


## City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** MAY 2, 2012

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** RASHAD M. YOUNG, CITY MANAGER 

**SUBJECT:** CONSIDERATION OF A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY PORT SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM

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**ISSUE:** Grant application to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Port Security Grant Program (PSGP).

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council:

- (1) Approve the submission of a grant application; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary documents that may be required.

**BACKGROUND:** On February 17, 2012, DHS announced the availability of funds from the fiscal year (FY) 2012 Port Security Grant Program to strengthen homeland security preparedness and the security of critical infrastructure. The PSGP is one of five grant programs that constitute the DHS Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 focus on transportation infrastructure security activities. The PSGP is one tool in the comprehensive set of measures authorized by Congress and implemented by the Administration to strengthen the Nation's critical infrastructure against risks associated with potential terrorist attacks. PSGP funds, available to state, local and private sector partners, are intended to support increased port-wide risk management, enhanced domain awareness, training and exercises, expansion of port recovery and resiliency capabilities, and further capabilities to prevent, detect, respond to, and recover from attacks involving improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and other non-conventional weapons.

In October 2011, the Fire Department requested of the Acting City Manager \$565,167 for a full flood-water and swift-water rescue capability in response to the flash flood events of September 8, 2011 associated with Tropical Storm Lee. This funding was to come from a portion of the General Fund surplus identified from FY 2011. However, due to funding constraints, the Acting City Manager recommended, and Council eventually approved \$213,950, a funding level which could provide basic flood-water awareness level training for all Fire personnel, e.g., training Fire personnel how to practice land-based rescue by throwing ropes to the flood-water victims, and also provide needed basic safety equipment, e.g., Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), helmets

and lights, and (rope) throw bags. (Docket Item #12 on October 25, 2011 and the discussion by Council on that date provided a thorough review of this issue.) City Council approved an allocation of \$213,950 and appropriated these funds for this purpose in a Supplemental Appropriation Ordinance on November 12, 2011.

**DISCUSSION:** The grant funds requested will assist the City and region to prepare for potential threats. The Fire Department proposes to apply for:

- Specialized water Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for members of its Marine Operations Team (MOT);
- Training classes for MOT personnel; and,
- One flood-water/shallow-water rescue boat and trailer to replace the two older AFD 13' Zodiac inflatable boats.

The rescue boat is a smaller boat that will be able to fit into smaller spaces and shallow water to search for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Enhanced Explosive (CBRNE) threats on the Potomac.<sup>1</sup>

The equipment and training described above are eligible for this competitive grant program.

This Port Security Grant, if awarded, would provide for 30 members of the Fire Department's Marine Operations Team (MOT) to have a specialized level of training and equipment in flood-water and shallow-water rescue to supplement the rest of the staff, closer to what was originally requested by Chief Thiel last October 2011. The MOT capabilities are currently limited to fireboat-based river rescues, fireboat-based defensive firefighting, and fire protection system support for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. The grant would allow the Fire Department to have a specialized team for flood-water and shallow-water rescue as well as to respond to CBRNE threats.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The Fire Department is requesting from FEMA equipment and training to the value of \$647,119. There is a 25 percent cash or in-kind match that totals \$161,780. If City Council agrees, the cash match can come from a portion of the funds (\$213,950) set aside in the Non-Departmental budget by City Council last November 2011 for basic flood-water and shallow-water response training and equipment, leaving a balance of \$52,170 that is not required for the grant match. Should the grant application be successful, the Fire Department would have the resources to enable a more thorough and comprehensive flood and shallow water response capability than what was funded in November 2011.

While awaiting a determination from FEMA on the grant application<sup>2</sup>, the Department will commence basic flood-water and shallow-water awareness training for first responders and commence the purchase of Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) using a portion of the set-aside

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<sup>1</sup> A more sophisticated radar system for the new fireboat will be purchased using FY 2010 awarded PSGP funds; and,

<sup>2</sup> Per the PDG application guidance, FEMA would be expected to award all grant funding by September 30, 2012.

described above that will not be required as a match for the PSG application, i.e., \$52,170. Should the grant application not be successful, the Fire Department will procure the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE), rope bags, helmets, PFDs, and lights to equip our first responders with the ability to undertake only shore-based water rescue, per the November 2011 plan.

In terms of the ongoing costs, the grant runs for two years and so the ongoing training needed for the 30 personnel assigned to the Marine Operations Team would be covered through FY 2014. Once outside of the grant period, the Fire Department estimates that the annual cost for 30 people is \$25,320 (16 hours of overtime per year plus recertification costs<sup>3</sup>). This amount would have to be addressed in the FY 2015 Fire Department budget, and in later years, in order to maintain this flood-water and shallow-water rescue capability.

City staff will administer the grant. The City is also responsible for the normal administrative costs associated with this grant, including financial and reporting oversight provided by the Fire Department, as well as the Office of Management and Budget, and the Finance Department.

**STAFF:**

Adam K. Thiel, Fire Chief  
Bruce Johnson, Chief of Staff

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<sup>3</sup>The cost would be for 30 people to attend a course costing \$300/person and 16 hours overtime for 30 people costing \$544 an hour (the average hourly OT costs for this group.)