



County of Monterey

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Board Report

File #: BC 24-033, **Version:** 1

Support authorizing and directing the Auditor-Controller to amend the FY 2023-2024 Adopted Budget for the Emergency Communications Department (028-1520-EME004-8507) to increase appropriations by \$567,829 funded with prior year's surplus being held in fund balance.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Budget Committee support adopting a resolution to authorize and direct the Auditor-Controller to amend the FY 2023-2024 Adopted Budget for the Emergency Communications Department (028-1520-EME004-8507) to increase appropriations by \$567,829 funded with prior year's surplus being held in fund balance.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

The Monterey County Emergency Communications Department is a consolidated Public Safety Answering Point for 9-1-1 emergency and non-emergency calls as well as a radio dispatch facility serving 28 law enforcement, fire protection, and emergency medical response agencies throughout Monterey County.

Source of Prior Year's Surplus

The Department ended Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-23 with a surplus of \$567,829 for Dispatch and Call-taking operations in Fund 028 which resulted from:

Surplus Revenue

- \$85,092 of Investment Income from interest on fund balance (\$77,892 over budget).
- \$28,437 of unbudgeted late fees collected on Dispatch Billing (nothing budgeted).
- \$20,451 recovery of FY2019-20 Public Safety Sales Tax (Prop 172).

Expenditure Savings/Delays

- \$428,102 Salary and benefits savings for vacant positions and delays in the security fence project at 1322 Natividad Road which houses the Department of Emergency Management and the Emergency Communications Department.

Need for Budget Increase

The Emergency Communications Department Executive Board has reviewed and approved this action and the Department requests that the Budget committee support adding this fund balance to our current year appropriations. Without this budget increase, the Department forecasts to finish the fiscal year short in personnel costs, equipment, and potentially a capital improvement project.

Personnel Costs

For years the Department has been chronically short staffed in the Dispatcher job classes with hiring efforts resulting in limited to no net headcount increase. In Fiscal Year 2023-24 the Department has made it a primary goal to increase hiring and have been very successful. Unfortunately, employee retention continues to be a problem. Contributing factors to this hiring success have been the wage study conducted on Dispatcher classifications resulting in a ~17% raise, holding more recruitments and academies, and advertising for job

openings in local movie theaters. The department has been able to more than triple the number of new hires in 2023 vs the prior year.

The direct cost of hiring and releasing a Dispatcher to call-taking status is approximately \$34,000 to \$35,000. It can take 2-3 times this amount to full train a dispatcher and promote them to Dispatcher II. While some increased hiring was budgeted for, the success of the recent hiring efforts was not fully anticipated. Hiring is planned to continue at a similar pace through 2024 because the Department still has 10 vacant dispatcher positions and 3 vacant shift supervisor positions. In 2023, 27 employees were hired and 18 employees separated. The separation were comprised of 12 trainees with an average tenure of 6 months and 5 fully trained dispatchers with an average tenure of over 9 years, and one administrative position. 5 were lost to agencies with less overtime or higher pay.

Several new personnel costs have been added during this fiscal year that were not included in the budget. These include: ~\$10,000 for a retiree to return to train the department's new Administrative Secretary and assist in a significant backlog of retro pays that were not completed in the last fiscal year. ~\$38,000 for on-call pay. ~\$8,000 for dispatch staff enrolled in PERS Platinum. Special Assignment pay of \$15,000 to employees who are awaiting position studies from HR.

Hardware Costs

The Department maintains critical infrastructure that requires both hardware and software. The costs for critical server replacements have exceeded what the department planned. The scope increased after discovery sessions with the vendor and IT staff resulted in the need for additional network hardware and software licensing.

Capital Project

The Security Fence around 1322 Natividad Road was originally budgeted to be completed in FY2022-23 but the majority of project costs were not expended that year and have been pushed to the current fiscal year.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The Emergency Communications Department Executive Board has reviewed and approved this action. The County budget office has reviewed this recommendation.

FINANCING:

This action will not result in any additional cost to the general fund, any County Departments, or any public safety agency served by the Department. This proposal does not impact the reserve balance, or the FY2023-24 reserve contribution. The Emergency Communications Dispatch Reserve has a projected balance of \$2,369,717 at the end of FY2023-24 which includes a \$329,000 budgeted contribution in FY2023-24. This is 16.4% of the FY24 operating budget before this budget increase and the ECD Executive Board has approved a policy to target a balance of 15% of the operating budget.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

This action meets the Board's Public Safety Strategic Initiatives and demonstrates the County's commitment to meeting the Board's strategic initiative of Public Safety and Administration that supports the mission of Monterey

County.

Mark a check to the related Board of Supervisors Strategic Initiatives

- Economic Development
- Administration
- Health & Human Services
- Infrastructure
- Public Safety

Prepared by: John Vaught, Finance Manager II, x8883

Approved by: Lee Ann Magoski, Director of Emergency Communications, x8880

Attachments:
Budget Committee Report