



MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Finance Committee

FROM: Rich Olson, City Manager
Eddie M. Buffaloe, Jr. Chief of Police

DATE: January 4, 2016

RE: Consideration – Authorization to Submit Application for Governor’s Crime Commission - Statewide Infrastructure and Technology Improvement Grant

BACKGROUND:

The Elizabeth City Police Department is currently seeking grant opportunities to enhance its infrastructure and technology program and increase the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Department. The North Carolina Governor’s Crime Commission is offering up to \$200,000 in grant funding through the Infrastructure and Technology Improvement Grant for programming that will support technology initiatives to enhance the readiness and effectiveness of day-to-day operations. Applications for their FY 16-17 cycle opened on January 1, 2016. Under the guidelines for the Infrastructure and Technology Improvement Grant (FY 16-17), no matching funds are required by the City. In keeping with this mission, the Governor’s Crime Commission supports the use of technology resources that ensure a safe working environment for officers across the State in an effort to make sure that all North Carolina data integration projects are interoperable. The Elizabeth City Police Department wishes to receive approval to submit an application directly to the Governor’s Crime Commission for this funding so that the opportunity to receive grant monies is not missed. Specifically, the Elizabeth City Police Department will seek to acquire additional 800 MHz radios, as well as enhancement of its computer hardware/software programs and data management systems. Radios provide greater officer safety through enhanced communications in the field, and improved data management systems secure police records and enhance the Department’s crime analysis abilities.

ANALYSIS:

The North Carolina Governor’s Crime Commission, through its Statewide Infrastructure and Technology Improvement Initiative Program, is offering individual law enforcement agencies a maximum of \$200,000 in grant funding with there being no required match on the part of the local agency. The Elizabeth City Police Department is seeking to

obtain an additional 45 hand-held, portable 800 MHz radios at an estimated cost of \$3,500, for a total of \$157,500. Forty-five (45) additional hand-held portable 800 MHz radios would complete the outfitting of the entire Department, as each sworn officer will need one of these important devices. The Elizabeth City Police Department needs to replace its aging portable police radios to the 800MHz system. Central Communications (E911) has been capable of dispatching on the 800MHz frequency for some time now. The replacement of our mobile radios would ensure a primary secure voice means of communication, the ability to talk statewide and the means to communicate with other assisting agencies in times of natural disasters.

An interoperability system in North Carolina has been in works for years now and is currently overseen by the North Carolina Department of Public Safety. The mission critical study performed following the tragic events of 9/11 resulted in the Voice Interoperability Plan for Emergency Responders (VIPER) Project, a statewide voice radio communications system whose mission is to ensure that emergency responder users can communicate quickly and effectively, each and every time they call for assistance, and also provide a communications system that promotes interoperability between public safety agencies. The VIPER 800 MHz Network and the digital microwave network that provides the connections for each of the remote radio sites are part of a complex communications network crossing all of North Carolina. All local agencies are encouraged to seek outside funding sources in order to equip officers with this much needed technology. Although there is mandate at the state level, as narrow-banding continues at the federal level, it is anticipated that within a number of years it will be mandatory to use the VIPER 800 MHz Network.

In addition to completing the outfitting of sworn officers with 800 MHz system radios, the Elizabeth City Police Department is seeking an additional approximate \$40,000 for the purchase of computer hardware/software for police records and data management systems. This is needed to enhance crime analysis, ensure accurate UCR Reporting, and increase the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Department. This grant would greatly benefit the department and since there are no matching funds required on the part of the City, this is an extremely cost effective way to improve the department's technology program in a tremendous way.

The grand total for grant submission is estimated at \$197,500.00. (There is a \$200,000 cap per local agency.) For this particular grant, there is no budget impact during FY 15-16. Award announcements for this particular grant are not expected until August 2016, and there will be no budget impact for the upcoming 16-17 budget and no matching funds required by the City.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

By motion, recommend that the City Council authorize submission of a preliminary grant application to the Governor's Crime Commission for the purchase of 45 hand-held, portable 800 MHz radios and a new computer hardware/software program to enhance its data management systems.