deployed. Taking into account the timing of the grant funds availability, which is November 18, 2019 and the length of the firefighter academy, the City will experience little-to-no overtime savings during FY 2019-20. Overtime savings is expected to be realized in FY 2020-21 and FY 2021-22.

MUNICIPAL CODE/POLICY DOCUMENT CROSS REFERENCE

There is no Alameda Municipal Code/policy document cross-reference.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This action is not a project for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 10561(b)(3) as there is no possibility that this action may have a significant effect on the environment.

CLIMATE IMPACTS

There is no climate impact with this action.

RECOMMENDATION

Accept \$1,600,786.50 Grant from the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Program and approve a resolution amending the fiscal year 2019-20 Fire Grants Fund Revenue and Expenditures budget by \$2,595,870, each, and General Fund Expenditures Budget by \$995,084 to allocate the required matching funds mandated by the SAFER grant program.

CITY MANAGER RECOMMENDATION

The City Manager recommends approval.

Respectfully submitted,
Edmond A. Rodriguez, Fire Chief

By,
Monique Raqueno, Fire Administrative Services Manager

Financial Impact section reviewed,
Elena Adair, Finance Director

Exhibit:

1. Award Package

cc: Eric Levitt, City Manager