



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: JUNE 7, 2011

ITEM NUMBER: _____

SUBJECT: ALTERNATIVES FOR HELICOPTER SERVICES

DATE: JUNE 2, 2011

FROM: OFFICE OF THE CEO

PRESENTATION BY: THOMAS R. HATCH, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: TOM HATCH, (714) 754-5328

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Authorize the CEO to administratively execute a short-term contract with the City of Huntington Beach, in a form to be approved by the City Attorney, for helicopter support services from July 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011 for a not to exceed amount of \$100,000;
2. Authorize staff to work with any interested parties to explore a public-private partnership model for helicopter services; and
3. Authorize staff to continue with the process of discontinuing the Airborne Law Enforcement Program, but not to sell any equipment until authorized by the City Council.

BACKGROUND:

On February 15, 2011, the City Council voted to dissolve the Airborne Law Enforcement Program (ABLE). Attachment 1 of this report is the Staff Report from the February 15th meeting that provides additional detail about the issues involved in that decision. On April 6, 2011, the City of Huntington Beach Police Department provided a proposal to the cities of Costa Mesa, Newport Beach and Santa Ana for contract helicopter services. Attachment 2 of this report is the proposal. In late April and May 2011, a Newport Beach businessman introduced the idea of forming a public-private partnership that would allow for current levels of air patrol over Costa Mesa, Newport Beach, and Santa Ana at reduced rates. While the proposal in concept is intriguing, the merit of this verbal proposal is unknown and it has been communicated that it may take several months to develop and study this proposal and maybe longer if a formal Request for Proposal process would need to be completed.

Per City Council direction, the ABLE Program is scheduled to discontinue operations on June 30, 2011 and the only funding in the Preliminary Budget for next year is the ABLE Commander position. The CEO's recommended reorganization plan for the Police Department is also going to include \$100,000 in General Fund dollars for contract helicopter services.

The City Manager of the City of Newport Beach has notified the CEO for Costa Mesa that Newport Beach will be taking a similar approach and contracting helicopter services from Huntington Beach while deciding if a public-private helicopter partnership is viable.

ANALYSIS:

The attached Proposal from Huntington Beach includes background information on their Air Support Unit, response times, heliport, Unit assets, external load capabilities, noise complaints/comparisons, flight schedule, special events, SWAT support, benefits, the proposed hourly rate and a conclusion. The proposed hourly rate is \$700 per hour which is significantly less expensive than what ABLE charges for an hourly rate of \$1,845.29. The Proposal does not discuss details related to specific patrol times for Costa Mesa or emergency response protocol and therefore it is recommended that these details be left to the Costa Mesa Police Chief to negotiate and include in the final agreement between the two agencies. Costa Mesa Police Department staff will be in continuous communication with Huntington Beach staff and will monitor the agreement for compliance with the conditions and adjust service needs as necessary.

The Costa Mesa Police Department obtained information and background on other potential public agencies that provide helicopter services but given the very limited options for this specialized service along with Costa Mesa's proximity to Huntington Beach, a proposal was only requested from Huntington Beach. Staff understands that the City of Santa Ana is pursuing an agreement with the Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSD) for air support services at an hourly rate of \$944 per hour. Any agreement between the OCSD and Santa Ana for air patrol time will enhance the availability of supportive air support services that can be requested by Costa Mesa as mutual aid.

If a contract with Huntington Beach is authorized, the goal will be to have the agreement finalized as soon as possible and before the 4th of July Holiday. This would allow our Police Department to request additional air support over the entire 4th of July Holiday weekend.

Attachment 3 is a memorandum from Interim Police Chief Steve Staveley that discusses the ABLE Program and includes an excerpt from the May 19, 2011 ABLE Board Meeting. At this meeting, the Board approved a motion to propose to the Costa Mesa City Council that they extend the ABLE program to continue to October 1, 2011 so that additional research can be done with this additional expense coming out of the ABLE reserve fund. This action was taken before administrative staff of Newport Beach had decided to pursue a short-term contract with Huntington Beach instead of recommending the temporary continuation of the ABLE Program.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

1. Keep the ABLE Program in its present state (past the June 30, 2011 deadline) until a decision can be made on the viability of a public-private partnership. It is unknown at this time exactly what this would cost the City and would likely be unaffordable if Newport Beach is not a full partner in the operations.
2. Discontinue any helicopter support services at this time but continue to explore the possibility of a public-private partnership.

3. Discontinue any helicopter support services at this time and continue to appraise the assets and proceed to sell the ABLE assets as soon as possible.

FISCAL REVIEW:

A short-term contract with Huntington Beach will include a not to exceed amount of \$100,000. Funding for FY 2011-2012 has been included in the Police Department Budget in the amount of \$212,000 from the General Fund for the ABLE Commander position. In addition, \$100,000 for contract air support services will be included along with the CEO's recommended reorganization plan for the Police Department for consideration by the City Council.

LEGAL REVIEW:

No specific legal review is required at this time. If the City Council chooses to authorize a short-term contract with Huntington Beach, the City Attorney's Office would review and approve the agreement as to form before it is executed by the CEO. If the public-private alternative is explored, an unknown amount of legal costs will be required. The CEO will monitor and authorize legal costs as appropriate related to the City Council direction.

CONCLUSION:

On June 30, 2011, the City of Costa Mesa is scheduled to discontinue the ABLE Program. A short-term contract with Huntington Beach for helicopter support services will allow for the continuation of a limited amount of services at a substantially lower rate than the full-time ABLE Program. The \$700 per hour rate that Huntington Beach is proposing to charge is a reasonable rate. If authorized, staff will proceed to allocate staff time and legal costs to explore any public-private partnership that is proposed to the City.

THOMAS R. HATCH
Chief Executive Officer

STEVE STAVELEY
Police Chief

LAWRENCE D. HURST
Finance Director

THOMAS DUARTE
City Attorney

- ATTACHMENTS:
- 1 [February 15, 2011 Staff Report](#)
 - 2 [Proposal from Huntington Beach](#)
 - 3 [Memo From Chief Staveley](#)