



MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Finance Committee

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

Date: October 2, 2018

Subject: Consideration – Authorize Submission of Application for Project Safe Neighborhood Grant from the US Department of Justice via the North Carolina Gang Investigator’s Association

BACKGROUND:

In its ongoing effort to seek opportunities to enhance operations, the Elizabeth City Police Department discovered that the Department of Justice, through its Project Safe Neighborhood (PSN) Program has tentatively designated monies for North Carolina’s three judicial districts: North Carolina Eastern, North Carolina Middle, and North Carolina Western. Mr. Don Connelly, the Law Enforcement Coordinator / Public Information Officer at the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of North Carolina has made application to be a “fiscal agent” for the PSN grant. Mr. Connelly has advised that the allocation tentatively allotted for the Eastern North Carolina District is \$342,882.00.

On October 5, 2017, the Attorney General took steps to strengthen the PSN Program and made it clear that it is a Department of Justice priority. PSN is a results-oriented, collaborative approach to public safety that utilizes law enforcement and community partnerships to focus on the most violent criminals in the most violent areas. The program's goal is to work together to reduce violent crime and make our communities safer. The PSN Program builds effective partnerships with state, local, and tribal law enforcement and community partners; it enhances community capacity to obtain and analyze crime data to guide strategies and measure the impact of efforts. Additionally, the PSN Program provides expansive training for law enforcement officials and prosecutors.

A board comprised of members of the North Carolina Gang Investigator’s Association, state, and local officials will review all grant applications; if our application is approved, the North Carolina Gang Investigator’s Association will be the body responsible for submitting the grant to the Department of Justice. Staff is seeking approval to represent the five-county region and spearhead our region’s efforts and to submit a

grant application in the amount of \$334,715.00. There are no matching funds required for this grant, and no budget impact. The grant will be written by the Elizabeth City Police Department in conjunction with our grant writer; and the awarded items will be accessible for use by any partners within the five-county region. Since the Elizabeth City Police Department will be spearheading the grant, staff intends to propose that any awarded equipment be housed here.

ANALYSIS:

This is the first time that money from the PSN Grant has been allotted to North Carolina's Eastern District in many years. An e-mail announcement to local law enforcement partners was distributed on July 24, 2018, reporting this information and inviting any interested departments in the district to attend and present ideas for using the grant funding. The Elizabeth City Police Department reached out to law enforcement within the five-county region of Northeastern North Carolina and a subsequent meeting of area representatives determined that they wished to submit an application. Collectively, the group agreed that it would be beneficial to this region to create a Violent Crime Task Force and partner together to provide resources in the region's high crime areas. Additionally, they encouraged applying for overtime funding, and obtaining an Integrated Ballistic Identification System (IBIS). The IBIS system is a database that analyzes shell casings, and is able to link crime to crime, and gun to crime.

It is viewed positively if there is a "regional" approach to crime and crime solving endeavors in law enforcement grants. The group is requesting \$20,000.00 in overtime funding in order to use staff from all agencies in saturated patrols, working the high crime areas. The second item of interest was the purchase of an IBIS machine for analyzing shell casings, which costs \$314,715.00. The IBIS machine is able to link crimes quickly; link crimes that may not have been otherwise connected; share intelligence across jurisdictional boundaries; and give prosecutors admissible evidence to corroborate witness testimony. The total amount that will be requested in grant funding is \$334,715.00.

If awarded, the North Carolina Gang Investigator's Association would serve as the fiscal agent and the Elizabeth City Police Department would be a sub-recipient. The original deadline for this grant was November 28, 2018; however, yesterday, staff received an email advising that the deadline has been moved up to October 11, 2018. The review board is expected to make a decision by October 17, 2018.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

By motion, recommend that the City Council authorize the Elizabeth City Police Department to submit a preliminary grant application on behalf of the region to the North Carolina Gang Association for the Project Safe Neighborhood Program in the amount of \$334,715.00.