COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 7/23/2024

File #: 24-1069

To: Board of Supervisors

From: County Administrative Office

Agenda Section: Consent

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:
Resolution Authorizing Execution of Cooperative Fire Programs - Fire Protection Reimbursement Agreement No. 1CA06883 with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Regarding the Provision of Fire Protection Services within County Service Area No. 4 for an Amount Not to Exceed $994,571.00

RECOMMENDATION(S):
That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Waive the requirements of the Humboldt County Nuclear-Free Ordinance with regard to Cooperative Fire Programs - Fire Protection Reimbursement Agreement No. 1CA06883 with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection;
2. Adopt the attached resolution which authorizes the County Administrative Officer, or a designee thereof, to execute Cooperative Fire Programs - Fire Protection Reimbursement Agreement No. 1CA06883 with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the provision of fire protection services within County Service Area No. 4 for the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2027, and any amendments thereto, along with any and all other certifications, agreements and documents required or deemed necessary or appropriate for the County of Humboldt to accept and secure its obligations thereunder;
3. Direct the Clerk of the Board to return one (1) fully executed certified copy of the attached resolution to the County Administrative Office for submission to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection; and
4. Direct the Human Resources Director, or a designee thereof, to provide the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection with any and all necessary certificates of insurance.

STRATEGIC PLAN:
The recommended actions support the following areas of the Board of Supervisors' Strategic Plan:

Area of Focus: Safe & Healthy Communities
Strategic Plan Category: 1001 -Support and sustain partnerships between public safety and partner agencies to enhance public safety in our communities

DISCUSSION:
For many years, the County of Humboldt has contracted with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection ("CalFIRE") to provide fire protection services in County Service Area No. 4 during the non-fire season. County Service Area No. 4 includes the community of Westhaven, the unincorporated area surrounding the City of Trinidad and the unincorporated area adjacent to U.S. Highway 101 stretching approximately ten (10) miles north of Trinidad. The residents of County Service Area No. 4 formed an assessment district to pay for fire protection services provided by CalFIRE on a year-round basis. The maximum benefit assessment was approved by property owners through an election conducted on May 6, 2003 (Item F-3). The maximum assessment per benefit unit is currently set at $29.00 plus an annually adjusted inflation factor based on the consumer price index.

CalFIRE has offered to continue to provide mutually advantageous fire and emergency services through Cooperative Fire Programs - Fire Protection Reimbursement Agreement No. 1CA06883. Cooperative Fire Programs - Fire Protection Reimbursement Agreement No. 1CA06883 with CalFIRE pertains to the provision of fire protection services within County Service Area No. 4 and funds the employment of three firefighters, including operating expenses, at the CalFIRE station located in Trinidad. Please note, Exhibit E of the agreement (Attachment 2) was intentionally left blank.

Residents within County Service Area No. 4 continue to experience dramatic increases in home and fire insurance rates and while Cooperative Fire Programs - Fire Protection Reimbursement Agreement No. 1CA06883 with CalFIRE provides dedicated fire service for seven (7) months of the year (estimated non-fire season) and mutual aid for the remainder of the year, insurance companies do not factor in this protection service to their ratemaking processes. Staff continue to work with local fire agencies, the City of Trinidad, the Trinidad Rancheria and other planning agencies to develop strategies to address this dynamic for the benefit of residents. To this end, Cooperative Fire Programs - Fire Protection Reimbursement Agreement No. 1CA06883 with CalFIRE can be terminated with a 1-year notice period should an alternative be developed. It should be noted that Cooperative Fire Programs - Fire Protection Reimbursement Agreement No. 1CA06883 with CalFIRE comes to the Board after the start date thereof due to inadvertent delays that occurred during the contract development process.

Therefore, staff recommends that the Board approve the attached resolution, which authorizes the County Administrative Officer, or a designee thereof, to execute Cooperative Fire Programs - Fire Protection Reimbursement Agreement No. 1CA06883 with CalFIRE regarding the provision of fire protection services within County Service Area No. 4 for the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2027, and any amendments thereto, along with any and all other certifications, agreements and documents required or deemed necessary or appropriate for the County of Humboldt to accept and secure its obligations thereunder. It should be noted that the Board must waive the requirements of the Humboldt County Nuclear-Free Ordinance in order to adopt the attached resolution, since CalFIRE will not modify Cooperative Fire Programs - Fire Protection Reimbursement Agreement No. 1CA06883 to incorporate the requirements thereof.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:
County Service Area #4 Property Assessment Fund 3970; General Fund

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Expenditures (1100-281)	**FY24-25**	**FY25-26 Projected***	**FY26-27 Projected***
Budgeted Expenses	$315,486.00	$331,261.00	$347,824.00
Total Expenditures	**$315,486.00**	**$331,261.00**	**$347,824.00**
Funding Sources (1100-281)	**FY24-25**	**FY25-26 Projected***	**FY26-27 Projected***
Fees/Other (CSA#4 Property Assessment)	$216,823.00	$223,328.00	$230,028.00
General Fund	$98,663.00	$107,933.00	$117,796.00
Total Funding Sources	**$315,486**	**$331,261.00**	**$347,824.00**

**Projected amounts are estimates and are subject to change.*

Cooperative Fire Programs - Fire Protection Reimbursement Agreement No. 1CA06883 with CalFIRE has a maximum amount payable of $994,571.00 for the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2027, which equates to an increase of approximately $51,000.00 annually from the prior year's cost. However, if the Board does not appropriate sufficient funds for the current year or any subsequent years covered under Cooperative Fire Programs - Fire Protection Reimbursement Agreement No. 1CA06883, which results in an inability to pay the state for the services specified in therein, it will terminate pursuant to a 1-year notice provision, or the state may amend the contract and lower the amount payable.

Funding for Cooperative Fire Programs - Fire Protection Reimbursement Agreement No. 1CA06883 with CalFIRE has been budgeted in the Forester and Warden budget unit (1100-281) for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 and will be included in subsequent years. Approximately $670,179.00 of the costs associated with the provision of fire protection services will be covered by the benefit assessment fees collected by County Service Area No. 4 (800600). The remaining costs, which total $324,392.00, will be the responsibility of the Humboldt County General Fund. It should be noted that the maximum payable amount has not been reached in any year for at least ten (10) years as expenses are based on seven (7) months of service CalFIRE covers staffing costs during fire

season, which has typically lasted for a longer amount of time than the contract assumes.

STAFFING IMPACT:
The County Administrative Office manages Cooperative Fire Programs - Fire Protection Reimbursement Agreement No. 1CA06883 with CalFIRE, which includes exploring alternatives to fire service within County Service Area No. 4 and issues dealing with the related benefit assessment. Measure Z also funds planning work done by staff within the Public Works - Natural Resources division for county-wide fire services, including issues related to County Service Area No. 4. The County of Humboldt does not operate any fire departments.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:
City of Trinidad, Trinidad Rancheria, Trinidad Volunteer Fire Department, Westhaven Volunteer Fire

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:
The Board May choose not to execute Cooperative Fire Programs - Fire Protection Reimbursement Agreement No. 1CA06883 with CalFIRE regarding the provision of fire protection services within County Service Area No. 4. However, this alternative is not recommended as the County of Humboldt is responsible for ensuring fire protection in County Service Area No. 4.

ATTACHMENTS:
1. Resolution Authorizing Execution of Cooperative Fire Programs - Fire Protection Reimbursement Agreement No. 1CA06883 with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Regarding the Provision of Fire Protection Services within County Service Area No. 4
2. CalFIRE Agreement Cooperative Fire Programs - Fire Protection Reimbursement Agreement No. 1CA06883 with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Regarding the Provision of Fire Protection Services within County Service Area No. 4

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:
Meeting of: June 15, 2021
File No.: 21-704