



NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Letter

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Gabrielle Avina for Ernie Loveless - Fire Chief
County Fire Department
REPORT BY: Gabrielle Avina, Fire Marshal, 967-1421
SUBJECT: Acceptance of grants for the County's Firewise Chipper Program

RECOMMENDATION

County Fire Chief requests the following actions relating to two grants for the County Firewise Program:

1. Acceptance of two grants and authorization for the Chair to sign the grant agreements for the purchase of a Commercial Wood Chipper, chipper related safety and operating equipment, and chipper related community outreach and advertising expenses in the amount of:
 - a. \$23,000 from the Fireman's Fund; and
 - b. \$17,500 from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD); and
2. Approval of Budget Transfer No. 50, increasing appropriations in the Fire Department budget by \$40,500 with offsetting revenues from the Fireman's Fund and the BAAQMD grants, and establishment of a fixed asset in the amount of \$27,500 for the purchase of a Commercial Chipper. (4/5 vote required)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The County Fire Chief requests approval of the acceptance of two grants from community partners of the Napa Firewise program. These grants will allow the Napa Firewise program to purchase a chipper to be used for chipping materials cut by residents of Napa County in wildland urban interface areas. The grants will also provide funds for the purchase of required chipper safety equipment and funding for public outreach and advertising for the community chipping program.

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact?	Yes
Is it currently budgeted?	No
What is the revenue source?	Grant funding

Is it Mandatory or Discretionary?	Discretionary
Discretionary Justification:	Acceptance of the grants and the purchase of a chipper will enhance the County's Firewise chipping program.
Is the general fund affected?	No
Future fiscal impact:	The commercial chipper will be maintained and operated by the County Fire Department within the Firewise budget line item.
Consequences if not approved:	The Napa Firewise community chipping program will be very limited in the services it is able to provide.
Additional Information:	

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Napa Firewise is a community-based program designed by city and county fire professionals to educate the residents of Napa County on the dangers wildland fire poses to them and their community. The program also provides specific steps each person can take to protect themselves, their family and their neighbors in the event a wildland fire occurs.

An extremely important component of the Napa Firewise program is fuel reduction. Napa County residents have chipped nearly 20,000 cubic yards of dangerous fire fuels from high risk communities during the last two years as part of Napa Firewise's free community chipping program.

During the last two years Napa Firewise has funded community chipping through Federal Wildland Urban Interface grants. Grant funds were used to pay a private contractor for forty days of chipping throughout the county each year. We believe by purchasing a chipper through grant funding from our community partners the Fireman's Fund and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District we will be able to provide a better service to the community.

The purchase of this chipper will allow Napa Firewise to increase the number of chipping days from forty to one hundred and twenty days and to provide a more user friendly service for the residents of Napa County. The community chipper program contemplates using Napa County Corrections Department inmates to operate the chipper. These inmates will be supervised by one or more contract employees funded through the County Fire budget, while the overall operation of the program will be managed and monitored by the County Fire Marshal.

Napa County's plan for a community chipper program utilizing inmates is based upon a similar program operated by Placer County Fire. The Placer County Fire chipping program currently has three chipper crews (inmates operating chippers under non-inmate supervision) and plans to add a fourth crew within the next year. Since the program's inception in 1998, Placer County has experienced less than 10 injury claims and no "lost time" due to injuries. According to the Placer County Fire chipping program coordinator and the Placer County Risk Manager, there have been no public or grand jury complaints concerning the use of inmates for this service over the life of their program. Statistics concerning the Placer County Fire chipping program are noted below:

- | Duration of program:1998 to present
- | Operations: 8 hrs per day, 5 days per week, 50 weeks per year
- | 8 to12 inmates assigned to chipper crews each day.

The purchase price for the chipper is approximately \$27,500. The remainder of the grant funds will be used to purchase chipper safety equipment and to fund a community outreach/public information program concerning the community chipping program.

There is also on today's agenda for Board consideration a recommendation for adoption of a resolution designating County Corrections Department inmates assigned to fire suppression or fire prevention activities as employees of the County for purposes of workers' compensation. The intent of this recommended action is to align the County's workers' compensation policy with current state statutes concerning the designation of County Corrections Department inmates assigned to fire suppression or fire prevention activities as employees for purposes of workers' compensation coverage. Labor Code Section 4017 mandates that inmates involved in fire prevention or suppression are employees and entitled to workers compensation benefits. Thus, should any County Corrections Department inmates be assigned to fire suppression or fire prevention activities such as the Firewise community chipper program, the County would be required to consider them employees for the purposes of workers' compensation coverage.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

None

CEO Recommendation: Approve

Reviewed By: Andrew Carey