



City of Grass Valley City Council Agenda Action Sheet

Title: Interim Options for Fire Resiliency and Vegetation Management

CEQA: Not a Project.

Recommendation: That Council 1) consider and provide direction to staff on using up to \$100,000 of general fund reserves to hire a new police officer academy graduate to backfill a police officer for approximately 12 months to operate the City's masticator and assist with our vegetation management program; 2) consider and provide direction on authorizing up to \$50,000 of general fund reserves for vegetation management software, and 3) authorize the Finance Director to make any necessary budget transfers to implement any actions approved by City Council associated with this item.

Prepared by: Timothy M. Kiser, City Manager

Council Meeting Date: December 12, 2023

Date Prepared: December 6, 2023

Agenda: Administrative

Background Information: On August 22, 2023, City Council heard an item discussing Fire and Vegetation Management and the potential interim options items that could be implemented.

Initially, the consideration was to hire seasonal firefighters, but the staff's suggestion now is to defer this option until after the March 2024 election. Instead, we propose recruiting new candidates and establishing a hiring list for various firefighter positions, a process anticipated to span approximately three months. This strategic approach positions us favorably to swiftly adapt based on the election's outcome.

During the City Council Meeting on August 22nd, the second option focused on Vegetation Management, a pivotal element in shielding our city from the perils of wildland fires. As an interim measure, the staff proposes assigning a Police Officer to operate the City's newly acquired masticator. This officer would not only address vegetation concerns but also handle issues like illegal camping, encompassing a broad spectrum of vegetation management duties. Leveraging the comprehensive capabilities of a police officer facilitates a collaborative and versatile approach to vegetation management, covering both private and public properties.

Since the inception of the Wolf Creek Trail in 2016, officers from the General Valley Police Department (GVPD) have honed their skills in safely and compassionately managing trespassing and unlawful camping on public and private lands. Appointing a new graduate to the police officer position allows us to develop a session plan and train the officer for future replacements, ensuring readiness for impending retirements. This approach

capitalizes on the unique "all in one" capability that a police officer brings to this multifaceted endeavor.

Lastly, the staff recommends the Council consider assessing a software program designed to enhance vegetation management inspections. Our team is keen on collaborating with other agencies to explore viable solutions collaboratively. Presently, we are exploring a software program employed by Truckee Fire, which shows promise for our needs. The objective is to streamline the process of recording inspections and generating follow-up letters, making our vegetation management efforts more efficient.

Council Goals/Objectives: The execution of this action attempts to achieve Strategic Goal #5 - High Performance Government and Quality Service.

Fiscal Impact: The funding required for hiring the backfill for the Police Department is approximately \$95,000 for a year and the software cost should not exceed \$55,000. The total of \$150,000 would need to come from General Fund Reserves.

Funds Available: Yes

Account #: General Fund Reserves

Reviewed by: Tim Kiser, City Manager

Attachments: None