


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 7, 2010

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: APPLICATION FOR VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, RESCUE SQUAD ASSISTANCE FUND (RSAF) GRANT FUNDS FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

ISSUE: Consideration of an application for Virginia Department of Health, RSAF (Rescue Squad Assistance Fund) grant funds for the Fire Department.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Approve the submission of the grant application (due September 15, 2010); and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute any necessary documents that may be required.

BACKGROUND: On August 1, 2010, the Virginia Department of Health opened the grant application period for the 2010 RSAF (Rescue Squad Assistance Fund) Grant Program. The RSAF is a multi-million dollar matching grant program for Virginia governmental and non-profit Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies and organizations to provide financial assistance based on demonstrated need. The primary goal of this program is to financially assist governmental and non-profit EMS agencies to purchase EMS equipment and vehicles and provide needed EMS programs and projects.

Because of our proximity, the Alexandria Fire Department (AFD) has much of the responsibility for addressing fire and medical emergencies on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, a vital Interstate 95 transportation thoroughfare linking not only this critically important region, but also the entire Northeast Corridor of the United States. The Fire Department also provides emergency medical care for pedestrian traffic on the pathway of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge.

DISCUSSION: The Woodrow Wilson Bridge pathway was designed primarily for pedestrian foot traffic. As a result, the Fire Department's EMS vehicles are not able to gain adequate access to the pathway and are unable to provide effective emergency medical services to injured parties on the overpass in the event of a medical emergency. The pathway provides a margin of approximately four inches for our standard emergency vehicles to turn around and transport

patients to medical facilities. Time taken for Department personnel to maneuver an oversized vehicle on a pathway for which it was not designed could result in lost treatment time to the detriment of injured parties. This small margin also increases the probability of damage to Department vehicles and increased vehicle repair costs.

Since the opening of the pathway, there have been eight incidents requiring Fire Department personnel to transport injured parties to an awaiting medic unit. Using current means, a patient has to be lying on a backboard of a stretcher or gator leaving them facing upward and fully exposed to the elements, which is not desirable. During inclement weather this is extremely uncomfortable for patients. To address this situation, the Fire Department proposes to share the costs on an 80/20 matching basis with the Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Health, to purchase a smaller medical vehicle known as a MedSTAT mini-ambulance for easier access to the pathway. Some of the features of this vehicle include the ability to travel up to 40 miles per hour with all wheel drive, heating and air conditioning, and a completely enclosed compartment capable of holding a full size stretcher with the option of securing a second patient. This type of vehicle has proven useful in many areas of the country as a means to move casualties during a multiple patient incident. The total cost of each vehicle is about \$63,000.

FISCAL IMPACT: The Department does not have the funds within the scope of the budget for a vehicle purchase of this magnitude. The Department is committed, however, to ensuring the immediate emergency care of all using the pathway of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. The Department it is willing to defer other important and necessary purchases of vehicles or equipment scheduled to be replaced in FY 2011 from the Equipment Replacement Fund to subsequent fiscal periods to be able to provide the matching component required by this grant. As a result, there would be no General Fund impact in FY 2011; however, the use of the Equipment Replacement Fund balance for previously unplanned expenses may result in the need for additional funding in a future fiscal year. Contributions to the Equipment Replacement Fund for the future replacement of this unit will also need to be added to the budget beginning in FY2012. The Fire Department is applying for the grant under the special exception of the 80/20 match requirement. If awarded, the Department will be responsible for the 20 percent match equaling \$12,400. Departmental funds have been set aside to meet the conditions of this award. 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

James Lynch, Chief, Administrative Services, Fire Department

Brian Hricik, EMS Operations Manager, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Department

Mayuri Middough, Fiscal Officer, Fire Department