



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

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

Date: July 19, 2019

Subject: Consideration – Authorize Application to the 2019 Byrne JAG Grant via North Carolina Governor’s Crime Commission for Purchase of Narcotics Identification Analyzers, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE’s) and Naxolone Units

BACKGROUND:

The Elizabeth City Police Department continues to seek grant funding opportunities through outside sources ifor the purpose of enhancing operations and furthering the department’s mission of the pursuit of excellence. During the last week of June 2019, the North Carolina Governor’s Crime Commission announced there was federal funding available for law enforcement equipment and training through the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program, which is part of the US Department of Justice, and is for the purpose of assisting state, local, and tribal law enforcement efforts to prevent or reduce crime and violence. The North Carolina Governor’s Crime Commission announced this funding opportunity had a cap of \$50,000.00 per agency, and no match required.

With the current heroin/opioid epidemic, there continues to be a concern for public safety and quality of life. It is important that first responders be equipped with the items that are needed to deal with these critical issues that have affected so many families. In addition, officer safety issues that arise from coming in contact with these dangerous drugs are cause for great concern. Law enforcement agencies must be proactive in protecting their officers from contact with lethal drugs while battling the epidemic. The Elizabeth City Police Department is seeking this grant to fund two (2) Narcotics Identification Analyzers; 64 Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) to outfit every police officer on the force; and approximately 128 Naxolone Units, which is enough to place at least two in every patrol vehicle. Staff is requesting approval to submit a preliminary grant application directly to the North Carolina Governor’s Crime Commission for the FY2019 Byrne JAG Grant Program in an effort to fund the items listed above.

ANALYSIS:

The application deadline for this grant is July 31, 2019. The grant project period for is January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2021. The mission of the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission is to improve the quality of life for the citizens of the state, to enhance public safety, and to reduce and prevent crime by improving the criminal justice system. The Byrne JAG Program was implemented after New York Police (103rd Precinct) Officer Edward R. Byrne was killed in the line of duty on February 26, 1988. Since that time and in honor of Police Officer Byrne, a major U.S. Department of Justice initiative was titled the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program, which allows states and local governments to support a broad range of activities to prevent and control crime and to improve the justice system.

The two (2) Narcotics Identification Analyzers sought by the Police Department are \$39,000.00, or \$19,500 per device. When officers handle drugs, they often are put at risk due to the chemicals contained in the illicit substances. For example, heroin cut with fentanyl is particularly potent. If it comes in contact with the skin, it can cause a person to experience severe difficulty in breathing and cardiac problems. By equipping officers with hand-held narcotics identification analyzers they are able to scan for more than 370 illicit substances in a single test, which keeps officers from having to open drug packages to determine what they are.

Secondly, the Department is seeking to obtain Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for every sworn law enforcement officer on the force. The protective gear, which consists of a Tyvek suit, Googles, and Mask, costs approximately \$22.42 each; the total for 64 of these is \$1,435.00. Personal Protective Equipment is designed to protect officers from serious injuries or illnesses resulting from contact with chemical, radiological, physical, electrical, mechanical or other hazards.

Lastly, the Department is seeking to obtain a supply of Naxolone Units, with enough to have at least two in every patrol officer vehicle. The Naxolone Units (also commonly referred to as Narcan) cost approximately \$74.72 per unit; 128 units will cost \$9,565.00. Law enforcement personnel are often the first to arrive on the scene of an overdose. Naxolone is a prescription medication, but it is not a controlled substance. Naxolone works by blocking or reversing the effects of opioid medication, including extreme drowsiness, slowed breathing, or loss of consciousness. Naxolone is used to treat a narcotic overdose in an emergency. The Pasquotank-Camden Emergency Management Services reported that in 2018, Naloxone (Narcan) was given 177 times. In 2019, so far, Naloxone (Narcan) has been given 92 times. Sadly, since June 5, 2019, there have been eight deaths in the area that are believed to be associated with drug use.

The total grant amount being sought by the Police Department is the maximum \$50,000.00.

FINANCIAL:

The Finance Committee discussed this matter during its July 18, 2019 meeting. Upon motion made by Councilman Caudle, seconded by Mayor Parker, the Committee unanimously recommended approval by the City Council.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

By motion, authorize the Elizabeth City Police Department's submission of a preliminary grant application to the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission for the 2019 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program, for the purpose of obtaining Narcotics Identification Analyzers, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and Naxolone Units.