TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL
FROM: CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT: POLICE
DATE: FEBRUARY 19, 2002 CMR:149:02
SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF A BUDGET AMENDMENT ORDINANCE TRANSFERRING $46,238 FROM CIP 19109, POLICE INFORMATION SYSTEMS MASTER PLAN, TO PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION FOR CIP 19312, FIRE/COMMUNICATIONS COMPUTER SYSTEM

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Council authorize a Budget Amendment Ordinance (BAO) reallocating $46,238 from the Police Information Systems Master Plan Capital Improvement Project (CIP 19109) to the Fire/Communications Computer System CIP 19312 for the purpose of purchasing and installing a replacement Fire Station Alerting System.

BACKGROUND

The Station Notification System (SNS) is the mechanism whereby Fire Department personnel are alerted to emergency calls for service in the Fire Stations. The SNS is wired from City Hall to each of the eight Fire Stations, based on the type of response and location of the emergency, a tone is transmitted to each specific station that results in the activation of bells and lights at the station alerting the firefighters. Additionally, a signal is sent over the normal radio frequency and the City’s wiring to the stations to ensure notification. Concurrent with the tones, a voice dispatch of the call by a public safety dispatcher goes out over the fire station’s public address system. Concurrent with this process, a copy of the call from the CAD system is sent to a printer that is located in the fire station.

As part of the Fiscal Year 1991-92 CIP budget, Council approved $189,283 for a multi-phased project to upgrade the Fire Department’s computer and
telecommunications technology. Phase’s I through III of the project covered the needs analysis and procurement of a Fire records management system. Phase IV will replace the existing SNS with a new Fire Station Alerting system. While staff identified the need for a new fire alerting system ten years ago, challenges and obstacles with other phases of the project, delays with vendors, a lack of former expertise with this type of technology, prevented this project from moving forward until this time.

DISCUSSION

The current SNS is nearly 30 years old and because replacement parts are no longer available, is difficult to maintain. Police Department Communications technicians have had to create makeshift parts in order to keep the system operational. It is imperative that a new system be purchased.

Under the present system, dispatchers must go through several steps to alert Fire Department personnel of an emergency call. Redundant and unnecessary steps would be eliminated with newer station alerting technology, expediting the dispatch of fire resources to an emergency. In an operation where seconds can mean the difference between life and death, or destruction of valuable property, an effective and efficient alerting system is critical. When the final phase of the project is implemented, a copy of the emergency call would be sent simultaneously to the mobile data computer in the fire apparatus, providing both timely and confidential communication with Fire Department personnel. This process becomes especially important when personnel are responding to emergency calls from the field.

The Police Department has agreed to assume responsibility for this project. The new station alerting system will be fully interfaced with the City’s CAD system, which will ensure that calls are processed rapidly and thereby reducing the overall response time of Fire Department personnel to the scene of an emergency.

Bid Process

A bid process was completed in 1997 and the design/build for the project was awarded to Telecommunications Engineering Associates of San Carlos. Inflationary cost adjustments from the 1997 quote of $117,392 will be negotiated with the vendor upon approval of this BAO by City Council. In addition, $22,500 will be paid to Public Safety Systems Incorporated (the Police Department’s CAD vendor) for software programming changes to interface the new Fire Station Alerting system with other critical public safety computer applications.
RESOURCE IMPACT

Approximately $145,000 is needed to complete the hardware purchase and professional services required to install the new Fire Station Alerting System. The attached BAO requests an additional appropriation of $46,238 for CIP Project 19312, Fire/Communications Computer System, offset by transferring funds from CIP Project 19109, Police Information Systems Master Plan. This project has a remaining balance of $46,238, originally set aside to purchase the hardware needed to upgrade the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system hardware from an HP3000 system to an NT-based system. The NT-based system was under development by the CAD vendor when the system was purchased in 1999 and was only recently made available. Since then, Staff has reevaluated this upgrade and believes that given the current speed and reliability of the existing hardware, this upgrade is not needed. This BAO has no impact on the Budget Stabilization Reserve and no future year General Fund ongoing costs.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This agreement is consistent with existing City policy.

TIMELINE

Once approved, it is anticipated that this project will be complete by May 2002.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This project is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Section 15301 of the CEQA guidelines.
Attachments

Attachment A: Budget Amendment Ordinance (BAO)
Attachment B: System Design and Budget for Station Alerting System

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