



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 16-1399A, Version: 1

Subject:

Resolution establishing a Water Rescue Grant Program.

Recommended Action:

Sitting as the Emergency Medical Services Authority, approve the resolution to establish a countywide Water Rescue Grant Program.

Strategic Plan:

Ensure Public Health, Safety, and Welfare

2.1 Provide planning, coordination, prevention, and protective services to ensure a safe and secure community

Deliver First Class Services to the Public and Our Customers

5.3 Ensure effective and efficient delivery of county services and support

Summary:

In an effort to improve and incentivize capabilities across the County regarding Water Rescue to include needed vessels, equipment and training; there is a need to establish a grant program with our municipal Fire Departments and Fire Districts. In each geographic service area there are different needs and levels of capability. Through this program and the efforts of an ongoing committee, the goal is to establish geo-diverse capabilities as the strategic plan evolves.

EMS & Fire Administration and the Pinellas County Fire Chief's Association established a Water Rescue committee. The committee has met many times over the last year working on a comprehensive plan, or strategy for Water Rescue improvements.

The recommendation is to establish a countywide Water Rescue Grant Program by Resolution to allow the implementation of a two year plan that will address operating and maintenance costs incurred by the Cities and Fire Districts. Such funding support will allow the Cities and Fire Districts to focus on training improvements. Further, funding to provide equipment and training will support significant program improvements.

The Pinellas County Fire Chiefs Association and the Pinellas County EMS Advisory Council support the establishment of this program and have provided letters of support.

Background Information:

The Cities and Fire Districts have provided various levels of water rescue through their Fire Rescue departments since their inception. Throughout that time, the Fire Service has worked closely with law enforcement, the US Coast Guard, and Florida Fish & Wildlife; however aligning fire-fighting and EMS capabilities to calls for service is paramount. Water Rescue assets and response needs are varied and complex due to the many types of hazards and situations faced by Fire Rescue personnel to include both scenarios and water body types.

Through this program there is a need to provide funding support for operating and maintenance costs; to provide equipment such as thermal cameras to improve searching for victims in the water; to provide rapid diver equipment and training to improve the rescue of victims in sinking or submerged vehicles; and search and rescue and other marine operations type training. A grant approach is being utilized in lieu of an Interlocal agreement to aid in the strategic alignment of capabilities and to incentive participation across the County's Fire Rescue providers.

Fiscal Impact:

Appropriation for operating, maintenance, equipment and training is budgeted within the Emergency Medical Services Fund in the amounts of \$150,000 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-2016 and \$300,000 in FY 2016-2017.

Funding is retroactive to FY 2015-2016.

Staff Member Responsible:

Craig A. Hare, Director, EMS & Fire Administration

Partners:

Pinellas County Fire Chiefs' Association
All Municipal Fire Rescue Agencies and Independent Fire Districts
Pinellas County EMS Advisory Council

Attachments:

Pinellas County Water Rescue Grant Program Resolution
Letter of Support - Pinellas County Fire Chiefs' Association
Letter of Support - Pinellas County EMS Advisory Council