



North County Dispatch JPA NCDJPA Board of Directors Agenda

Staff Report: NCDJPA Board of Directors ITEM NO. 23/02
Date: February 22, 2023
Subject: Escondido Dispatch Services

Action Requested: Authorize

RECOMMENDATION: JPA Staff recommends the Board of Directors provide direction to the Administrator and designated chief(s) to negotiate financial terms with the City of Escondido about becoming a member agency.

JPA Staff recommends the Board of Directors authorize the Administrator, with approval from the Board of Chiefs, to overhire up to 3 Fire Communications Dispatcher positions if negotiations with the City of Escondido progress positively and all involved parties believe a formal request to join the JPA by the City of Escondido is forthcoming.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NCDJPA was formed on June 11, 1984. The founding members were the City of San Marcos, the City of Solana Beach, and Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District. Additional member agencies were added:

- 1986 - City of Encinitas
- 1986 - City of Vista
- 2003 - City of Carlsbad
- 2005 - North County Fire Protection District
- 2006 - City of Oceanside

Several non-voting contract agencies have joined, including: City of Del Mar in 2004, Pauma in 2011, Pala in 2012, and Rincon, San Pasqual & Valley Center in 2014.

BACKGROUND: There has been a desire to add the City of Escondido to NCDJPA for many years. They border 3 existing NCDJPA agencies and service levels would be increased for each of those areas on a daily basis, in addition to across the JPA's service area when larger incidents occur. Representatives from the JPA and the City of Escondido have met formally and informally a handful of times over the last 4 years to discuss this topic.

The addition of the City of Escondido as a member agency was a topic of discussion at the Board of Directors meetings in May and August 2019. The discussion included the feasibility of incentivizing the City of Escondido joining, including a discount of up to 100% for the first year of service.

As member agencies have joined NCDJPA, the agreements have varied. However, most have not had incentives and the member agencies began paying for services upon joining.

The City of Carlsbad is a notable exception. They received discounting of 60% over 3 years, but were not considered a full member until 5 years had passed. The City of Carlsbad also did not pay a buy-in fee, where other agencies (including North County Fire and the City of Oceanside) did pay a buy-in fee.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The Administrator has been working with the City of Escondido since late 2022 to put together information to assist the Escondido Fire Department as they conducted internal discussions with stakeholders to identify whether there was support to join the JPA.

Through these discussions, the City of Escondido has identified support for joining the JPA throughout the executive levels of the city manager's office, fire department, and police department.

The City of Escondido would like to defer or have waived as much of the initial and first year costs, including the full amounts, if possible.

FISCAL IMPACT:

If the City of Escondido were to join the JPA and begin paying for service, other member and contract agencies would see their assessments reduced by an average of more than 12% annually. Deferring or waiving any portion of first year costs for the City of Escondido would not increase assessments for existing JPA agencies.

JPA Staff have identified the need to hire 3 additional Fire Communications Dispatchers, at a current annual cost of \$390,000, to handle the additional workload that would come with the City of Escondido joining the JPA. This would be an actual cost that if waived, would be borne by existing JPA agencies. If these start-up costs were deferred, Undesignated Reserve funds could be used to fund the new positions until reimbursement from the City of Escondido is received.