

Agenda Report



MEETING DATE: Wednesday, November 6, 2024

TO: Revenue Measure Oversight Committee

FROM: FIRE CHIEF LOPEZ
ADMINISTRATIVE ANALYST MEYER

SUBJECT: FIRE DEPARTMENT STATUS REPORT FOR JULY 1, 2024,
THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2024

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is recommended that the Revenue Measure Oversight Committee approve, by motion, the Watsonville Fire Department status report for July 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024.

BACKGROUND:

The Watsonville Fire Department's (WFD) mission is to serve and safeguard the community through the protection of life and property. The WFD is dedicated to helping the youth in the community by being mentors and demonstrating the importance of community by exemplifying the WFD core values: Family, Integrity, Respect, Enthusiasm, Trust, Ethics, Attitude, and Maturity. The WFD is dedicated to the community and will provide the best service possible.

Measure Y

On June 3, 2014, Measure G was approved by Watsonville voters. The new tax went into effect on October 1, 2014. On March 3, 2020, Watsonville voters passed the Public Safety Sales Tax Measure (Measure Y), renewing the existing local sales tax to support public safety efforts in Watsonville.

The Revenue Measure has been instrumental in providing adequate staffing levels for the Fire department by increasing available staffing positions. The Measure has also provided for fire equipment, fire engines, and in 2019, a new aerial ladder truck. The Measure provided new personal protective equipment for personnel and updated rescue equipment. Prior to the Measure, WFD had to borrow fire engines from other local agencies because WFD engines were out of service; and WFD firefighters had to use equipment that was unreliable.

DISCUSSION:

During this period, Watsonville Fire Department (WFD) reports the following:

Staffing

Measure Y funding continues to nine (9) additional personnel- eight (8) firefighters and one (1) administrative staff person. Due to retirements and resignations in both the General Fund and Measure Y, as well as reduced interest in firefighting careers, the department has struggled to continually keep the nine allocated Measure Y positions filled. At the start of this reporting period, there is one firefighter position vacant. WFD continues to recruit qualified personnel.

Paramedic Training Program for EMTs

As part of the recruitment process, WFD is sponsoring three local EMTs through the Paramedic Core Course being offered through South Bay Regional Public Safety Training. Three candidates are participating in this program. The three participants began the Core Phase (Didactic) which is the first phase of the Paramedic Core Course on November 25, 2023. They began the Clinical Course (Hospital Internship) which is the second phase of the Paramedic Core Course on May 1, 2024 which ran through July 12, 2024. The third and final phase began July 14, 2024. The anticipated completion date is December 21, 2024. Upon successful completion and paramedic certification, the participants will begin a 16-week fire academy in February 2025.



Summer Youth Academy



Measure Y funds were used to hold a summer youth academy session during this reporting period from July 22- August 2, 2024. There were 12 participants. This session was in partnership with Pajaro Valley Unified School District's (PVUSD) Expanded Learning Program. This program limited applicants to incoming Freshman thru Juniors from high schools in PVUSD's area. The session ran for a period of two weeks, Monday through Friday 8am-4pm. All 12 attendees successfully graduated from the academy.

Supporting the Mental Health of First Responders

Measure Y funds continue to provide mental health support to first responders and their families. Mental health clinicians familiar with the fire service are available to fire personnel and their families when needed.

Apparatus and Equipment

Measure Y funds were used for the following apparatus and equipment related purchases:

- Wildland Pants
- Two staff vehicles

The two staff vehicles purchased replace the current battalion chief command vehicle, a 2015 Dodge Ram 2500 SLT, which will be used to replace a 2002 Chevy Tahoe, the current out of county vehicle; and a 2015 Ford Explorer that was sold to Watsonville Police. The funds from that sale will be used to offset some of the costs of the new truck.

Building Maintenance

Measure Y funds continue to support the renovations needed at the fire stations. Work is continuing to move forward to upgrade the restrooms at Fire Station 1 to make them gender neutral and allow for privacy while showering. Staff will present a staff report to City Council to receive authorization to go out to bid. It is anticipated that renovations will begin in 2025.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

- 02-Infrastructure & Environment- Measure Y funds are used to address the need to repair the infrastructure necessary for fire department operations.
- 05-Public Safety - Measure Y funds are used to ensure adequate staffing and equipment needs are being met for fire department operations.
- 06-Community Engagement & Well-Being- Measure Y funds are used to increase community engagement with all members of the community.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact. Measure Y funds are being utilized as directed by the voters.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

None

ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (If any):

None