

**February 27, 2024**

**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS**

*The Minutes of the*

***SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION  
DISTRICT  
REGULAR MEETING***

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO**

STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS  
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
REGULAR MEETING  
**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2024, 9:00 AM**  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATION CENTER, ROOM 310  
1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY  
SAN DIEGO, CA 92101

A. REGULAR SESSION – Regular Meeting was called to order at 9:06 a.m.

PRESENT: Directors Nora Vargas, Chair; Terra Lawson-Remer, Vice-Chair; Joel Anderson; Monica Montgomery Steppe; Jim Desmond; also, Andrew Potter, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.

C. Non-Agenda Public Communication: Opportunity for members of the public to speak to the Board on any subject matter within the Board’s jurisdiction but not an item on today’s agenda.

NOTICE: THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MAY TAKE ANY ACTION WITH RESPECT TO THE ITEMS INCLUDED ON THIS AGENDA. RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY COUNTY STAFF DO NOT LIMIT ACTIONS THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MAY TAKE. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SHOULD NOT RELY UPON THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE BOARD LETTER AS DETERMINATIVE OF THE ACTION THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MAY TAKE ON A PARTICULAR MATTER.

**Agenda Items**

<b>Agenda #</b>	<b>Subject</b>
1.	NOTICED PUBLIC HEARING ADOPT AN ORDINANCE FOR SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT GROUND AMBULANCE SERVICE AREA FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES FEES

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**1. SUBJECT: NOTICED PUBLIC HEARING  
ADOPT AN ORDINANCE FOR SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE  
PROTECTION DISTRICT GROUND AMBULANCE SERVICE AREA  
FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES FEES (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

**OVERVIEW**

On June 14, 2022 (FP01), the San Diego County Fire Protection District (SDCFPD) Board of Directors established the SDCFPD's emergency medical services fee for ambulance transportation services. The new fee was established in anticipation of the Ramona Municipal Water District transferring fire protection and emergency medical services to the SDCFPD in Fiscal Year 2022-23, and ambulance services being provided by SDCFPD in other areas. On May 23, 2023 (FP 01), the SDCFPD Board of Directors authorized the Executive Director, or designee, to enter into a written contract with the County of San Diego for the SDCFPD to exclusively provide and/or manage emergency ambulance services in the areas where the County has, or will have, the responsibility. Ambulance operating areas historically have relied upon insurance revenue from transports to hospitals to recover costs. However, rural communities with large geographic areas and small population centers are more costly and generally are overrepresented by public insurance programs that reimburse at lower rates than private health plans. Public plans, such as Medicare and Medi-Cal, pay a fixed rate based upon regulation and statute.

On September 12, 2023 (FP 01), County Fire staff, on behalf of the SDCFPD, updated the Board of Directors with revenue projections from two different consultants, which had a wide range of estimated revenue to be collected. The range anticipated the SDCFPD Ground Ambulance Service Area (ASA) would have a \$3.0 million to \$5.0 million deficit, based upon the current fee schedule, minimum service levels, and projected collections. To reduce this gap, County Fire staff worked with an outside consultant in emergency medical services (EMS) and evaluated several fee schedule options to support the entire ambulance service program. The options leverage recent legislation which provides an opportunity to generate additional revenue from private insurance and reduce the impact on patients and taxpayers. Assembly Bill 716 requires private health insurance plans regulated by the State of California to pay the full cost of an ambulance transport if a local agency establishes a fee ordinance. Because of this state law, the change in ambulance fees will not impact direct costs to patients in the ASA but will raise costs for private health insurance companies.

Today's request is for the Board of Directors for the SDCFPD to consider adoption of an ordinance updating fees for EMS. If the Board takes the recommended action today, then on March 12, 2024, the Board is asked to consider and adopt the proposed ordinance. If approved, fee updates will be effective on April 12, 2024.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

1. Waive Board Policy B-29, Fees, Grants, and Revenue Contracts - Department Responsibility for Cost Recovery which requires full cost recovery for services.

2. Approve the introduction of the Ordinance (first reading), read title, and waive further reading of the Ordinance:  
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE ARTICLE XX SECTION 370, RELATING TO EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES FEES.

If, on February 27, 2024, the Board takes action as recommended in Item 2 above, then on March 12, 2024:

Consider and adopt (second reading):

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE ARTICLE XX SECTION 370, RELATING TO EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES FEES.

#### **EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

Advanced (Paramedic) and Basic (Emergency Medical Technician) Life Support ambulances are critical components to an emergency medical services system that seeks to reduce health disparities in our region. San Diego County Fire, on behalf of the San Diego County Fire Protection District, worked with outside consultants to establish a service plan and quality assurance measures to meet the minimum requirements for residents in rural communities. Updating the fee schedule will have minimum impacts to our lowest-income and most vulnerable residents.

#### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

The proposed action to update the ambulance transportation fees in the San Diego County Fire Protection District supports efforts for County programs, operations, and contracts that reflect the values and priorities, including equitable service delivery, to residents in our region. The proposed fee increase, along with changes in State law, protect our lowest-income residents while promoting an equitable emergency medical services program that is closer to full cost recovery to operate the system.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The proposed increases to fees are not included in the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Operational Plan for San Diego County Fire Protection District (SDCFPD) Ground Ambulance Service Area. If approved, it will result in additional revenue for Fiscal Year 2023-24. The proposed increase will be included in the Fiscal Year 2024-26 CAO Recommended Operational Plan for SDCFPD. There is no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

#### **BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

N/A

#### **ACTION:**

ON MOTION of Director Vargas, seconded by Director Anderson, the Board of Directors of the San Diego County Fire Protection District closed the Hearing and took action as recommended, to further consider and adopt the Ordinance on March 12, 2024.

AYES: Vargas, Anderson, Montgomery Steppe, Desmond

NOT PRESENT: Lawson-Remer

There being no further business, the Board of Directors of the San Diego County Fire Protection District adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

ANDREW POTTER  
Clerk of the Board of Directors of the  
San Diego County Fire Protection District

Notes By: Vizcarra

NOTE: This Statement of Proceedings sets forth all actions taken by the San Diego County Fire Protection District on the matters stated, but not necessarily the chronological sequence in which the matters were taken up.

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Approved by the Board of Directors, on Tuesday, March 12, 2024.



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NORA VARGAS  
Chair

Attest:



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ANDREW POTTER  
Clerk of the Board