



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR

June 12, 2007

To: Honorable Mayor and  
Members of the City Council

From: *PK* Phil Kamlarz, City Manager

Submitted by: Debra Pryor, Fire Chief

Subject: Fireman's Fund Heritage-Employee Grant Program

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to apply for and accept a grant, and any amendments, from Fireman's Fund Heritage-Employee Grant Program in the amount of \$44,500 to develop a comprehensive water rescue program for the City of Berkeley.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Total cost for the requested equipment and training is \$44,500, with personnel training costs of \$28,000 and equipment costs of \$16,500. A new grant fund will be assigned if the grant is awarded.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Berkeley has unique water-related hazards that include Lake Anza, Aquatic Park, various creeks, and a boundary of 7.5 square miles that extends into the San Francisco Bay. Currently, the Fire Department does not have a comprehensive water rescue program. Such a program would include training by a certified instructor, specialized equipment for rescue swimmers, and other specialized equipment, such as a rescue tripod for the Berkeley Pier.

A comprehensive water rescue program will enable the Fire Department to establish safe, efficient, and rapid rescue responses to water-related emergencies. Enhancement and delivery of these special services also increases the Department's ability to respond to any water-related emergency call and/or mutual aid to neighboring jurisdictions.

BACKGROUND

Seismologists tell us that there is a 62% probability that at least one earthquake of magnitude 6.7 or greater will occur in the Bay Area in the next 30 years. A comprehensive water rescue program would be a tremendous asset in the event of a major earthquake or other calamity. Berkeley has the largest public pier in the state. It is home to the second largest marina in Northern California, and provides berthing for over 1,300 vessels and 100 houseboats. In addition, it is centrally located for rapid rescue/paramedic response, law enforcement and fire suppression response.

The purchase of specialized water rescue equipment, and training of staff, will enable the Department to improve firefighter safety and enhance its ability to respond to water-related emergencies in a disaster, and in day-to-day operations.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The acquisition of new equipment and training will prevent injuries and/or deaths of rescuer swimmers performing their duties of aquatic rescue, and reduce injuries and/or deaths associated with civilian water-related rescues and emergencies, such as drowning.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

The Fireman's Fund grant is a welcomed funding opportunity given the city's fiscal constraints. The General Fund is currently unable to purchase special equipment and pay for specialized staff training without the assistance of such a program.

CONTACT PERSON

Debra Pryor, Fire Chief, 981-5500

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT A GRANT, AND ANY AMENDMENTS, FROM FIREMAN'S FUND HERITAGE-EMPLOYEE GRANT PROGRAM IN THE AMOUNT OF \$44,500 TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE WATER RESCUE PROGRAM

WHEREAS, Fireman's Fund Heritage-Employee Grant Program has made grant funding available to fire departments to better serve the community and surrounding areas; and

WHEREAS, the Berkeley Fire Department does not have a comprehensive water rescue program; and

WHEREAS, the purchase of specialized water rescue equipment, and training of staff, will enable the Department to improve firefighter safety and improve its ability to respond to water-related emergencies; and

WHEREAS, a new grant fund will be assigned if the grant is awarded.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager is authorized to apply for and accept a grant, and any amendments, from Fireman's Fund Heritage-Employee Grant Program in the amount of \$44,500 to develop a comprehensive water rescue program.

