



City of Palo Alto

City Council Staff Report

(ID # 11177)

Report Type: Consent Calendar

Meeting Date: 5/4/2020

Summary Title: Approval for COPS Funds

Title: Approval of the Acceptance and Appropriation of State of California Citizens Options for Public Safety (COPS) Funds and Approval of a Budget Amendment (Requires 2/3 Approval) in the Supplemental Law Enforcement Services Fund

From: City Manager

Lead Department: Police

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the City Council:

1. Approve the acceptance and expenditure of Citizens Options for Public Safety (COPS) funds from the State of California; and
2. Amend the Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Appropriation Ordinance (requires 2/3 approval) for the Supplemental Law Enforcement Services Fund (SLESF) by:
 - a. Increasing the estimate for Revenue from the State of California by \$105,174; and,
 - b. Increasing the Police Department Facilities and Equipment expense appropriation by \$105,174.

Background

Since 1997, the California State Budget Act has included allocations to counties and cities for the COPS program. This funding is intended to fill the need for additional resources at the local level to ensure public safety. Under the provisions of Government Code Section 30061, a percentage of the funds are allocated to counties and cities, based upon population, for law enforcement services. Funds must supplement existing services and cannot be used to supplant any existing funds. Each city is also required to deposit the funds into a separate Supplemental Law Enforcement Services Fund so that these funds are not intermingled with General Fund dollars. The funds must be used to benefit front-line law enforcement efforts.

Previous uses of COPS funds have included re-starting the Community Service Officer (CSO) program, purchasing an E-Citation system, rifle magnifiers and range safety equipment and upgrades to the patrol vehicle and traffic motorcycle programs.

Discussion

Staff proposes to use the COPS funds in the following manner:

- Conductive Electronic Weapons (\$60,000)
Conductive Electronic Weapons (CEW), sometimes referred to as Tasers, are a constructive resource to patrol officers in times of crisis. The technology has been around since the 1990's and is used to gain compliance of combative suspects in accordance to the department's use-of-force policy. The technology is another tool in the use-of-force continuum between less-than-lethal tools such as pepper spray and batons and lethal weapons such as handguns and rifles. The purchase of the latest design in CEW devices will be an improvement on the current older technology in use today.
- Tactical Communication Equipment (\$45,000)
The purchase of the tactical communication technology improves the outcome of critical incidents like the incident involving a prolonged standoff with a barricaded suspect that came to a peaceful resolution in 2019. Tactical equipment can include "throw-phones" and incident communication devices that enhance communication between officers and messaging with the public that may be impacted.

Resource Impact

The Police Department has received funds each year under this program since its inception in 1998. Annual allocations have averaged approximately \$100,000 over the last few years. The City received the official [notice](#) from the California Department of Finance in September 2019 that the City's COPS allocation for Fiscal Year 2020 is \$105,174. Revenues of \$105,174 are recommended to be recognized in the City's Supplemental Law Enforcement Services Fund.

A total of \$105,174 of expenditures are anticipated as described previously in the memorandum, which will be covered by the COPS grant funding appropriated in FY 2020 (\$105,174). There will be no impact to the General Fund as ongoing maintenance costs for the items purchased by the SLESF will be absorbed in the Department's existing non-salary budget.

Policy Implications

Expenditures of funds associated with COPS funds are consistent with City Policy.

Environmental Assessment

Acceptance of COPS funding and the proposed expenditures for public safety equipment are not projects subject to CEQA requirements.