



City of Huntington Beach

File #: 19-1096

MEETING DATE: 11/18/2019

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

SUBMITTED TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

SUBMITTED BY: Oliver Chi, City Manager

PREPARED BY: David A. Segura, Fire Chief

Subject:

Approve additional appropriation of \$150,000 for professional Fire Prevention inspection, plan check, and environmental engineering services, and increase professional services authority accordingly

Statement of Issue:

The Fire Department requires professional fire prevention inspection, plan check, and environmental engineering services on an as-needed basis. These professional services are critical to making sure development related and inspection services are provided to the community in a timely manner. The Department requests an additional appropriation of \$150,000 for these services.

Financial Impact:

The FY 2019/20 budget for professional services under 10065201.69365 is currently \$100,000 so an additional allocation of \$150,000 is requested. The recommended action is primarily cost-neutral since a major portion of these expenditures are reimbursed by developers and also offset by revenues generated from inspection and plan review services.

Recommended Action:

A) Approve an additional appropriation of \$150,000 for Fire Prevention inspection, plan check and environmental engineering services as these expenditures are primarily cost-neutral and generally offset by reimbursements from developers and revenues generated from inspection and plan review services; and,

B) Increase the Fire Department's professional services authority by \$150,000 to ensure compliance with Administration Regulation No. 228.

Alternative Action(s):

Do not approve the additional appropriation and provide staff with alternative direction.

Analysis:

The Fire Prevention Division is responsible for enforcing local, state, and federal codes in order to reduce the loss of life and property from preventable fires and other emergencies. These responsibilities are achieved through the use of professional services to cover the increase in workload.

In Fiscal Year 2018/19, the Fire Prevention Division conducted 10,050 inspections and 1,870 development and fire protection/life safety plan check reviews that yielded approximately \$1.2 million in annual revenues. These inspections covered businesses, residential facilities, hazardous materials occupancies, oil wells, and new construction. This Division also performed annual inspections of approximately 1,992 multi-family residential complexes as mandated by the State.

Whenever City staff can no longer meet the increased demands of development activity, including performing life safety, business, and state mandated inspections, these services are usually supplemented with professional fire prevention inspection and plan review consulting services. This approach is a cost effective method of closing the gap between the demands for inspection and plan review services and the ability of City staff to meet those demands.

Typical Fire Prevention inspection, plan check, and environmental engineering services include:

- Performing over the counter plan check services and consultations
- Performing plan checks for detailed technical projects, including oil well abandonments
- Performing field inspections of operational fire permits, fire protection systems, fire master plans, and architectural plans
- Determining plan compliance with applicable codes, specifications, and City standards
- Submitting a list of items requiring correction to achieve conformance with City regulations
- Providing technical reports of findings and recommendations

The Fire Prevention Division is taking steps in evaluating our service priorities and the potential of redirecting a portion of our staff hours based upon a community risk assessment. Our mission will remain intact while we find ways to reduce our use of professional services. We also recognize that the volume of new development and redevelopment in Huntington Beach can fluctuate year-to-year. We will continue to monitor the need for contract services and create a long-term staffing plan based upon the ability to fulfill the mission of our division while addressing the ebb and flow of development and redevelopment needs.

The Fire Department is requesting an additional appropriation for professional environmental engineering and plan check/fire inspection services. The current funding for FY 2019/20 is \$100,000 and is anticipated to be exhausted by the end of the calendar year. An additional appropriation of \$150,000 to the Fire Prevention business unit (10065201.69365) is requested. This amount will sustain these services through June 30, 2020. These expenditures are primarily cost-neutral since a major portion of the services are reimbursed by developers and offset by General Fund revenues generated from cost recovery fees associated with fire inspection and plan check services.

The additional allocation is needed to enable the Fire Prevention Division maintain its mission of providing development related and inspection services to the community in a timely manner.

Environmental Status:

None.

Strategic Plan Goal:

Enhance and modernize public safety service delivery

Attachment(s):

None.