

STAFF REPORT

Date: May 10, 2023

To: Mayor and City Council

Thru: Doug Thornley, City Manager

Subject: Staff Report (For Possible Action): Approval of Interlocal Contract and Annual Operating Plan between the City of Reno, on behalf of the Reno Fire Department, and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Nevada Division of Forestry for the Wildland Fire Protection Program (WFPP) for FY 23/24 (\$6,879) and FY 24/25 (\$6,879) Wildland Fire Management, in the total amount of \$13,758. (General Fund)

From: Dave Cochran, Fire Chief

Department: Fire Department

Summary:

The Fire Department needs the support of all regional, State and Federal partners to ensure the necessary suppression, and restoration resources are available when needed. The Wildland Fire Protection Program (WFPP) allows for a more collaborative and comprehensive use of necessary resources to mitigate costs and damages to the City and provides a cost recovery mechanism for expenses associated with wild fire suppression. The WFPP interlocal agreement provides the City with a more efficient and cost effective way to access fire suppression, meeting the Council's goals of financial sustainability, a safe community, and well-maintained public infrastructure. The WFPP is budgeted within the Fire Department operating budget within the City's general fund, and has demonstrated that it can deliver the necessary support during and after a fire in our community. Staff recommends Council approve the award of the contract.

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

Fiscal Sustainability

Public Safety

Previous Council Action:

April 28, 2021 - Council approved the FY 21/22 and FY 22/23 Wildland Fire Protection Program (WFPP) for Wildland Fire Management in an amount not to exceed \$14,432.

April 24, 2019 - Council approved the FY 19/20 and FY 20/21 Wildland Fire Protection Program (WFPP) for Wildland Fire Management in an amount not to exceed \$36,606.

Background:

Over the past 10 years, wildfires have been increasing in size, frequency, and duration resulting in higher wildland fire costs and community devastation. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) established the Wildland Fire Protection Program (WFPP) to assist local Nevada fire jurisdictions in wildland fire response, prevention and mitigation. NDF has the responsibility in Nevada to supervise or coordinate all forestry and watershed work on state-owned and privately-owned lands, including fire control, and work with federal agencies, private associations, counties, towns, cities, and private persons.

The WFPP program was developed to defend the people and lands of Nevada against wildland fire through collaborative and comprehensive use of fire suppression, prevention and restoration resources available through the state. It works to address current challenges facing federal, state, and local governments which include fighting year-round wildland fires, escalating fire suppression costs, cheatgrass and other invasive species, expanding Wildland Urban Interfaces, scattered capabilities and jurisdictions, tight budgets, and declining federal resources and cost-shifting. Through this program, the State provides financial assistance with wildland fire costs, increased suppression resources and coordination, incident management assistance, and technical expertise to participating fire protection districts during a wildfire.

Discussion:

Wildfires are resource-intensive disasters that require significant support, staff time, and cost. Given the City's limited resources and the significant need to perform this work, it is to the mutual advantage of NDF and the City of Reno to work closely to maintain effective wildland fire management without duplication, and to coordinate efforts with federal cooperators. This Interlocal Contract will provide the Reno Fire Department the resources of the Nevada Division of Forestry when responding to and managing wildland fire incidents, cost recovery, administrative assistance, and wildfire pre-suppression services for events like the Pinehaven and Caughlin fires.

Financial Implications:

The total cost of this interlocal contract between the City of Reno, on behalf of the Reno Fire Department, and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Nevada Division of Forestry for the Wildland Fire Protection Program (WFPP) is \$13,758. The funding for this contract is budgeted annually in the Fire Department's operating budget in the Emergency Operations Division, under fire incident costs.

Legal Implications:

Legal review completed for compliance with City procedures and Nevada law.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends Council approve the Interlocal Contract and the Operating Plan between the City of Reno, on behalf of the Reno Fire Department and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Nevada Division of Forestry, for the Wildland Fire Protection Program (WFPP) in an amount not to exceed \$13,758 for Wildland Fire Management, and authorize the Mayor and/or the Fire Chief to sign the necessary documents.

Proposed Motion:

I move to approve staff recommendation.

Attachments:

Interlocal Contract COR-RFD and NDF - WFPP