



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Reginald Goodson, City Manager
Chris Carver, Fire Chief

Date: February 21, 2025

Subj: Consideration – Authorize Submission of FEMA Grants as Available

BACKGROUND:

The Elizabeth City Fire Department is actively seeking grant opportunities through FEMA. These grants include the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant (SAFER), the Assistance to Firefighters Grant and the Fire Prevention & Safety Grant. These opportunities allow the ECFD to improve their capabilities and provide better service to our citizens with minimal budget impact. Historically, these particular grants have a very short window of opportunity to apply, and the exact requirements are not specified until the application period opens.

ANALYSIS:

Each year, the ECFD requests approval from the Council in advance to apply for these grants as they become available. The grants open with very little notice and for such a short period that it does not allow adequate time to present each individual opportunity to the Council. In most cases, these grants usually require a 5%-10% match by the City. As is the case with most opportunities via the federal government, the grants are rarely awarded quickly, which allows staff the opportunity to budget for any requisite matches or pinpoint necessary funding in the following budget year.

The SAFER Grant is a staffing opportunity that would be used to request additional personnel. This grant pays for a portion of new positions, and over a two-to-three year period, we absorb the associated costs of the new employees. The cost share and retention requirements vary from year to year, but this remains an excellent opportunity for us to increase our staffing levels.

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant is for equipment. The ECFD has numerous projects and needs that this grant could be used towards. In the past, some items that have been eligible for award have been turnout gear, apparatus, air packs and extrication equipment. All of

these items carry a hefty price tag and are essential for our personnel and the department. This grant generally requires a 5% match, but that may vary year to year.

The Fire Prevention and Safety Grant would allow for the purchase of equipment and items required to further prevention efforts within our community. We have several areas where we are seeking to enhance our prevention measures. This grant normally requires a 10% match; and associated costs will be available in the ECFD budget.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

By motion, authorize staff to apply for the FEMA grant opportunities as they become available throughout the year.