



DATE: May 28, 2019
TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Fire Chief
SUBJECT: Adoption of a Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Execute a New First Responder Advanced Life Support (FRALS) Agreement with Alameda County

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council adopts the attached resolution (Attachment II) authorizing the City Manager to negotiate and execute a new First Responder Advanced Life Support (FRALS) Agreement with the County of Alameda, which will be effective through June 30, 2024.

SUMMARY

The current FRALS agreement between Alameda County and the City of Hayward is set to expire June 30, 2019. The agreement took effect November 1, 2011. The County has proposed a new agreement, to take effect July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2024. The proposed new agreement is effectively similar to the current amended agreement, except that it removes all financial penalties for FRALS agencies. The removal of penalties reflects that FRALS agencies are no longer compensated for their services through FRALS payments, a change that occurred in Summer 2018.

BACKGROUND

EMS Coordination in Alameda – In 1984, the County created the Alameda County Emergency Medical Services District (ALCO EMS) to oversee and coordinate the county’s EMS system. The State of California has designated ALCO EMS as the local Emergency Medical Service Agency (LEMSA) responsible for implementing State regulations. One of the primary functions of ALCO EMS is to establish policies and procedures for the designation of paramedic and ambulance service providers within the county.

Voter-Approved EMS Funding - In 1982, county voters passed the first measure to establish paramedic services countywide. In 1997, voters passed Measure C, a special tax that remains the current funding source for ALCO EMS. Measure C specifies that the tax is to “continue emergency medical services including paramedic, ambulance, and trauma services.” The 2018 special tax amount is \$31.73 per benefit unit, which generates approximately \$19.2 million annually in revenue for ALCO EMS. Currently, approximately \$9.3 million of this revenue source goes to trauma care centers, \$3.4 million goes to dispatch centers, and \$7.4 million goes to ALCO EMS salaries and operating expenses.

Operationalization of FRALS - In 1998, ALCO EMS made a major change to their ambulance provider contract to include fire department First Responder Advanced Life Support (FRALS) units as part of the EMS response. This change allowed the ambulance company to staff their transport vehicles with one less paramedic. The ambulance company paid the money saved through this change to ALCO EMS, who then disbursed the money to the fire department for each FRALS unit. This has been the arrangement up until now.

Currently, ALCO EMS has designated city fire departments to provide first-responder paramedic services in most cities, including Hayward. As the governing board of ALCO EMS, the County has FRALS agreements with each of these municipal fire departments. The goal of the FRALS agreement is to standardize and set performance metrics for first responder paramedics in cooperation with private ambulance company paramedics to enhance the effectiveness and timeliness of EMS delivery.

The original FRALS agreement between Alameda County and the City of Hayward took effect July 1, 2004. The second agreement took effect November 1, 2011 and is set to expire on June 30, 2019. The second agreement was amended three times, most recently in summer 2018.

DISCUSSION

Over the past two years, ALCO EMS has worked to select an ambulance provider and implement a new ambulance provider contract for most Alameda County jurisdictions, including Hayward. The County's current ambulance provider, Paramedics Plus, will be ceasing service on July 1, 2019, at which point the County's new ambulance provider, Falck, will take over service.

Over the past several years, Paramedics Plus has had challenges generating sufficient revenue to cover the costs of their operations. Consequently, when ALCO EMS negotiated the new ambulance agreement with Falck, it eliminated the FRALS payments to municipal fire departments. This change took place in summer 2018, with the third amendment to the 2011 agreement, and cost the City approximately \$300,000 annually in revenue.

Staff recommends that Council authorize the City Manager to execute the new FRALS agreement with the County so that the City retains an active agreement with the State-recognized LEMSA. The proposed new agreement is effectively similar to the current amended agreement, except that it removes all financial penalties for FRALS agencies. The removal of penalties reflects the fact that FRALS agencies are no longer compensated for their services.

The performance metrics for municipal fire departments remain the same in the proposed agreement as in the previous agreement. The new agreement requires the Hayward Fire Department to, among other things, maintain paramedic units capable of first response to emergency calls within specified response times, provide 24-hour, 7-day per week staffing for the paramedic units, and maintain on staff an EMS Coordinator who holds a license as a certified paramedic or who is licensed as a Registered Nurse or Medical Doctor.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are no additional fiscal impacts resulting from this new agreement in comparison to the current agreement that was executed in 2011 and amended in summer 2018. The new agreement removes all potential financial penalties to FRALS agencies. Staff continues to work with the County Health Care Services Agency and other fire departments in the County to identify other sources of funding for the paramedic services provided by the City.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

This agenda item is a routine operational item and does not relate to one of the Council's Strategic Initiatives.

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Recommended by: Garrett Contreras, Fire Chief

Approved by:



Kelly McAdoo, City Manager