



Legislation Text

File #: 24-0955, **Version:** 1

Office of Wildfire Preparedness and Resilience, a Division of the Chief Administrative Office, recommending the Board:

- 1) Approve and authorize the Board Chair to sign Agreement 8713 with Lake Valley Fire Protection District to provide defensible space inspection services, including education, outreach, and response to resident complaints for violations, within the Tahoe Basin in the amount of \$78,750 for the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025; and
- 2) Authorize the Purchasing Agent to execute any necessary amendments relating to Agreement 8713, excluding term extensions and increases to the not-to-exceed amount, contingent upon approval by County Counsel and Risk Management.

FUNDING: General Fund.

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

California Public Resources Code 4291 (PRC 4291) requires residents to clear hazardous vegetation on their property to provide "defensible space," against wildfire risk. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) identifies Defensible Space Inspection Areas, previously Target Hazard Areas, annually in which to conduct defensible space inspections and educate residents about their responsibilities under PRC 4291. El Dorado County Ordinance No. 5101, Chapter 8.09 Vegetation Management and Defensible Space, also establishes local requirements for maintaining defensible space. Following the Board's adoption of Chapter 8.09 in 2019, the County has modeled its inspection program after CAL FIRE's program by identifying County Emphasis Areas (CEAs) in which to conduct proactive and focused defensible space inspections on an annual basis.

In addition to preparing updates to the County's hazardous vegetation and defensible space requirements under Chapter 8.09 and working to enhance the County's Defensible Space Program, the Office of Wildfire Preparedness and Resilience (OWPR) Defensible Space Working Group is also tasked with identifying these inspection areas. For the upcoming CEA inspection cycle beginning July 2024, the group identified a total of six (6) CEAs, including one (1) in the Tahoe Basin. With the recent addition of two (2) permanent Defensible Space Inspectors, OWPR is positioned to conduct defensible space inspections for the five (5) CEAs on the West Slope as well as the property assessments for the Weber Creek Grant Project. However, staff have determined that due to the limited nature, seasonality, and locations of the work under this Agreement, the amount of work specific to the unincorporated area of the Tahoe Basin is not sufficient to warrant the addition of permanent staff. Lake Valley Fire has developed a strong and trusted working relationship with the communities in the Tahoe Basin. As such, staff are recommending that the Board find that it is more economically feasible to continue to contract with Lake Valley Fire to provide these services.

Under the proposed Agreement, services provided by Lake Valley Fire will include conducting inspections of all properties within the identified CEA on behalf of the County, investigating citizen complaints for violations in all unincorporated areas of the County within the Tahoe Basin and west to the area of Strawberry, hosting a community informational workshop(s) to provide property owners and residents education on how to meet defensible space requirements and protect their homes from

wildfire, and referring appropriate violations to the County for further action. Inspections conducted by Lake Valley Fire will be in accordance with Chapter 8.09, including any amendments thereto during the term of the Agreement.

ALTERNATIVES

The Board could choose not to approve the proposed Agreement with Lake Valley Fire Protection District and direct staff to evaluate other options to implement the defensible space program in the Tahoe Basin.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION

N/A

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

County Counsel, Procurement & Contracts.

CAO RECOMMENDATION / COMMENTS

Approve as recommended.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no increase to Net County Cost associated with the approval of this Agreement. Funding for these services has been included in the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Recommended Budget.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

Obtain the Board Chair's signature on one (1) copy of Agreement 8713 and return to CAO Fiscal, attention Kelley Lawrie.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT

N/A

CONTACT

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