



County Executive Office

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NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

BOARD AGENDA MEMO

MEETING DATE: September 27, 2022

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Alison Lehman, County Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Memorandum of Understanding between the County of Nevada and the City of Grass Valley to memorialize funding commitments to support emergency services programs and projects serving District III residents

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the attached Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) between the County of Nevada (“County”) and the City of Grass Valley (“City”), contingent upon voter approval of the Nevada County Wildfire Prevention, Emergency Services, and Disaster Readiness Transactions and Use Tax (“Measure V”), and authorize the Chair of the Board of Supervisors to sign the MOU upon approval by the City.

FUNDING:

If Measure V is approved by voters in the November 8, 2022, General Election, funds would come from a one-half percent transaction and use tax (commonly referred to as a sales tax).

Twelve million dollars is estimated to be generated annually for ten years through the sales tax to provide critical resources needed to save lives, reduce the threat of wildfires, and improve all-hazards disaster readiness and evacuation safety, and other general government services.

The purpose of the MOU would be to memorialize funding commitments to support programs and projects serving City and District III residents. The calculation would be based on an

aggregate value that includes direct financial allocations to the City, direct benefits delivered and/or based in District III, and indirect benefits from shared services.

The MOU would memorialize the County's investment of thirteen-point-six percent (13.6%) of the value of annual Measure revenues (or \$1,632,000 based on estimated total revenue of \$12 Million) held within the General Fund on programs and projects that directly benefit the City and District III.

The methodology by which this allocation shall be achieved is described below:

The County will pay 7.5% of the total annual revenue (or \$900,000 based on estimated total revenue of \$12 Million) to the City to be spent on programs and projects that fall into the categories of preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery, and are in alignment with approved local or regional plans and/or County plans such as the Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan, Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, evacuation plans, etc. These funds may be used to, without limitation, provide prevention and mitigation services such as fuels reduction on public properties and roadways (such as those of the City, County, schools, airport, special districts, and critical infrastructure including hospitals), implement defensible space programs, and other eligible uses within City limits or its sphere of influence.

The County will spend 6.1% of the total annual revenue (or \$732,000 based on estimated total revenue of \$12 Million) on programs, services and/or projects that are delivered and located in District III, as well as indirect programs and services such as but not limited to Countywide planning, emergency communications, outreach and education programs, etc.

The allocation for District III shall require citizen oversight, mandatory financial audits, and reports to the public consistent with practices for the rest of the fund.

BACKGROUND:

In January 2022, the County Board of Supervisors reaffirmed "Emergency Preparedness" as a priority objective. The Board directed staff to engage key stakeholders in a needs assessment to identify the gap between what we are doing now and what we need to be doing to make our community safer.

CEO Roundtable:

Working together, the CEO Roundtable, which included City of Grass Valley representatives City Manager Tim Kiser and Fire Chief Mark Buttron, participated in the needs assessment process.

The CEO Roundtable identified the Measure's purpose "to save lives, reduce the threat of wildfires, and improve all-hazards disaster readiness and evacuation safety."

The CEO Roundtable developed a draft expenditure plan based on an estimated \$12 Million in annual sales tax revenue. That plan included targeted allocations in the following areas: Planning / Preparedness / Prevention 10%, Mitigation 65%, Response 20%, and Recovery 5%.

These target allocations may vary from year to year depending on project readiness, fluctuations in sales tax revenues, and the need to be flexible in the event of a major disaster. Fund balances may be carried over when necessary to fund large-scale projects such as a major fuel break project. The recovery fund should be allowed to build overtime to support large-scale efforts when necessary.

Based on the principle of shared services, the measure envisions a commitment to coordination and collaboration with countywide partners. This would include convening partners for necessary all-hazards planning; advocating and seeking federal state, and regional funding; contributing matching funds to support prioritized projects and programs; and providing coordinated public outreach/education and PIO communications.

Eligible projects and programs with shared benefits in each category may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Planning, Preparedness, and Prevention includes required Countywide, municipal, and regional emergency plan development with regular updates to guide evacuation and all-hazards programs and projects; public education and outreach to residents and visitors to foster self-reliance, emergency preparedness, and evacuation planning; support for Firewise communities and neighborhoods; coordinated outreach to reduce wildfire risk by navigating unhoused people to shelter and services; and training and advocacy.

Mitigation includes Countywide and local hazardous vegetation reduction projects using science-based treatment and maintenance best practices to remove flammable brush and other fuels along roads, around municipalities and residential communities, near critical infrastructure, in recreation areas and open spaces with trails, parks, and camping areas; public safety capital improvements and infrastructure projects such as public safety buildings, fire suppression and water storage systems, and heavy equipment; green waste disposal facilities and programs; evacuation safety route improvements such as removing fuels and constructing turnouts, roadway/shoulder widening, signage, etc.; defensible space and home hardening programs including education, enforcement, and abatement; and grants for neighborhood projects and programs such as expanded chipping programs and training programs, and financial assistance to low-income seniors, people with disabilities, and other residents with access and functional needs.

Response includes support for wildfire prevention and response capabilities but not fire suppression; emergency services communications capabilities including early warning and alert systems; sheltering support and capability improvements for people and animals/livestock; and first responder evacuation logistics support, tools, and training.

Recovery includes recovery coordination; case management to help those impacted by disasters; a recovery fund to address survivors' immediate needs; and a cleanup/debris management program to support rebuilding efforts.

Program Management:

The staffing plan imbedded in the measure is for direct implementation (read “boots on the ground”) of measure funded projects and programs. Measure funds are not intended to cover County general overhead expenses or senior administrator salaries and benefits.

Staff estimates that new staff positions may be needed to manage programs such as countywide planning, engagement and outreach, grant writing and management, homeless navigation, and emergency communications. Staff will also be needed to implement fuel reduction projects, and complete evacuation route improvement projects.

Citizens Oversight Committee (COC):

To ensure accountability and transparency, the Board of Supervisors will appoint a Citizens Oversight Committee. The committee would consist of seven members including one appointed by each Board member from their district and two at-large members selected by the entire Board.

The COC's roles and responsibilities would include reporting annually to the Board of Supervisors and public on the receipt and expenditures of Measure revenue, reviewing revenue and expenditures for conformity to the text of the Measure, and reporting any inconsistencies. The COC would not weigh in on spending priorities nor direct staff or officials.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC):

The County would create a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to recommend funding priorities as part of the County's annual budget cycle and be staffed by the Office of Emergency Services, and subject to final approval by the Board of Supervisors.

The TAC would have both an Eastern and a Western County component, which would meet jointly and separately. The western TAC (WTAC) membership will include two seats for City of Grass Valley staff, appointed by the City Council.

The WTAC membership would be comprised of multi-disciplinary subject matter experts (e.g., first responders, firefighters, law enforcement, conservation, social services, etc.). The WTAC's recommendations would be based on expertise, adherence to approved plans, and commitment to cooperation and collaboration.

The City may submit recommendations or requests to the WTAC for the expenditure of funds as the WTAC develops its annual expenditure recommendations.

Therefore, staff recommends the Board:

Approve the attached MOU and authorize the Board Chair to sign the MOU upon approval by the City of Grass Valley.

Item Initiated by: Caleb Dardick, Assistant County Executive Officer

Approved by: Alison Lehman, County Executive Officer