

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 2022**

**MINUTE ORDER NO. 1**

**SUBJECT: ENSURING ADEQUATE AERIAL FIRE SUPPRESSION SUPPORT THROUGH THE ACQUISITION OF A TWIN-ENGINE HELICOPTER (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

**OVERVIEW**

Climate change has led to our region getting hotter and drier and the risk of serious wildfires continues to grow. We have seen historic fires throughout our state and the western United States in recent years and we must continue to do everything we can to adequately prepare for the very real risk of wildfire in San Diego. That includes taking every possible step to make sure that our first responders have the regional assets they need to fight fires on a 24-hour basis.

Aerial fire suppression during a wildfire is a critical component of the region's overall firefighting strategy. The current San Diego County aerial fleet consists of single-engine helicopters that are built out of 1960s and 1970s airframes. Twin-engine helicopters are more efficient at fighting fires as they have the ability to fly at night and carry a larger amount of water. The entire fleet of single-engine helicopters must eventually be replaced. Today's proposal, the acquisition of a twin-engine helicopter to add to the fleet, is the first step in this replacement plan.

The current fleet of helicopters used by San Diego County is manufactured by Bell. Operating a fleet of helicopters and equipment from a single manufacturer is more efficient and provides cost savings by standardizing flight training for pilots and costs for tooling and maintenance training.

This is a request to authorize the Director of the Department of Purchasing and Contracting to issue a competitive solicitation for the first acquisition, a single-source purchase, of one Bell 412 EPX helicopter, including outfitting. This is also a request to award new contracts and amend current contracts for Bell parts, components, repairs, and maintenance services, to award new contracts and amend current contracts for helicopter pilot and mechanic training and certifications, and to award new contracts and amend current contracts for the outfitting, parts, and components, and repair and maintenance of the Bell 412 EPX helicopter.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**CHAIR NATHAN FLETCHER**

1. In accordance with Section 401, et. seq., of the County Administrative Code, authorize the Director, Department of Purchasing and Contracting to enter into negotiations with Bell; and subject to successful negotiations and determination of a fair and reasonable price, award a contract for one Bell 412 EPX Helicopter and outfitting with standardized Sheriff equipment, and to amend the contract as needed to reflect changes to services and funding, subject to the approval of the Sheriff.
2. In accordance with Board Policy A-87, Competitive Procurement, approve and authorize the Director, Department of Purchasing and Contracting to enter into negotiations with Bell; and subject to successful negotiations and determination of a fair and reasonable price, award new contracts and amend current contracts for Bell Helicopter parts, components, outfitting and repairs and maintenance services for a five-year period.

3. In accordance with Board Policy A-87, Competitive Procurement, approve and authorize the Director, Department of Purchasing and Contracting to enter negotiations with Bell; and subject to successful negotiations and determination of a fair and reasonable price, award new contracts and amend current contracts for helicopter pilot and mechanic training and certifications for a five-year period.
4. In accordance with Board Policy A-87, Competitive Procurement, approve and authorize the Director, Department of Purchasing and Contracting to enter into negotiations with Bell Authorized Distributors and Service Centers, Original Equipment Manufacturers such as FLIR, The Civil Aerospace Division of Rolls Royce, Pratt & Whitney and uniquely Specialized Federal Aviation Administration Repair Facilities, and subject to successful negotiations and determination of a fair and reasonable price, award new contracts and amend current contracts for the outfitting, parts and components, and repair and maintenance of the Sheriff's current and future fleet of helicopters, for a five year period to support the mission of the Sheriff's ASTREA (Aerial Support to Regional Enforcement Areas) Program. Contracts shall be amended as needed to reflect changes in services and funding, subject to the approval of the Sheriff.

### **EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

Much of the unincorporated areas of San Diego County, where San Diego County Fire provides protection, consist of disadvantaged communities. We must ensure that these vulnerable communities are protected from the impacts of wildfires. Today's action to purchase a new twin-engine helicopter will help protect these areas and the entire region.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Funds for this request will be included in the Fiscal Year 2022-23 CAO Operational Plan Change Letter in the Sheriff's Department. If approved, this will result in estimated costs and revenue of \$16.0 million. The funding sources are unassigned General Fund fund balance of \$8,000,000 resulting from expenditure savings and available Proposition 172 fund balance of \$8,000,000.

### **BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

Adequate fire protection protects the residential and business assets of the San Diego region.

### **ACTION:**

ON MOTION of Supervisor Desmond, seconded by Supervisor Vargas, the Board of Supervisors took action as recommended, on Consent.

AYES: Vargas, Anderson, Lawson-Remer, Fletcher, Desmond

State of California)  
County of San Diego) §

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Original entered in the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors.

ANDREW POTTER  
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors



**Signed**  
by Andrew Potter