ROSS VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT

For the Meeting of November 10, 2026

To: Board of Directors

From: Dan Mahoney, Fire Chief

Subject: Acknowledge the grant acceptance of $275,545.45; authorize the Fire Chief to execute all necessary grant-related documents; and authorize staff to utilize funds from the Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus Account in an amount not to exceed $120,000 to complete required matching funds and to purchase additional equipment that did not meet the grant scope requirements.

RECOMMENDATION:

Acknowledge the grant acceptance of $275,545.45; authorize the Fire Chief to execute all necessary grant-related documents; and authorize staff to utilize funds from the Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus Account in an amount not to exceed $120,000 to complete required matching funds and purchase additional equipment that did not meet the grant scope requirements.

BACKGROUND:

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides several grant opportunities to support local fire agencies, including the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG), Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) Grant, and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant.

Since 2001, the AFG Program has provided critical funding to fire departments to help meet firefighting and emergency response needs. Eligible funding includes essential equipment, personal protective equipment, emergency vehicles, training, and other resources necessary to enhance firefighter safety and protect the public from fire and other hazards.

The Department has been the recipient of three Assistance to Firefighters Grants in the past. In 2002, the Department received a grant for a mobile live fire trainer; in 2005, the Department received a grant to install fire suppression sprinklers and alarm systems at the Department's three fire stations; and in 2014, the Department received a grant for Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) replacement.

Earlier this year, the Department filed a regional grant application for the purchase of SCBA's. Regional partners included Marin County Fire, Kentfield Fire Protection District, and Central

Marin Fire Department. The Marin County Fire Department prepared and submitted the grant application on behalf of all above-mentioned regional partners and will be the fiscal agent.

DISCUSSION:

Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) is one of the most critical pieces of safety equipment carried on a fire engine. SCBAs provide firefighters with a supply of breathable air while operating in structure fires and other hazardous environments where smoke, toxic gases, or oxygen-deficient conditions may be present. Each SCBA consists primarily of a backpack-style harness, compressed-air cylinder, regulator, and face mask.

Due to the demanding environments in which SCBAs are used, the equipment has a limited service life and generally requires replacement approximately every 10 to 15 years. Maintaining reliable and properly functioning SCBA equipment is essential to firefighter safety and emergency operations.

The grant application was successful, and the Department was awarded $275,545.45, not including the department matching funds. However, the grant guidelines limited the number of SCBAs eligible for funding based primarily on the number of units carried on the Department's frontline fire engines. As a result, several SCBA-related items necessary to maintain a complete and operational inventory were not eligible for reimbursement under the grant. In addition, the grant requires a Department match. We also incurred expenses for professional grant-writing services provided by Blackrock3.

Equipment Not Eligible Under the Grant - Several necessary SCBA-related items were not eligible for grant funding. These include additional firefighter face masks; reserve SCBAs used for training and to replace units that are damaged, undergoing maintenance, or otherwise out of service; Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) packs equipped with supplemental air supplies for rescuing trapped or downed firefighters; and a testing device for SCBA masks performed annually.

Department Grant Match - As a condition of the grant award, the Department is responsible for a match and cost sharing (approximately $53,000) toward the eligible equipment costs.

Grant-Writing Services - Blackrock3, a professional grant-writing firm, assisted the participating agencies with the grant application process. The Department's cost for these services is equal to 1% of the federal grant funds awarded.

As a result of the above-mentioned factors, additional funds will be needed to complete the SCBA purchase. Utilizing the SCBA Fund for these purchases will allow the Department to complete the replacement project and ensure that firefighters have the necessary respiratory protection equipment for frontline operations, training, emergency backup, and firefighter rescue for the next 10 - 15 years.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Department has $120,000 in an assigned fund balance for the SCBA equipment. If approved, the Department will use up to this amount ($120,000) for equipment not eligible under the grant, the Department grant match, and grant writing services not covered by the grant.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment #1 - Grant Award Letter