



City Council Report

Date: April 5, 2021
To: City Council
Through: Christopher J. Brady, City Manager, or
John Pombier, Assistant City Manager
From: Mary Cameli, Fire Chief
Mike Dunn, Assistant Fire Chief
Subject: Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the City of Mesa and the
Rio Verde Fire District to lease a portable G2 encoding system to the
Rio Verde Fire District.
(Citywide)

Purpose and Recommendation

The purpose of this report is to request Council approval to authorize the City Manager to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement to lease a portable US Digital Designs (USDD)/G2 station alerting package to the Rio Verde Fire District (RVFD). The recommendation is to enter this IGA to lease a single USDD/G2 station alerting package for up to one year. Signing this agreement is appropriate for the existing partnership with RVFD and provides emergency response encoding system coverage consistent with the regional automatic aid consortium.

Background

Mesa Fire and Medical Department (MFMD) has searched for a reliable backup station alerting package that can be used temporarily in the event the existing alerting system fails or a temporary station is constructed. MFMD, in partnership with City of Mesa Department of Information Technology – Communications (DoIT – Communications), has built a portable USDD/G2 station alerting package that can meet this need. This station alerting package can be used temporarily anytime a USDD/G2 system goes down in a current fire stations or at one-off special event locations.

A portable USDD/G2 station alerting package, like the one developed by MFMD and DoIT – Communications is successfully used by the Phoenix Fire Department Regional Dispatch Center with their dispatch partners. The practice of leasing this equipment to dispatch partners, as proposed by MFMD, is commonly used on an as needed basis.

Discussion

The RVFD has been a partner in the Mesa Regional Dispatch Center (MRDC) system for several years. This fire district currently has one station. It has been

challenging for RVFD to respond to emergency calls in a new housing development located in the northwest area of their fire district. Distance between the existing station and the new community has resulted in extended response times.

RVFD is expanding with a second station in the build phase that will permanently address this response issue. However, in the meantime, to help reduce response times and accommodate community needs in the area, the developer for the new housing community has installed a temporary fire station trailer structure until the second station is built. Initially, the station was staffed for only 12-hour operations and the Mesa Regional Dispatch Center (MRDC) worked with RVFD to develop a station alerting package by using an alert tone on a portable radio and providing the USDD phone app on the cell phone the crew at the station was issued. However, in February 2021 it became apparent the area needed 24-hour coverage. The initial alerting method used by the MRDC to alert this station location is inadequate for 24-hour coverage and alerting crews during the nighttime hours.

To provide 24-hour emergency service from the new station location, RVFD needed an enhanced encoding system to provide dependable emergency alerting to the station. A complete USDD/G2 system, as opposed to the portable system, is not an option due to concerns modification to the temporary trailer station would cause. MFMD's portable USDD/G2 station alerting package provides the consistency desired and the enhanced system required to meet this dispatch partner's need.

As an interim solution until an IGA could be put in place, MFMD and RVFD entered a letter of agreement for the lease of the portable USDD/G2 station alerting package, effective February 19, 2021 and expiring April 20, 2021. Entering into the proposed one-year IGA will extend the lease of the portable USDD/G2 alerting package through the time period RVFD needs to complete the build of their second station and install a complete USDD/G2 system.

Alternatives

The City of Mesa and RVFD enter an IGA to lease MFMD's portable USDD/G2 station alerting package. This meets the needs of RVFD to provide 24-hour coverage from the temporary trailer station and provides alerting service consistent with that provided to all other stations in the MRDC system.

Alternatively, a telephone call from the MRDC to the station could be used; however, this will be out of normal operations for the MRDC and potentially cause delays in communication and response times.

Lastly, the City can choose not to enter an IGA with RVFD to lease the portable USDD/G2 system. No rent for this equipment will be obtained. RVFD's station will not be able to provide 24-hour coverage.

Fiscal Impact

The cost to build a single USDD/G2 portable station alerting package is about \$25,000.00. This will be offset by renting the unit to MRDC dispatch partners for \$500.00 per month. MFMD currently has a single USDD/G2 portable station alerting package available for lease.

RVFD will pay MFMD \$500.00 per month to lease the USDD/G2 portable station alerting package.

Coordinated With

The current proposal was reviewed by Mesa Fire and Medical Department staff and Mesa City Attorney's Office.