



Department: Fire
Cost Center: 8501
For Agenda of: 11/12/2024
Placement: Consent
Estimated Time: N/A

FROM: Todd Tuggle, Fire Chief
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SUBJECT: AUTHORIZE THE FIRE DEPARTMENT TO APPLY FOR SAN LUIS OBISPO OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE GRANT PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATION

1. Authorize the Fire Department to apply to the San Luis Obispo County Off-Highway Vehicle Grant Program to replace Utility Task Vehicle-2; and
2. Authorize the City Manager, or their designee, to execute the grant documents and approve the budget changes necessary to appropriate the grant amount upon notification that the grant has been awarded.

POLICY CONTEXT

The recommended actions are consistent with the City of San Luis Obispo's Financial Management Manual, Section 740 - Grant Management Policy. The policy states that Council approval is required for all grant applications in excess of \$5,000. Council may delegate receipt and contract execution to the City Manager.

The work conducted under the grant is in line with the City's Major City Goal, Open Space, and Sustainable Transportation by improved accessibility to open space areas, maintaining the ability to provide rapid emergency services in remote areas.

DISCUSSION

Background

Off Highway Motor Vehicles (OHMV) operating on publicly accessible land in California must pay registration fees to the state and are the equivalent to vehicle registration. These registration fees are displayed on the vehicle and are commonly called California Green Stickers. A portion of the fees collected by the state are distributed to counties. The San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors has approved a competitive grant program for the distribution of sixty percent (60%) of the County's annual receipts of these Green Sticker Fees to other governmental agencies and non-profit organizations for several eligible uses, including law enforcement entities and related equipment.

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The City of San Luis Obispo is home to some of the busiest open space areas in the county. Over 200 people enjoy the mountain bike, hiking and off-highway trails operated by the City every day. These areas are difficult to reach by traditional motor vehicles and sometimes only accessible on foot or by helicopter. Routinely, there are incidents where individuals become injured, trapped, or lost and require prompt life saving measures and need extrication from these limited access areas where every minute is critical. The Utility Task Vehicle (UTV) is routinely requested by San Luis County Fire to assist with incidents outside the City limits in areas that include both East and West Cuesta Ridges as well as Reservoir Canyon to reach individuals that cannot be accessed with traditional rescue vehicles.

The City has one UTV purchased in 2017 through this Green Tag Fee Grant Program through the county. The Fire Department is requesting grant funds from the County's OHMV Grant Program to replace the aging UTV. The UTV has increased the ability to access these difficult areas and reach critical patients quickly. However, as a result of the frequent use, repairs on the UTV are increasing in both cost and time out of service. In the thirteen months prior to October 2024, the cost of repairs and upkeep on the UTV are over \$5,000, over double the cost of the previous year.

Previous Council or Advisory Body Action

On [November 14, 2023](#), Council Authorized the Fire Department to submit a grant application to San Luis Obispo County Off Highway Motor Vehicle grant program. The City submitted the grant request for a replacement UTV but was not selected for funding at that time.

Public Engagement

This item is on the agenda for the November 12, 2024 City Council meeting and will follow all required postings and notifications. The public will have an opportunity to comment on this item at or before the meeting.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The California Environmental Quality Act does not apply to the recommended action in this report, because the action does not constitute a "Project" under CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15378. If the work associated with the grant funding requires environmental review, staff will not proceed with the project until a review has been completed.

FISCAL IMPACT

Budgeted: Yes
Funding Identified: Yes

Budget Year: 2025-26

Fiscal Analysis:

Funding Sources	Total Budget Available	Current Funding Request	Remaining Balance	Annual Ongoing Cost
General Fund	\$	\$0	\$	\$500.00
State				
Federal				
Fees				
Other:				
Total	\$	\$0	\$	\$500.00

The total grant request is \$57,799.09. This will allow for the purchase of a new UTV and all necessary accessories to be an emergency response vehicle. These accessories include a rescue skid, light bars, display module and other safety features not standard on a UTV. The application for this grant is in Fiscal Year 2024-25, however, if awarded the grant period is in Fiscal Year 2025-26, and that is when the City would receive the funds.

While many Mutual Aid assignments do generate revenue for the City, the Auto Aid response agreements with the nearby local agencies generally do not. There is a minimum commitment time of twelve hours before any payment will be received and these incidents rarely extend long enough to reach that time minimum. Since the UTV is in high demand in the City it does not leave the immediate response area for the longer Mutual Aid assignments that would generate revenue.

The OHV grant program does not require any City matching funds. The department has requested funds to fully fund a new UTV, plus necessary accompaniments for use as a rescue vehicle. If the grant is awarded to the City, the department estimates costs of \$500.00 annually for ongoing maintenance which can be absorbed by the mechanic's current budget, as repairs are already budgeted and a new UTV would require fewer repairs than the current UTV.

ALTERNATIVES

Council could decide not to pursue the grant monies. This is not recommended by staff as fire service grant opportunities are limited and the grant funds would only serve to enhance the City's safety while increasing sustainability for the City by allowing funds on the fleet replacement schedule to be allocated elsewhere.

ATTACHMENTS

None