

Legislation Text

File #: 24-262, **Version:** 1

PRESENTER:

Jennifer Gates, Grants Coordinator

SUBJECT:

Approval of a resolution; ratification for the submission of a grant application to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, State Homeland Security Program - Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Activities grant for Program Year 2024 to request funding for the purchase of a robot, and accessories to unmanned aircraft vehicles; and authorization for the City Manager to act on behalf of the City in all matters related to the grant if awarded.

DEPARTMENT: Police

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

New Braunfels' City Council strategic priorities include using a variety of funding sources for operational and capital needs. As such, Staff recently submitted an application to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, State Homeland Security Program - Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Activities grant program as administered by the Office of the Governor, Public Safety Office, Homeland Security Grants Division's State Homeland Security Program grant for Program Year 2024 to request funding on behalf of the New Braunfels Police Department (NBPD) for the purchase of a robot, and accessories to unmanned aircraft vehicles (UAVs).

For emergency prevention and response, it is critical to have a variety of reliable equipment available to first responders to protect the health and safety of citizens during natural and man-made events. If awarded, the grant will replace a significantly outdated robot that is being used by NBPD's, Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Unit during high-risk calls, including assistance to other law enforcement agencies. Utilizing an unmanned robot allows emergency personnel to safely and quickly respond to an event which may be extremely dangerous to human life such as a bomb threat or active shooter situation, as first responders are able to see, hear, or manipulate objects without human intervention and make informed decisions without risking human life. The grant will also provide essential upgrades to City-owned unmanned aircraft vehicles (UAV), commonly known as drones, operated by NBPD's Air Unit. Two spotlights and an aerial scanner will allow NBPD to better locate and assist injured and stranded victims from flood waters, monitor threats from the air during the City's large scale outdoor festivals, and assist NBPD's Traffic Unit in their investigations of fatal vehicular collisions. With this equipment, the City will be more effective in performing law enforcement activities, and protecting its first responders, over 100,000 residents, and more than 3 million tourists each year from potential threats and hazards caused by emergency situations such as floods and terroristic acts.

City staff recently submitted a grant application for a total amount of \$300,000, consisting of \$282,200 allocated to the purchase of a quadruped robot, and \$17,800 allocated to two spotlights and an aerial scanner for

City-owned, NBPD-operated drones. The granting agency will provide funds for 100% of the total amount therefore, there is no City-match requirement.

If approved, the grant will be awarded by September 2024.

Staff is also requesting City Council approval of a resolution, as required by the granting agency, that will authorize our City Manager to act as the authorized official on behalf of the City in all matters related to this grant. The designated authorized official is given the power to apply for, accept, reject, alter, or terminate the grant on behalf of the applicant agency.

ISSUE:

Submission of the aforementioned grant application supports the City's Strategic Priorities as follows: Use a variety of funding sources for operational and capital needs.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The granting agency will provide reimbursement of all awarded costs; there is no City-match requirement.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of a resolution; ratification for the submission of a grant application to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, State Homeland Security Program - Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Activities Grant for Program Year 2024 to request funding for the purchase of a robot, and accessories to unmanned aircraft vehicles; and authorization for the City Manager to act on behalf of the City in all matters related to the grant if awarded.