



CONSENT CALENDAR

City of San Bernardino Request for Council Action

Date: June 4, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

From: Bill Gallardo, Interim City Manager
Darren Goodman, Chief of Police

Department: Police

Subject: **Adopt Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to execute a contract with the County of San Bernardino for the acceptance of funds toward 75% of the purchase of Unmanned Aerial Systems for a Drone First Responder Program (All Wards)**

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Mayor and City Council of the City of San Bernardino, California, adopt Resolution No. 2025-303, authorizing:

1. The City Manager to execute a contract with the County of San Bernardino for the acceptance of \$562,500 from the County Board of Supervisors, for the purchase of 75% of Unmanned Aerial Systems and equipment for a Drone First Responder Program.
2. The Director of Finance and Management Services to amend the FY 2025/26 operating budget for the amount of \$562,500 in both revenue and expenditures.

Executive Summary

The County of San Bernardino Board of Supervisors, more specifically Supervisor Joe Baca, is desirous of providing the City of San Bernardino Police Department with 75% of the funding for the purchase of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and equipment, to assist in the creation of a Drone First Responder Program (DFR). The amount authorized by the Board of Supervisors toward this purchase is \$562,500. This amount will be needed to create this program for the San Bernardino Police Department. The UAS systems will be used throughout the City of San Bernardino for calls for service response; emergency or disaster response; search and rescue operations; tactical incidents; crime scene mapping; and as an aerial asset when San Bernardino Sheriff's Department Aviation is unavailable.

Background

Since 2019, the San Bernardino Police Department has successfully, deployed Unmanned Aerial Systems during patrol operations. The UAS systems are deployed by a trained Part 107 Police Officer, at a scene, to locate suspects, missing persons, or identify emergency hazards for citizens and SBPD staff. These deployments occur often, with a Police Officer pilot on scene at an incident. The range is limited due to the current FAA visual line of sight requirement by the pilot and the capability of the UAS systems currently in use.

Discussion

Law Enforcement nationwide is continuing to expand their Unmanned Aerial Systems Drone First Responder programs. Cities such as Beverly Hills, Chula Vista, Santa Monica, Las Vegas, New York, and many other large and small cities and counties are employing DFR programs. These UAS systems are filling the gaps of staffing shortages and call for service volumes that are overwhelming some agencies.

Locally, agencies in the Inland Empire are currently developing DFR programs. Fontana and Ontario have both entered contracts with vendors for the purchase of these systems, to include training, maintenance, and FAA Beyond Visual Line of Sight waivers. They have recognized the capacity of this technology to increase public safety and the efficiency and effectiveness of the agencies.

The San Bernardino Police Department will use these funds to purchase 75% of the equipment needed to professionally initiate a DFR program. This will not only include the purchase of the UAS systems, but also the docking stations, maintenance agreements, training for staff, pilot station construction, and assistance in obtaining the Beyond Visual Line of Sight FAA waiver. These are all key components to the successful implementation of a DFR program. The remaining 25% of funding for this program, \$187,500, will be allocated from the FY 2024/25, Citizens' Option for Public Safety (COPS) funds, which acceptance, obligation, and expenditure, was approved at the May 21, 2025, MCC meeting per Resolution No. 2025-296.

The trained FAA Part 107 pilot will be stationed inside the Police Department's Real Time Information Center and will immediately deploy to scenes up to 6 miles away. The UAS system will arrive at a scene prior to the officer, or possibly before the incident is even dispatched. Once there, the pilot can use the UAS system's camera to survey the scene and determine appropriate assets for a successful response. This will assist with the judicious use of Police Officers in the field along with providing information for events in progress.

Eventually, agreements with public or private entities for the placement of UAS docking stations throughout the city can be employed for extensive coverage. This would dramatically reduce response times to records never experienced in San Bernardino or many law enforcement agencies.

2021-2025 Strategic Targets and Goals

The funding for the purchase of 75% of a DFR program is from the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors, namely Supervisor Joe Baca, and is aligned with Key Target Goal No.1 Improved Financial & Operational Capacity. The ability to “Secure a long-term revenue source.” Drone First Responder Programs can be costly to create, and this funding will assist in the long-term approach to a DFR deployment program for years to come.

A Drone First Responder program aligns with Key Target Goal No. 3 Improved Quality of Life. The constant evaluation of public safety services and the vessels for which they are provided, synthesizes to this agreement. The immediate deployment of a UAS system to a scene to identify hazards to public safety and the appropriate deployment of Police Officers in the field, will reduce call response times and increase the availability of Police Officers at scenes where they are truly needed.

Fiscal Impact

Approval of this item does not impact the General Fund.

Conclusion

It is recommended that the Mayor and City Council of the City of San Bernardino, California, adopt Resolution No. 2025-303, authorizing:

1. The City Manager to execute a contract with the County of San Bernardino for the acceptance of \$562,500 from the County Board of Supervisors, for the purchase of 75% of Unmanned Aerial Systems and equipment for a Drone First Responder Program.
2. The Director of Finance and Management Services to amend the FY 2025/26 operating budget for the amount of \$562,500 in both revenue and expenditures.

Attachments

Attachment 1	Resolution No. 2025-303
Attachment 2	San Bernardino County Grant Contract

Ward:

All Wards

Synopsis of Previous Council Actions:

May 21, 2025	Mayor and City Council adopted Resolution No. 2025-296 approving the acceptance, obligation, and expenditure, of Citizens' Option for Public Safety (COPS) funds in the amount of \$678,501.23, authorizing the Police Department to encumber and expend the allocated COPS funding for FY 2024/25.
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