

CITY OF YUBA CITY
STAFF REPORT

Date: October 18, 2022
To: Honorable Mayor & Members of the City Council;
From: Fire Department
Presentation By: Jesse Alexander, Fire Chief

Summary

Subject: 2021 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant

Recommendation:

- A. Accept the 2021 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant for \$1,199,700.00 to hire three Firefighter II positions as the 4th person on Aerial Ladder Truck
- B. Adopt a Resolution authorizing receipt, allocation, and expenditure of the 2021 SAFER Grant with the stipulation to hire three (3) Firefighters as permanent employees
- C. Authorize the Finance Director to make a supplemental appropriation for the revenues and expenditures associated with the 2021 SAFER Grant and add three (3) Firefighter II positions to the FY 22/23 Budget

Fiscal Impact:

There is no local City cost match; however, the 2021 SAFER Grant only covers salary and benefits over the three years. Expected additional costs not covered by the 2021 SAFER Grant for the entirety of the three-year grant:

- Recruitment Costs: \$7,320 (Absorbed in current FY 22/23 budget)
- Uniforms and Personal Protective Equipment: \$27,555 (Uniforms absorbed in current FY 22/23 budget, PPE absorbed in anticipated FY 23/24 budget)
- Salary increase due to Yuba City Firefighters' Local 3793 Wage Reopener Side Letter: \$71,934 (\$17,983.50 requested in budget process for FY 23/24, \$35,967 in FY 24/25, and \$17,983.50 in FY 25/26.
- Overtime backfill: Approximately \$59,400 (\$6,000 absorbed in the current FY 22/23 budget, \$19,800 absorbed in the anticipated FY 23/24 and 24/25 budget, \$13,800 in the anticipated FY 25/26 budget)

Purpose:

To increase staffing on the Fire Department's apparatus and daily operational staffing to more closely match National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1710's fire personnel staffing recommendations.

Council's Strategic Goal:

This item addresses the City Council's Public Safety Strategic Goal by increasing apparatus staffing and daily operational staffing for the Fire Department.

Background:

In November 2021, the Yuba City Fire Department (YCFD) submitted an application to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for consideration of funding under the 2021 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant for the hiring of three limited-term Firefighter II positions with the intent to add as 4th-person to our daily Aerial Ladder Truck staffing.

The purpose of the grant was not to replace our current staffing but to enhance our staffing model to bring YCFD more closely in line with National Fire Protection Association 1710's fire personnel staffing recommendations for Aerial Ladder Trucks. The grant was written to increase our daily operational staffing to 17 personnel (including the Battalion Chief); however, it does provide the flexibility that during a Fire Station closure situation due to COVID, Mutual Aid deployments, or draw down situations, the 4th person on the Aerial Ladder Truck could be reassigned to maintain an open Fire Station.

On September 21, 2022, YCFD received a \$1,199,700.00 grant award notification from FEMA. From the award date, the City of Yuba City has 30-days to accept or decline the award. In addition, YCFD has 180 days to recruit, train, and provide staffing on the Aerial Ladder Truck if the award is accepted.

Analysis:

FEMA determined that during their highly competitive SAFER Grant review process, YCFD needed to have our Aerial Ladder Truck staffing and daily operational staffing increased to meet NFPA 1710 recommendations. Increasing staffing on our Aerial Ladder Truck to 4-persons will improve our capabilities, increase our capacity, and allow apparatus to return to service sooner; all backed up by National data and research.

The 2021 SAFER Grant funds cover the "fully burdened" salary and benefits for three Firefighter II limited-term positions. As the application was prepared in November 2021, prior to the approval of the salary increases per Yuba City Firefighters' Local 3793 Wage Reopener Side Letter, the salary included in the application was 17% less than what is in place today. There is no local City match for the award amount. However, the grant does not cover recruitment costs, uniform & personal protective equipment costs, the 17% salary increase, or backfill overtime. The anticipated costs are individually identified in the Fiscal Impact of the staff report.

In addition, during the grant's period of performance, the department must comply with SAFER Program Grant regulations regarding the Staffing Maintenance Number, which is the combined number of operational fire-suppression positions funded by the department AND the awarded SAFER positions, for a total of 51 personnel. This combined total equates to the Staffing Maintenance Number, which is the number of positions the department agrees to fill and retain during the period of performance by accepting the grant award.

By signing the grant award, the department agrees to comply with the following FEMA regulations:

1. Must not incur firefighter layoffs of SAFER-funded or non-SAFER-funded positions.
2. Must fill all SAFER-funded positions.
3. Must maintain the operational staffing number at the level that existed on the date of award and

the number of awarded SAFER positions (Staffing Maintenance Number).

In the past, YCFD has utilized SAFER Grants to maintain minimum daily operational staffing with limited-term employees. This has resulted in extreme difficulties with recruitment and retention, which resulted in numerous vacancies that were required to be filled with overtime and overtaxed Fire Department staff. In addition, at the conclusion of the grant, the personnel are laid off, which is a wasted opportunity after the amount of time, equipment, and training invested in the personnel.

SAFER Grants are limited-term positions; however, a FEMA award recipient can hire the positions as permanent employees. The SAFER Grant awards' intent is to allow a Fire Agency to bridge the gap until they can provide permanent funding.

If the 2021 SAFER Grant is accepted as is with Limited-Term hires, YCFD will again experience severe recruitment and retention issues, resulting in increased overtime costs. However, the City can accept the grant; and hire the three firefighters as permanent employees. Staff recommends accepting the 2021 SAFER Grant and making the three (3) firefighter positions permanent. At the end of the grant term, Council will have flexibility as to how the three (3) additional firefighters are utilized.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no local City cost match; however, the 2021 SAFER Grant only covers salary and benefits over the three years. Expected additional costs not covered by the 2021 SAFER Grant for the entirety of the three-year grant:

- Recruitment Costs: \$7,320 (Absorbed in current FY 22/23 budget)
- Uniforms and Personal Protective Equipment: \$27,555 (Uniforms absorbed in current FY 22/23 budget, PPE absorbed in anticipated FY 23/24 budget)
- Salary increase due to Yuba City Firefighters' Local 3793 Wage Reopener Side Letter: \$71,934 (\$17,983.50 requested in budget process for FY 23/24, \$35,967 in FY 24/25, and \$17,983.50 in FY 25/26.
- Overtime backfill: Approximately \$59,400 (\$6,000 absorbed in the current FY 22/23 budget, \$19,800 absorbed in the anticipated FY 23/24 and 24/25 budget, \$13,800 in the anticipated FY 25/26 budget)

Alternatives:

- 1) Accept the 2021 SAFER Grant, and hire the positions as limited-term. As noted above, staff does not recommend this alternative as previous experience has shown it is extremely difficult to recruit and retain qualified individuals on a limited-term basis.
- 2) Do not accept the 2021 SAFER Grant
- 3) Instruct staff to determine another alternative

Recommendation:

- A. Accept the 2021 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant for \$1,199,700.00 to hire three Firefighter II positions as the 4th person on Aerial Ladder Truck.
- B. Adopt a Resolution authorizing receipt, allocation, and expenditure of the 2021 SAFER Grant with the stipulation to hire three (3) Firefighters as permanent employees.
- C. Authorize the Finance Director to make a supplemental appropriation for the revenues and expenditures associated with the 2021 SAFER Grant and add three (3) Firefighter II positions to

the FY 22/23 Budget.

Attachments:

1. 2021 SAFER Resolution dl

Prepared By:
Jesse Alexander
Fire Chief

Submitted By:
Diana Langley
City Manager

ATTACHMENT 1

RESOLUTION NO. ____

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YUBA CITY
AUTHORIZING RECEIPT, ALLOCATION, AND EXPENDITURE OF THE 2021
SAFER GRANT WITH THE STIPULATION TO HIRE THE FIREFIGHTERS AS
PERMANENT EMPLOYEES**

WHEREAS, the Yuba City Fire Department submitted an application under the 2021 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and received an award notification for the grant with authorization to receive funds in the amount of \$1,199,700.

WHEREAS, the goal of the program is to enhance the department's staffing model to become more in line with the National Fire Protection Association 1710's fire personnel staffing recommendations for Aerial Ladder Trucks; and

WHEREAS, the Yuba City Fire Department is requesting to hire the three firefighters on the SAFER Grant as permanent employees; and

WHEREAS, by accepting the grant award the City of Yuba City and the Fire Department agree to comply with SAFER Program Grant regulations:

1. The department must not incur firefighter layoffs of SAFER-funded or non-SAFER funded positions.
2. The department must fill all SAFER-funded positions.
3. The department must maintain the operational staffing number at the level that existed on the date of award and the number of awarded SAFER positions (Staffing Maintenance Number).

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to accept the grant, authorize the Fire Chief to execute any necessary contracts or documents to effectuate the award of the grant funds, and authorize the Finance Director to make the necessary supplemental appropriations for the revenues and expenditures associated with the grant, and add three (3) permanent Firefighter II positions to the FY 22/23 Budget.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Yuba City as follows:

Section 1. The above recitals are true and correct, and are hereby incorporated herein by this reference.

Section 2. The City Council hereby accepts the award of the 2021 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant of \$1,199,700. The City Manager, or designee, is authorized to execute any contracts or other documents on behalf of Yuba City necessary to effectuate acceptance of the grant funds, subject to approval as to legal form by the City Attorney.

Section 3. The City Council authorize the Fire Chief to execute any necessary contracts or documents to effectuate the award of the grant funds.

Section 4. The City Council authorizes the Finance Director to make the necessary supplemental appropriations for the revenues and expenditures associated with the grant, and add three (3) permanent Firefighter II positions to the FY 22/23 Budget.

The foregoing Resolution was duly and regularly introduced, passed, and adopted by the City Council of the City of Yuba City at a regular meeting thereof held on the 18th day of October, 2022.

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ATTEST:

Dave Shaw, Mayor

Ciara Wakefield, Deputy City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM
COUNSEL FOR YUBA CITY:

Shannon Chaffin, City Attorney
Aleshire & Wynder, LLP