

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
TUESDAY, MAY 23, 2023**

MINUTE ORDER NO. 19

**SUBJECT: REIMAGINING AMBULANCE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES IN THE
COUNTY'S RURAL COMMUNITIES (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

OVERVIEW

On December 5, 2017 (5), the Board of Supervisors approved a revised ambulance transportation model in the County's unincorporated communities known as the Unified Service Area (USA). The programmatic changes consolidated the three (3) Exclusive Operating Areas and seven (7) undesignated or non-exclusive operating areas where the County has the responsibility to ensure ambulance services, into one service area wherein a provider(s) could be contracted. The County contracted with one private ambulance vendor to provide at least ten (10) paramedic, Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulances and one part-time ALS ambulance. Despite the enhancements that came with unifying and expanding service, the remote location of communities, low transport revenue, and paramedic staffing challenges still hinder the viability of the current ambulance transportation model.

On October 4, 2021, the State of California enacted Assembly Bill (AB) 389 which included provisions for a county Board of Supervisors to contract with a fire agency for ambulance services and for the fire agency to subcontract service, in whole or in part, to a private provider, as codified into California Health and Safety Code (HSC) Sections 1797.230-231. On December 13, 2022 (1), the Board directed the Chief Administrative Officer to hire a consultant to evaluate the optimal ambulance transportation service model(s) within the USA given the statutory change, along with, as of January 1, 2023, increased Medi-Cal payments to *government-provided* ambulance services. San Diego County Fire completed a competitive procurement for a consultant and contracted with Citygate Associates, LLC (Citygate) to conduct the review. Citygate was tasked with evaluating fiscal sustainability, patient care, and operational objectives of a future ambulance services model. To leverage the best combination of service options and revenues newly available, and to ensure the County meets the emergency medical services needs of vulnerable communities, Citygate is recommending that San Diego County Fire Protection District (SDCFPD) assume responsibility as the ambulance service manager/provider for the USA when the current private ambulance services contract in the USA ends.

The actions in today's Board Letter and accompanying SDCFPD Board of Directors agenda item provide the authority to subcontract, as needed, for private ambulance services and/or in combination add firefighter/paramedic ambulance staffing. The final service model to be implemented will meet the standards established by the Board on December 13, 2022 (1). Today's action authorizes a contract between the County of San Diego and the SDCFPD to manage and/or provide emergency, non-emergency, interfacility, and special event/standby ambulance services in the areas where the County provides those services, or may in the future, consistent with California and Federal authorities and new California HSC Sections 1797.230-231. The contract between County and SDCFPD will be effective upon the expiration of the existing ambulance services contract in the USA.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Authorize the Chief Administrative Officer or designee, on behalf of the County of San Diego, to enter into a contract with the San Diego County Fire Protection District (SDCFPD) to exclusively provide and/or manage emergency ambulance services in the areas where the County has, or will have, the responsibility for ambulance transportation services in compliance with California Health and Safety Code Sections 1797.230-231 and approve any amendments to the contract. SDCFPD may provide ambulance services, in whole or in part, through a written subcontract with a private ambulance service, in compliance with Health and Safety Code Section 1797.231.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Advanced (paramedic) and Basic (Emergency Medical Technician) Life Support ambulances are a critical component of an emergency medical services system reducing emergency medical health disparities in the USA's unincorporated areas. San Diego County Fire will continue working with Citygate Associates, LLC to review Emergency Medical Services incident data to determine how staffing patterns and ambulance deployment models will provide for equitable services across the Unified Service Area. County Fire will track data and outcomes for quality of timely care by race, gender, and geography to support positive outcomes for all residents.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Implementing the new ambulance transportation model provides for a just and equitable access to County resources. This action also supports efforts for our services to reflect the County's values and priorities.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with today's recommendations in the current fiscal year. Fiscal impacts will be determined when staff evaluates the final report from Citygate and staffing options and will return to the Board for consideration and approval of recommendations.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ACTION:

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

AYES: Vargas, Anderson, Lawson-Remer, Desmond

ABSENT: (District 4 Seat Vacant)

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