



TRUCKEE MEADOWS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT STAFF REPORT

Board Meeting Date: October 6, 2020

DATE: September 16, 2020
TO: Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Board of Fire Commissioners
FROM: August Isernhagen, Division Chief
THROUGH: Charles A. Moore, Fire Chief
Phone: (775) 328-6123 Email: cmoore@tmfpd.us
SUBJECT: Recommendation to authorize acceptance of a grant in an amount not to exceed \$1.2 million dollars from the Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) for the purpose of increasing fire suppression work in accordance with NRS 474.580 and authorize Fire Chief to execute necessary documents. The grant will be used to expand the fire suppression work TMFPD performs with NV Energy by increasing personnel and equipment. The equipment and personnel will also be used to assist with TMFPD's firefighting mission. (All Commission Districts) FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

SUMMARY:

Recommendation to authorize acceptance of a grant in an amount not to exceed \$1.2 million dollars from the Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) for the purpose of increasing fire suppression work in accordance with NRS 474.580 and authorize Fire Chief to execute necessary documents. The grant will be used to expand the fire suppression work TMFPD performs with NV Energy by increasing personnel and equipment. The equipment and personnel will also be used to assist with TMFPD's firefighting mission.

PREVIOUS ACTION

December 17, 2019, the Board approved the position of Division Chief of Fuels and Wildfire to oversee the Fuels Reduction Program.

April 28, 2020, the Board approved a 3-year contract between the District and NV Energy for the purpose of eliminating fire hazards. This agreement pays the District on a "time and materials basis" for fuels reduction services. The contract includes payment for the annual costs for the first squad of the Fuels Reduction Program and needed equipment. The contract provided that, as additional projects were identified, additional squads and equipment could be added. All the costs associated with completing the work on the NV Energy projects will be paid by NV Energy.

June 16, 2020, the Board approved the payment of up-front expenses in a total amount of \$249,200 for the purchase of 1 Type V Engine, which was needed to perform the hazardous fuels reduction under the contract with NV Energy. The purchase amount is to be reimbursed by NV Energy pursuant to the above-referenced contract.

July 21, 2020, the Board approved new positions to add a second squad to the Fuels Reduction Program, specifically 1 Crew Boss, 1 Heavy Equipment Operator, 1 Squad Boss, and 4 Crew Members.

September 1, 2020, the Board approved five positions in order to add a third squad to the Fuels Reduction Program for a total personnel 18 positions in the Program.

BACKGROUND

Statutory Authority: NRS 474.500 authorizes a district fire chief to hire employees upon Board authorization and to coordinate fire protection activities within the District. NRS 474.580 requires control and elimination of fire hazards on private property. The District is authorized to remove the hazard and charge the landowner for the performance of that work.

Necessity and Benefits of Fuels Reduction Program: Prior to its consolidation with TMFPD, the Sierra Fire Protection District managed a 20+ person hand crew squad that conducted fuels management projects, including wildfire hand crew work. That program was tremendously successful and operated largely off grant funds. TMFPD is developing a similar, but more robust, Fuels Reduction Program to address the fire hazards within the wildland-urban interface that surround most of the District.

In the Fall of 2019, NV Energy began working with the State of Nevada and local government fire agencies to develop a program to reduce the risk of fires related to NV Energy's electrical infrastructure, such as removal of vegetation around power poles and within their easements as required by NRS 474.580. A long-term plan was established to identify areas of highest fire risk and prioritize elimination of fire hazards.

On April 28, 2020, the Board approved a 3-year contract between the District and NV Energy for the purpose of implementing the above-referenced plan by eliminating fire hazards by using the hand crews of the District's Fuels Reduction Program. The contract included payment for the annual costs for the first fuels management squad and equipment. The contract contemplated that, as additional projects were identified, additional squads and equipment could be added. All costs associated with personnel and equipment completing the work on the NV Energy projects will be paid by NV Energy. On July 21, 2020, the Board authorized positions for a second squad under this contract.

On September 1, 2020, the Board approved five positions in order to add a third squad to the Fuels Reduction Program. This will put the total personnel in the Fuels Program at 18. The NDF Grant will fund the remainder of those personnel.

During the 80th Special Session, the Nevada Legislature allocated \$5 million in funds for pre-fire suppression work across the State. Subsequently, NV Energy partnered with and provided \$5 million in matching funds to NDF, creating a fund of \$10 million for pre-fire suppression work. NDF has agreed to provide a grant not to exceed \$1.2 million to TMFPD. The District seeks Board approval to accept these funds. The grant will be used to expand the fire suppression work TMFPD performs under NV Energy contract by increasing personnel and equipment. The equipment and personnel will also be used to assist with TMFPD's firefighting mission.

FISCAL IMPACT

The total subgrant award is estimated at \$1.2 million dollars over the three-year term of the agreement. All costs will be reimbursed under the terms of the subgrant award. The District will present a fiscal year 20/21 budget augmentation from additional resources to the Board of Fire Commissioners at a future date for a public hearing.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the District be authorized to accept a grant in an amount not to exceed \$1.2 million dollars from the Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) for the purpose of increasing fire suppression work in accordance with NRS 474.580 and authorize Fire Chief to execute necessary documents. The grant will be used to expand the fire suppression work TMFPD performs with NV Energy by increasing personnel and equipment. The equipment and personnel will also be used to assist with TMFPD's firefighting mission.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a potential motion could read:

I move to authorize acceptance of a grant in an amount not to exceed \$1.2 million dollars from the Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) for the purpose of increasing fire suppression work in accordance with NRS 474.580 and authorize Fire Chief to execute necessary documents. The grant will be used to expand the fire suppression work TMFPD performs with NV Energy by increasing personnel and equipment. The equipment and personnel will also be used to assist with TMFPD's firefighting mission.