

STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2023, 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; Joel Anderson; Jim Desmond; also, Andrew Potter, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.

ABSENT: (District 4 Seat Vacant)

B. Statement (just cause) and/or Consideration of a Request to Participate Remotely (emergency circumstances) by a Supervisor/Member/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 meetings of June 27, 2023 and June 28, 2023.

ACTION:

ON MOTION of Director Anderson, seconded by Director Desmond, the Board of Directors of the San Diego County Fire Protection District approved the Statement of Proceedings/Minutes for the meetings of June 27, 2023 and June 28, 2023.

AYES: Vargas, Anderson, Lawson-Remer, Desmond

ABSENT: (District 4 Seat Vacant)

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.	UPDATE TO THE AMBULANCE SERVICES MODEL IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY’S RURAL COMMUNITIES [FUNDING SOURCE: PROPERTY TAX COLLECTIONS]

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1. SUBJECT: UPDATE TO THE AMBULANCE SERVICES MODEL IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY'S RURAL COMMUNITIES (DISTRICTS: 1, 2, AND 5)

OVERVIEW

The San Diego County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Office, a division of San Diego County Fire, oversees a private contract for ambulance transportation services in rural communities known as the Unified Service Area. That contract expires on September 30, 2023. On May 23, 2023 (FP01), the San Diego County Fire Protection District (SDCFPD) Board of Directors authorized the Executive Director or designee to enter into a written agreement with the County of San Diego (County) to provide and/or manage emergency ambulance services in the areas where the County has, or will have, the responsibility for ambulance transportation in compliance with California Health and Safety Code Sections 1797.230-231. The agreement between the County and SDCFPD was signed on August 14, 2023, and will become effective on September 30, 2023. Going forward, the Unified Service Area will be known as the SDCFPD Ground Ambulance Service Area (ASA). The proposed ASA deployment plan maintains a minimum level of services to meet current and emerging medical needs for an older and vulnerable population with significant healthcare needs.

County Fire staff, on behalf of the SDCFPD, engaged outside consultants to estimate the amount of transport revenue that would be collected to support the program while enhancing patient care. The consultants developed revenue projections based upon multiple factors, which provided a wide range of estimates from \$8.0 million to \$14.0 million in annual revenue. Differences in revenue estimates can be attributed to how the individual consultants accounted for the payer mix (private insurance, Medi-Cal, or Medicare), fees charged, and percent of billing recovered. The actual revenue will not be known until there is a history of billing and collections for ambulance services under the new public/private operational model. Based on the analysis provided, County Fire does not expect ambulance transportation services to be cost neutral (revenues covering all costs). In addition to the anticipated ongoing gap between revenue collected and costs to provide ambulance services, there is a cash flow issue this fiscal year since the timeframe between billing and reimbursement for ambulance services is estimated at 6 to 12 months or longer. This likely will result in a funding gap in Fiscal Year 2023-24 for SDCFPD to cover ambulance transportation costs in the ASA, and County Fire staff will return at a future quarterly report with an update and a plan to close the gap.

During the initial start-up period, existing budgeted SDCFPD funding will be used to pay for services while County Fire closely monitors actual expenditures and revenue. County staff will return to the Board this fiscal year for budget adjustments with funding source(s) identified to fully fund ambulance operations in Fiscal Year 2023-24. Structural gaps between ambulance system revenue and costs will be addressed in future year Operational Plans. Today's actions include receiving a presentation on the new ambulance services model and proposed implementation of the service model in the ASA and establishing a special revenue fund.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

1. Receive a presentation on the new ambulance services model in the San Diego County Fire Protection District's Ground Ambulance Service Area.

2. Direct the Auditor and Controller to establish a special revenue fund for ambulance transport revenues collected to support the ambulance services in the unincorporated area with interest earnings allocated and distributed to the new fund.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Advanced (Paramedic) and Basic (Emergency Medical Technician) Life Support ambulances are critical components to an emergency medical services (EMS) 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 closely with Citygate Associates, LLC and CAL FIRE to develop a deployment model and continuous quality improvement plan that promotes equitable outcomes for all residents within the SDCFPD. The SDCFPD continuous quality improvement plan will monitor demographic and geographic data to promote more equitable outcomes among patients experiencing medical emergencies.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Implementing the new ambulance transportation model in the San Diego County Fire Protection District's Ground Ambulance Service Area provides for just and equitable access to County resources. The proposed model also supports resiliency by supporting the capability to respond to immediate medical transportation needs for individuals and families.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for this request are not included in the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Operational Plan for San Diego County Fire Protection District. Costs are anticipated to be \$11.2 million to provide ambulance services for 9 months, starting September 30, in Fiscal Year 2023-24. Ambulance transport revenues are anticipated to be between \$6.0 million and \$10.5 million. Once anticipated ambulance transport revenues are determined, staff will return to the Board of Directors to establish appropriations, as needed for the \$11.2 million with the identified funding sources, including ambulance transport revenues. In the meantime, SDCFPD will use existing appropriation capacity to fund initial ambulance services start-up costs. The funding source is Property Tax collections. The Public Safety Group will monitor departmental budgets to help identify funding in support of ambulance services to cover any shortfalls.

Subsequent fiscal year costs are anticipated to be \$15.0 million to provide ambulance services for the full year. Ambulance transport revenues are anticipated to be between \$8.0 million and \$14.0 million requiring a combination of a contribution from the General Fund, rate adjustment, and/or expenditure reduction of \$1.0 million to \$7.0 million to be identified as part of future operational plan builds.

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 took action as recommended.

AYES: Vargas, Anderson, Lawson-Remer, Desmond

ABSENT: (District 4 Seat Vacant)

There being no further business, the Board of Directors of the San Diego County Fire Protection District adjourned at 2:53 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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