



Tracy Rural County Fire Protection District

Agenda Item 4.1

STAFF REPORT

Meeting: Regular Meeting
Date: October 13, 2026
To: Board of Directors
Prepared by: Brian Bagley, Deputy Chief
Reviewed by: Randall Bradley, Fire Chief
Approved by: Craig Miller, Chairperson

Re: Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER)
Grant Award – Authorization of District Funding and Modification
of Member Agency Cost Share

RECOMMENDATION

☒ **Action Item** ☐ Non-Action Item

Staff recommends that the Board of Directors consider the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant awarded to the South San Joaquin County Fire Authority (Authority) and authorize participation under either of the following options:

1. Option 1 – Rural Funding of All (3) Daily Positions: Authorize Tracy Rural Fire Protection District (TRFD) to assume responsibility for all three additional daily firefighter positions associated with the nine SAFER-funded firefighters, resulting in a revised Fire Authority member agency cost-share allocation of 55.56% City of Tracy and 44.44% TRFD beginning in Fiscal Year 2027-28; or
2. Option 2 – Shared Funding of the (3) Daily Positions: Authorize TRFD to assume responsibility for two of the three additional daily firefighter positions, with the City of Tracy assuming responsibility for one additional daily firefighter position, resulting in a revised Fire Authority member agency cost-share allocation of 59.26% City of Tracy and 40.74% TFRD beginning in Fiscal Year 2027-28.

Staff believes either Option 1 or Option 2 provides a significant opportunity to increase daily staffing while leveraging approximately \$2.92 million in federal funding.

BACKGROUND

The Tracy Rural Fire Protection District (District) delegates the provision of fire protection and emergency response services to the Authority pursuant to the Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement between the District and the City of Tracy.



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Recognizing the need to increase operational staffing and improve the Authority's ability to provide effective emergency response throughout its jurisdiction, Authority staff submitted an application through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program for future fire station 98.

The Authority was subsequently notified that it had been awarded \$2,916,839.72 in federal funding to support the hiring of nine additional firefighters. Accepting the grant includes a local matching requirement that, over the three-year performance period, will total \$1,813,170.67.

The nine additional firefighters provide sufficient staffing to add three firefighters on duty each day, based upon the Authority's three-platoon staffing model.

Because acceptance of the grant creates an additional financial obligation to the Authority, the expenditure must ultimately be authorized by the Authority's member agencies.

CURRENT MEMBER AGENCY COST-SHARING FORMULA

The Authority's current operating cost-sharing formula is based upon the daily staffing responsibility assigned to each member agency.

The current staffing allocation consists of 24 daily positions, with 15 positions attributable to the City of Tracy and nine positions attributable to Tracy Rural Fire Protection District.

Member Agency	Current Daily Positions	Current Cost Share
City of Tracy	15 of 24	62.5%
Tracy Rural	9 of 24	37.5%
Total	24	100%

Acceptance of the SAFER grant would ultimately increase the staffing basis from 24 to 27 daily positions. Due to the time necessary to recruit, hire, and onboard nine firefighters, implementation of the additional staffing is anticipated to occur near the conclusion of Fiscal Year 2026-27. Accordingly, the existing 62.50% City and 37.50% District cost-sharing formula would remain in effect for the current fiscal year, with the revised staffing-based allocation becoming effective as part of the Fiscal Year 2027-28 budget.

DISCUSSION

Under Option 1, all nine SAFER-funded firefighters would be allocated to the District's staffing responsibility. The three additional daily positions would increase Tracy Rural's staffing allocation from nine to 12 positions, while the City's allocation would remain at 15.



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Member Agency	Current	Safer Positions	FY2027-28 Staffing Basis	FY2027-28 Cost Share
City of Tracy	15	0	15 of 27	55.56%
Tracy Rural	9	3	12 of 27	44.44%
Total	24	3	27	100%

This option provides the District with the benefit of all three additional daily positions while using the federal award to offset a substantial portion of the initial personnel costs.

Under Option 2, the District would assume responsibility for two additional daily positions and the City of Tracy would assume responsibility for one. The City's staffing allocation would therefore increase from 15 to 16 positions and Tracy Rural's allocation would increase from nine to 11 positions.

Member Agency	Current	Safer Positions	FY2027-28 Staffing Basis	FY2027-28 Cost Share
City of Tracy	15	1	16 of 27	59.26
Tracy Rural	9	2	11 of 27	40.74
Total	24	3	27	100%

This option distributes the long-term financial responsibility for the additional staffing between both member agencies while still increasing Tracy Rural's staffing allocation by two positions per day.

The Board may elect not to authorize additional District funding, giving up the Federal SAFER award of \$2,916,839.72. If the necessary member agency financial commitments cannot be secured, the Authority would decline the SAFER award and the existing staffing and cost-sharing allocation would remain unchanged.

FISCAL IMPACTS

The SAFER award provides \$2,916,839.72 in federal funding and requires a total local matching contribution of \$1,813,170.67 over the three-year grant period.

For planning purposes, the total local match represents an average Authority exposure of approximately \$604,390 per year over three years. Actual annual expenditures and federal reimbursement will vary based upon the applicable SAFER grant-year reimbursement percentage and actual eligible personnel costs.

FEMA's award provides significant federal assistance toward the fully burdened cost of the nine additional firefighters. Based upon the grant terms provided to the Authority, federal participation is 65% during the first and second grant years and 35% during the third grant year. Following expiration of the grant, the Authority and its member agencies would become responsible for the full ongoing cost of the additional positions.



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No modification to the member agency pro-rata cost-sharing formula is proposed for Fiscal Year 2026-27. If the grant is accepted, the Authority will immediately begin the recruitment and hiring process. Given the time necessary to recruit, conduct background investigations, hire, equip, and onboard nine firefighters, staff anticipates the additional personnel will be placed into service near the conclusion of the current fiscal year.

The Authority's adopted Fiscal Year 2026-27 budget has sufficient available funding to absorb all costs associated with the firefighters through the hiring process and required training period, including salary and benefits, as well as the required personal protective equipment (PPE), for the remainder of the current fiscal year. Therefore, no additional member agency funding contribution or adjustment to the existing 62.50% City / 37.50% District pro-rata formula is necessary during Fiscal Year 2026-27 as a result of accepting the grant.

The revised staffing-based pro-rata formula would become effective with the Fiscal Year 2027-28 Authority budget (July 1, 2027), at which time, the full complement of SAFER-funded personnel is anticipated to be incorporated into the Authority's ongoing daily staffing model.

The District concluded the prior fiscal year with approximately \$1.1 million in additional unanticipated/unallocated revenue, providing the Board with additional financial capacity to consider the future local contribution associated with the SAFER award. The District's future financial forecasting outlook continues to be on an upward trend. Acceptance of the grant nevertheless represents both a three-year matching obligation and an ongoing staffing commitment that extends beyond the federal grant period.

For comparison purposes, the following table illustrates the effect of each option using the existing \$31,543,199 operating budget as a baseline plus the approximately \$604,390 average annual SAFER local match. These figures are provided for planning purposes only; the actual FY 2027-28 Authority budget will establish the member agency contributions when the revised pro-rata formula becomes effective.

Funding Scenario	City Cost Share	City Contribution	Rural Cost Share	Rural Contribution	Total
Current Formula-24 Positions	62.5%	\$19,714,499	37.5%	\$11,828,700	\$31,543,199
Option-1 27 Positions (Rural accepts all 3)	55.56%	\$17,859,772	44.44%	\$14,287,817	\$32,147,589
Option 2-27 Positions (Rural accepts 2, City accepts-1)	59.26%	\$19,050,423	40.74%	\$13,097,166	\$32,147,589

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution 2026-17



Tracy Rural County Fire Protection District

Resolution No. 2026-17

APPROVING PARTICIPATION IN THE FEMA STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE FIRE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE (SAFER) GRANT AWARDED TO THE SOUTH SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY FIRE AUTHORITY, AUTHORIZING THE DISTRICT'S FUNDING COMMITMENT, AND APPROVING A REVISED MEMBER AGENCY COST-SHARING ALLOCATION EFFECTIVE FISCAL YEAR 2027-28

WHEREAS, the Tracy Rural Fire Protection District ("District") delegates the provision of fire protection and emergency response services to the South San Joaquin County Fire Authority ("Authority") pursuant to the Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement between the District and the City of Tracy; and

WHEREAS, the Authority applied to the Federal Emergency Management Agency ("FEMA") Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response ("SAFER") grant program to increase operational staffing associated with future Fire Station 98; and

WHEREAS, FEMA awarded the Authority \$2,916,839.72 in federal funding to support the hiring of nine additional firefighters; and

WHEREAS, the SAFER award includes a local matching requirement that, over the three-year grant performance period, will total \$1,813,170.67; and

WHEREAS, the nine additional firefighters will provide three additional firefighters on duty each day based upon the Authority's three-platoon staffing model; and

WHEREAS, the Authority's current member agency cost-sharing methodology is based upon daily staffing responsibility, with 15 of 24 daily positions attributable to the City of Tracy and nine of 24 daily positions attributable to the District, resulting in a current allocation of 62.50% to the City of Tracy and 37.50% to the District; and

WHEREAS, the Authority's adopted Fiscal Year 2026-27 budget contains sufficient available funding to support costs associated with the hiring and required training of the additional firefighters, including salaries, benefits, and required personal protective equipment, for the remainder of the current fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, no modification to the existing member agency cost-sharing allocation is therefore necessary during Fiscal Year 2026-27; and



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WHEREAS, upon implementation of the additional staffing, the Authority's daily staffing basis will increase from 24 to 27 positions, requiring a corresponding adjustment to the member agency cost-sharing allocation beginning Fiscal Year 2027-28; and

WHEREAS, the Board has considered the staffing alternatives and associated financial impacts presented by Authority staff and finds that participation in the SAFER grant provides an opportunity to increase operational staffing while leveraging approximately \$2.92 million in federal funding.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Directors of Tracy Rural County Fire Protection District that:

Section 1. SAFER Grant Participation. The Board hereby approves the District's participation in the SAFER grant awarded to the South San Joaquin County Fire Authority and authorizes the District's financial participation in the required local match *in accordance with the staffing allocation selected in Section 4 of this Resolution.*

Section 2. Fiscal Year 2026-27. The existing member agency cost-sharing allocation of 62.50% City of Tracy and 37.50% Tracy Rural Fire Protection District shall remain unchanged through June 30, 2027.

Section 3. Effective Date of Revised Cost Share. The revised staffing-based member agency cost-sharing allocation authorized by this Resolution shall become effective July 1, 2027, as part of the Authority's Fiscal Year 2027-28 budget.

Section 4. Staffing Allocation and Member Agency Cost Share.

[BOARD TO SELECT OPTION 1 OR OPTION 2]

OPTION 1 – DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THREE ADDITIONAL DAILY POSITIONS

The District hereby approves responsibility for all three additional daily firefighter positions associated with the nine SAFER-funded firefighters. Effective July 1, 2027, the member agency staffing and cost-sharing allocation shall be:

Member Agency	Daily Staffing	Cost Share
City of Tracy	15 of 27	55.56%
Tracy Rural	12 of 27	44.44%
Total	27	100%

OR



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OPTION 2 – SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THREE ADDITIONAL DAILY POSITIONS

The District hereby approves responsibility for two additional daily firefighter positions associated with the SAFER-funded firefighters, contingent upon approval by the City of Tracy of responsibility for the remaining additional daily firefighter position. Effective July 1, 2027, the member agency staffing and cost-sharing allocation shall be:

Member Agency	Daily Staffing	Cost Share
City of Tracy	16 of 27	59.26%
Tracy Rural	11 of 27	40.74%
Total	27	100%

In the event the City of Tracy does not approve responsibility for the additional daily firefighter position and corresponding revised cost allocation, this authorization shall not constitute approval by the District of Option 1 or responsibility for all three additional daily positions, and the matter shall return to the Board for further consideration.

Section 5. Annual Budget Appropriations. The District's financial obligations associated with the SAFER grant and the revised member agency cost-sharing allocation shall be incorporated into the applicable annual Authority and District budget processes.

Section 6. Authorization. The Fire Chief, or designee, is authorized to take such administrative actions and execute such documents as may be reasonably necessary to implement the Board's selected option, consistent with the SAFER grant award, Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement, and applicable budgetary approvals.

Section 7. Effective Date. This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

Motion passed.

Passed, approved, and adopted this 13th day of October 2026.

Craig Miller, Chairman of the Board

ATTEST:

Raychel Jackson, Clerk of the Board