



Board of Commissioners Meeting Agenda Item Submittal

Item To Be Considered: **Application for Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG)**

Board Meeting Date: **January 23, 2024**

Prepared By: **Jacob Randall – Fire Chief**

Overview: The need to communicate with other agencies is detrimental to the success and safety of Emergency Services. As we strengthen working relationships with surrounding agencies, we have identified a deficiency in our current capabilities. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides grant opportunities for enhancing homeland security, preparedness, safety, and community resiliency. One of those grant opportunities is the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG).

During the FY 23-24 Budget Workshop, held on May 17, 2023, the intention was to seek funding assistance for new communications equipment for Fire and Emergency Services. The grant, if awarded, would assist in purchasing the necessary equipment to enhance our communication efforts with surrounding agencies operating on numerous communication bands.

We have been approached to complete this grant as a Regional Grant, meaning numerous agencies would receive the equipment if awarded. The Hubert Volunteer Fire Department would like to join forces in seeking this grant funding to support not one but two agencies with essential equipment while reducing the overall financial burden on the departments and, ultimately, the Citizens. The Town of Swansboro would be the “host” agency. We would write the grant, perform the purchasing, complete all necessary reporting measures, and request reimbursement from FEMA. The region's population dictates the Cost-Share Match expense encumbered with this grant. However, we would divide the cost-share match between the two agencies based on the quantity of equipment issued. Populations under 20,000 are a 5% cost-share match, and populations over 20,000 but less than 1,000,000 are a 10% cost-share match.

The preliminary quote for this equipment, which is needed to issue personnel and equipment radios, is \$822,800.00. That is an estimated cost-share match of \$74,801.55. If selected for this grant funding, that would amount to a Cost-Savings of \$747,998.45 if the equipment was purchased or financed.

The AFG has a tentative application process initiated in mid-late January, with award notifications from Late April to May until funds are exhausted. Furthermore, the acceptance of this grant would be presented to the Board of Commissioners for official acceptance in the form of a Resolution, as was completed in the FY 22 AFG award for the Breathing Air Cascade System.

Background Attachment(s): None

Action: _____

Recommended Action:

1. Approve the Fire Department to seek regional grant funding for essential communications equipment through the FY 2023 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) as the “host” agency partnering with the Hubert Volunteer Fire Department, estimating \$822,800 but not to exceed \$900,000.
2. Allow the town manager and fire chief to draft a cost-share agreement preparing for any award notifications or the potential for future financial opportunities to maximize cost efficiency between agencies.