

STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 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 9:03 a.m.

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

ABSENT: Director Joel Anderson

B. Statement (just cause) and/or Consideration of a Request to Participate Remotely (emergency circumstances) by a Director, if applicable.

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.

D. Approval of the Statement of Proceedings/Minutes for the meeting of February 27, 2024.

ACTION:

ON MOTION of Director Desmond, seconded by Director Montgomery Steppe, the Board of Directors of the San Diego County Fire Protection District approved the Statement of Proceedings/Minutes for the meeting of February 27, 2024.

AYES: Vargas, Lawson-Remer, Montgomery Steppe, Desmond

ABSENT: Anderson

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

Agenda #	Subject
1.	FISCAL YEAR 2023-24 SECOND QUARTER OPERATIONAL PLAN STATUS REPORT AND BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS [FUNDING SOURCE: OPERATING TRANSFERS IN FROM SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE AND AMBULANCE SERVICE FEES] (4 VOTES)

2.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEM:
SECOND CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE:
ADOPT AN ORDINANCE FOR SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION
DISTRICT GROUND AMBULANCE SERVICE AREA FOR EMERGENCY
MEDICAL SERVICES FEES

1. SUBJECT: FISCAL YEAR 2023-24 SECOND QUARTER OPERATIONAL PLAN STATUS REPORT AND BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

This item recommends budget adjustment in the San Diego County Fire Protection District as part of the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Second Quarter Operational Plan budget adjustments.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Establish appropriations of \$14,500,000 in San Diego County Fire Protection District Ambulance Service Area (ASA), Services & Supplies, to provide ambulance services, based on Operating Transfers In from San Diego County Fire (\$7,400,000) and Ambulance Service fees (\$7,100,000). **(4 VOTES)**

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The recommended actions are intended to provide resources to address inequities in County services and to identify disparities, develop meaningful outcomes, and create a County government culture of equity, belonging, and racial justice.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Today's actions support the sustainability measures across the County considering the environment, economy, health/wellbeing, and/or social aspects of the community by aligning the County's available resources with services to maintain fiscal stability and ensure long-term solvency.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds associated with today's recommendations are not included in the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Operational Plan in the San Diego County Fire Protection District (SDCFPD). If approved, this action will result in cost of \$14,500,000 to provide ambulance services. The funding sources are Operating Transfers In from San Diego County Fire (\$7,400,000) and Ambulance Service fees (\$7,100,000). There will be 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 Desmond, the Board of Directors of the San Diego County Fire Protection District took action as recommended.

AYES: Vargas, Lawson-Remer, Montgomery Steppe, Desmond

ABSENT: Anderson

**2. SUBJECT: ADMINISTRATIVE ITEM:
SECOND CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE:
ADOPT AN ORDINANCE FOR SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE
PROTECTION DISTRICT GROUND AMBULANCE SERVICE AREA
FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES FEES (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

OVERVIEW

On February 27, 2024 (FP01), the Board of Supervisors took action to further consider and adopt the Ordinance on March 12, 2024.

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**

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:

Noting for the record that due to technical issues on March 12, 2024, this item was heard on March 13, 2024; ON MOTION of Director Vargas, seconded by Director Montgomery Steppe, the Board of Directors of the San Diego County Fire Protection District took action as recommended, adopting Ordinance No. 10893 (N.S.), entitled: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE ARTICLE XX SECTION 370, RELATING TO EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES FEES.

AYES: Vargas, Lawson-Remer, Montgomery Steppe, Desmond

ABSENT: Anderson

There being no further business, the Board of Directors of the San Diego County Fire Protection District adjourned at 6:00 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.