

Memorandum

City of Lawrence

Fire Medical

TO: David L. Corliss, City Manager

FROM: Mark Bradford, Fire Chief

Date: September 12, 2013

RE: Grant Opportunity

Each year, the Department evaluates budget and capital requests regarding alternative funding sources. The Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) provided through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is awarded to fire departments to enhance their ability to protect the public and fire service personnel from fire and related hazards. Four types of grants are available through the AFG: Vehicles, Operations and Safety, Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S). We have identified two capital improvement requests that we feel would meet the awards criteria set forth in the grant considerations.

BACKGROUND

The primary goal of the Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) is to meet the firefighting and emergency response needs of fire departments and nonaffiliated emergency medical service organizations. Since 2001, AFG has helped firefighters and other first responders to obtain critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training, and other resources needed to protect the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards. The Grant Programs Directorate of the Federal Emergency Management Agency administers the grants in cooperation with the U.S. Fire Administration.

Nationally, the AFG awards, which will be distributed in phases (rounds), will ultimately provide approximately \$285 million to fire departments and nonaffiliated emergency medical service organizations throughout the country. AFG awards aim to enhance response capabilities and to more effectively protect the health and safety of the public with respect to fire and other hazards. The grants enable local fire departments and emergency medical service organizations to purchase or receive training, conduct first responder health and safety programs, and buy equipment and response vehicles.

Each department may submit multiple applications for each type of grant through the AFG.

PAST GRANT AWARDS

The department has been awarded two Assistance to Firefighter Grants. In 2002, we were awarded approximately \$150,000 for three water rescue boats and miscellaneous water rescue equipment. The second was a 2012 grant for station video conferencing in the amount of \$268,355. In both cases the city was responsible for a 20% match.

FY 2014-2018 CAPITAL PROJECT REQUESTS

The department has requested both SCBA/PASS (2015) and MDC (2014) replacements as part of our FY 2014-2018 Capital Project request.

Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus and Personal Alert Safety System (PASS)

The department's inventory of Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) is approaching their useful life. As standards are updated, SCBA have been upgraded to meet the current standard. When two standard revisions have passed, the SCBA cannot be brought up to the current standard.

The last standard update was in 2007 and was a minor update of the previous standard. In 2013 a new standard will be released and will be a substantial change from previous requirements due to firefighter deaths over the past few years.

Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus are fundamental firefighting tools used by firefighters that provide safe breathing air in hazardous atmospheres. Firefighters are required to use these devices as a practical part of their work. Respiratory protection in dangerous atmospheres is a key safety focus in the fire service. The atmospheric hazards that SCBA's protect firefighters from generally fall into three categories; toxic, oxygen deficient or super-heated atmospheres. Firefighters use the SCBA in incidents including fires, automatic fire alarms, gas leaks, carbon monoxide incidents, hazardous materials incidents, and other hazardous atmosphere calls. In addition, this equipment is operated on a daily basis as part of training and equipment testing. The main parts of an SCBA are a backpack tank of compressed breathing air, a regulator and a face mask. This provides purified, oxygen rich air from the tank for a rescuer to breathe, which allows entry into toxic or oxygen depleted atmospheres.

PASS

In addition, SCBA devices are equipped with sophisticated safety devices including the Personal Alert Safety System (PASS). PASS devices sense the lack of motion and emit an audible alert if a firefighter is disabled. Integrated communications equipment assists firefighters to talk and hear in noisy areas and allows a firefighter wearing a mask to hear and speak on a radio.

Our current PASS system was implemented in 1999; the new standard for these systems will also be revised in 2013. The current provider has just maintained our system and has made no improvements since 2007. Our current belief is this system may not continue past this standard and will need to be replaced.

With current technology and safety practices, we plan to eliminate our current PASS system and replace both the SCBA and PASS system with one integrated system.

Under the AFG guidelines, the city must commit to funding 15% of the cost of the project. Initial quotes indicate the system would cost approximately \$750,000, which would require a City commitment of \$112,500.

Mobile Data Computers (MDC)

Mobile data units are absolutely necessary to provide information from the emergency communications center including status changes, response data, mapping, hazards planning and reference, and pre-incident response plans. These units are utilized daily and are constantly on ready to receive and transmit data. As we prepare to move to a new CAD system, the need to have current and reliable mobile data computers will become imperative. Fire Medical originally purchased 12 mobile data computers in 2004 for use in the apparatus. This original purchase covered only primary apparatus with no spares and no MDC's for secondary apparatus.

The department has tried to add additional units to the fleet and maintain the existing units and has been unable to fully develop the program and has encountered regular and numerous MDC failures. Mobile data units should be replaced after a three year lifespan due to the rugged environments they are used in and the constantly evolving technology changes. All but two MDC's exceed this lifespan with the oldest models no longer supported and not capable of running many of today's programs. In order to fully outfit the department with a spare computer, 26 units would need to be purchased.

Under the AFG guidelines, the city must commit to funding 15% of the cost of the project. Initial quotes indicate the system would cost approximately \$104,615, which would require a City commitment of \$15,692.

REQUEST

We are requesting authorization to pursue these grants. The FY 2013 AFG application period will open in the next few weeks. Grants are awarded in "rounds", which means there is no identifiable deadline when we will be notified whether our grant requests have been awarded or denied.