



**County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors
Agenda Item Submittal**

From: General Services Department: County Fire
(831) 454-2210

Subject: 2024-25 Proposed Budget for County Fire Protection

Meeting Date: May 22, 2024

Recommended Actions

Approve the 2024-25 Proposed Budget for County Fire Protection, including any supplemental materials, as provided in the referenced budget documents:

- Proposed and Supplemental Budget
- Supplemental Budget
- Budget Financial Data with Line Item Drill Down

Executive Summary

The 2024-25 Proposed Budget for County Fire Protection supports two divisions: County Fire, which includes County Service Area (CSA) 48, and CSA 4, Pajaro Dunes. Volunteer Firefighters and Emergency Medical Responders (EMR) make up the bulk of Santa Cruz County Fire Department staffing with supplemental staffing provided through a cooperative agreement with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE).

Discussion

The mission of County Fire Protection is to protect the life, property, and natural resources of its citizens and visitors through effective emergency response, preparedness, education, and prevention. The departmental and divisional operational goals are shown in the 2024-25 Proposed Budget and 2023-25 Operational Plan. Both are available at: www.SCCvision.us

Budgeted funding will continue to support structural fire protection, first responder emergency medical services, technical rescue, public fire safety education, and fire marshal services including code inspections for the unincorporated areas of the County that are not included in an autonomous fire district with a new CAL FIRE contract that has been updated to more accurately reflect the emerging needs of Santa Cruz County Fire.

The overall County Fire budget is status quo and includes funding from CSA 48, Proposition 172 funding for the Fire Chiefs Association, and funding for Santa Cruz County Hazardous Materials Response Incidents Team. The County Fire contract with CalFire is currently under negotiation and represents a minimal change contract budgeted for maximum contract liability which will allow status quo services to the extent possible, which includes fire protection for CSA 4 Pajaro Dunes, while incorporating some known anticipated changes.

The Supplemental Budget includes a net decrease of \$203,150 from the 2024-25 Proposed Budget primarily related to updated contracted costs of the CAL FIRE Contract and related supports.

Over the next fiscal year, the department will be focused primarily on engaging new County Fire volunteer opportunities that do not require emergency response training, reducing operational costs by decreasing the County Fire fleet by 10%, and implementing a year-round recruitment and on-boarding strategy, with the goal of increasing volunteer firefighters by 10%.

Financial Impact

The County Fire Protection Proposed Budget includes \$13,523,495 in expenditures offset by \$10,655,244 in revenues and \$2,868,251 of fund balance, reflecting a total expenditure decrease of \$4,522,424 or 25% decline from the 2023-24 Adopted Budget.

Strategic Initiatives

The 2024-25 Proposed Budget for County Fire Protection supports the following Strategic Plan Goals:

- 1.B (Comprehensive Health & Safety: Community Support)
- 4.B (Sustainable Environment: Natural Resources)
- 4.C (Sustainable Environment: Local Conservation)
- 4.D (Sustainable Environment: Climate Change)
- 6.A (Operational Excellence: Customer Experience)
- 6.C (Operational Excellence: County Infrastructure)
- 6.D (Operational Excellence: Continuous Improvement)

Submitted by:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer, Michael Beaton, Director

Recommended by:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

Attachments:

- a Proposed and Supplemental Budget
- b Supplemental Budget
- c Budget Financial Data with Line Item Drill Down
- d County Fire Budget Presentation

Santa Cruz County Fire Protection

2024-2025 Request Budget



Presentation Intro & Achievements



Mission and Vision, Organizational Structure



How We are Organized



Our Successes



2024-25 Requested Budget



Budget Goals, Changes & Community Bene



Budget Details



Future Considerations



Conclusion & Questions

Mission

The mission of the Santa Cruz County Fire Department is to protect the life, property, and natural resources of its citizens and visitors through effective emergency response, preparedness, education, and prevention.

Our Vision is to...

To provide quality service to all communities in the county and to be a leader in fire protection, fire prevention, and emergency response.

Support for Climate & Equity Goals

- Providing emergency services to all members of the public within Santa Cruz County.
- Expanding volunteer opportunities to include those who don't have the ability to attend required courses for emergency response.
- Support climate-impacted communities at risk of natural disasters
- Reduce community wildfire risk
- Exploring possibilities for clean air light utility vehicles
- Protect structures at-risk of wildfire
- Protect forested landscapes from wildfire risk
- Research options for clean energy systems for County Fire facilities

Organizational Structure & Leadership

Director of General Services

Fire Chief | Nate Armstrong

Deputy Fire Chief | Jed Wilson

Battalion Chief | Sam Filson

Divisions and Services



STRUCTURAL FIRE
PROTECTION



FIRE PREVENTION



HAZARDOUS
MATERIALS
RESPONSE



TECHNICAL RESCUE



FIRE MARSHAL
SERVICES



COMMAND
LEADERSHIP/COORDINATION



EMERGENCY MEDICAL
RESPONSE



PUBLIC FIRE
SAFETY
EDUCATION

Our Achievements

- Two (2) - Type 3 Wildland Engines In-Service
- Increased Community Event Participation
- Utilization of County Fire Equipment for Fuels Reduction Projects with CALFIRE.
- On track for Completion of County Objective #377 and #378
- Nearing implementation of an RMS System
- Nearing implementation of County Fire Polic

2024-25 Budget Request

	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	Change
Revenues	\$10,324,784	\$10,655,224	\$330,440
Expenditures	\$18,045,919	\$13,523,495	\$(4,548,924)
General Fund Contribution	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0
Funded Staffing Full-time Equivalents (FTEs)	00.00	00.00	00.00

Primary Budget Goals

1

Provide the desired staffing level and services to CSA 4 that budget can support.

2

Increase Firefighter staffing for CSA 48 to meet CAL FIRE standard.

3

Add supervisory position to CSA 48 to provide value-added program management.

Requested Changes

- CSA 4 requested changes will be based on the results of an assessment process.
 - If assessment does not pass, then minimal change.
 - If assessment passes there will be request to add three FTIR to CAL FIRE agreement.
- CSA 48 must add 6 Firefighter I positions based on non-CAL FIRE staffing standards.
- CSA 48 would like to add one supervisory position to continue the high-level analysis and coordination of improving service delivery.

Community Benefit (CSA 4)



- CSA 4's benefit of potential added staffing would be more effective emergency response to all incidents.
- The current staffing level for Pajaro Dunes is the lowest of the staffed fire departments in Santa Cruz County and is the minimum allowable by CAL FIRE and industry standards.

Community Benefit (CSA 48)



- The addition of the Firefighter positions will assure healthy and well-rested firefighters to serve the community as well as providing a more robust pool to ensure consistent staffing
- Additional management personnel would provide dedicated staff to complete high level analysis and projects that should improve County Fire's service delivery.

Future Considerations

Long-term Opportunities & Risks

- Utilize analytics and recommendations from the AP Triton Study
- Roll out of First Due platform
- Completion of County Fire Policy Manual
- Continued effort for varied volunteer efforts
- County Fire website transition
- Measure K
- Fall 2024 tax measure
- CAL FIRE Labor contract



Santa Cruz County
FIRE DEPARTMENT
California

Long-Range
MASTER PLAN



Our Request

Approve the Proposed Budget for the Santa Cruz County Fire Department, including any Supplemental Materials, which includes

- Revenues of \$10,665,224
- Expenses of \$13,523,495
- General Fund Contribution of \$0.00
- Staffing of 0.0FTEs