



Legislation Text

File #: 20-261, **Version:** 1

Report Prepared by: Janet German, Secretary III, Fire Department

SUBJECT: Approve the Local Agreement to Provide Firefighting Services to the Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit (MMU) of CAL FIRE, to Provide Assistance by Hire (ABH) Utilization of Local Government Firefighting Resources to Augment CAL FIRE Resources in Support of the State's Mission within the State Responsibility Areas (SRA) of the MMU When the Need Arises

REPORT IN BRIEF

Considers the authorization to approve the local firefighting services agreement between the City of Merced and the Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit (MMU) of CAL FIRE.

RECOMMENDATION

City Council - Adopt a motion approving the CAL FIRE Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit's 2020 Local Government Assistance by Hire Agreement and authorizing the City Manager or the Assistant City Manager to execute all necessary documents.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve as recommended by staff; or,
2. Approve, subject to modifications as conditioned by City Council; or,
3. Deny this request; or,
4. Refer back to staff for reconsideration of specific items (specific items to be addressed in City Council motion); or,
5. Continue to a future City Council meeting (date and time to be specified in motion).

AUTHORITY

Charter of the City of Merced, Section 200.

CITY COUNCIL PRIORITIES

This recommendation is consistent with City Council's priority in establishing and strengthening community and regional partnerships to enhance the quality of life.

DISCUSSION

Background

The State of California Fire Department (CAL FIRE) and the United States Forest Service (USFS) depend on local government resources to assist with large-scale wildland incidents. As California's population continues to expand into wildland areas coupled with unpredictable climatology, urban interface fire activity has been increasing in frequency and severity.

The California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), administers requests, deployment and tracking of all State and local agency resources for large scale incidents in California through the California Master Mutual Aid Agreement (CMMA). Annually, the State system is used to mobilize resources throughout California to combat large fires and other disasters. When a local or Cal OES owned resource is requested through the Cal OES dispatch center, local agency personnel assemble, staff the necessary apparatus, and respond to the incident as a State Resource. These responses typically have a duration of 7 - 14 days, depending on the type of incident or resource deployed.

Since 1989, the City of Merced has supported the CMMA since by sending its Cal OES resources, local engines, and personnel to respond as requested. Currently, the City of Merced Fire Department domiciles two Cal OES resources (Type 1 Engine and a decontamination trailer). Additionally, department personnel are certified in various incident management overhead and support positions and are able to respond and fill individual requests for roles such as, Division/Group Supervisor, Strike Team Leader, Line Emergency Medical Technician, Public Information Officer, and other positions. In the past few years, Cal OES has made frequent requests to the Merced Fire Department due to the large fires the State has been experiencing.

Under the auspices of the California Fire Assistance Agreement (CFAA), the State and the USFS request emergency apparatus and personnel from local government fire agencies within the California Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid System, and responding local agencies may receive reimbursement of their response costs through the Cal OES.

The compensation for the equipment and time spent on these incidents is paid according to the rates established in the CFAA. This agreement provides the salary scales based on existing MOU's/Contracts with the various labor and management groups. These pay scales compensate paid staff on a portal to portal (from time of dispatch to time back in quarters), so that all of their deployment time is covered. It is also important to note that each city/county/district establishes acceptable resource drawdown levels to ensure that sufficient personnel are available to cover their home base. Apparatus rates are determined by equipment type.

Current Proposal

The Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit (MMU) of CAL FIRE desires to establish local agreements that provide for Assistance by Hire (ABH) utilization of local government firefighting resources to augment CAL FIRE resources in support of the State's mission within the State Responsibility Areas (SRA) of the MMU when the need arises. Should City personnel and/or equipment be deployed to Statewide emergencies, the City would be eligible for reimbursement, similar to Cal OES reimbursement's protocols. Essentially, the city will be reimbursed for any response exceeding two hours. The agreement is retroactive to January 1, 2020 and expires on December 31, 2022. Reimbursement rates are updated annually on January 1st.

The agreement outlines:

- Personnel and Apparatus Reimbursement Rate Methodology
- MMU Local Government ABH Payment Procedures
- Apparatus Condition, Apparatus Liability and Apparatus Repairs Protocols

- Guidelines for Unstaffed Apparatus
- Consumables and Damaged and/or Destroyed Supplied Protocols
- Communications Protocols
- Personnel Standards
- Staffing Standards

IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES

Approval of the agreement will allow the City of Merced Fire Department to recover approximately 100% of the total expenses incurred. Any over expenditures will be absorbed within the Fire Department's operating budget. The reimbursement rate is consistent statewide for assistance to wildland emergency responses in the SRA in the MMU.

ATTACHMENTS

1. CAL FIRE Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit 2020 Local Government Assistance by Hire Agreement