



Council Business Meeting

June 20, 2023

Agenda Item	Wildfire Program & 2023-2025 BN Budget Presentation	
From	Ralph Sartain Mariane Berry	Fire Chief Finance Director
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Item Type	Requested by Council <input type="checkbox"/> Update <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Request for Direction <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

SUMMARY

This presentation is to clarify and discuss the recent questions on the Wildfire Budget for BN 2023-2025.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

Council goal of Wildfire risk reduction.

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Recently, there has been communication within the community that the Wildfire budget was cut in half. This presentation will clarify that the 2023-2025 BN Wildfire budget was not reduced, in fact was increased, from the previous BN Wildfire budget and will provide background information. City Staff will present a summary of the Wildfire program and budget during the City Council Business Meeting on June 20th.

The Wildfire Division is part of the overall budget of the Fire Department. In the Adopted Budget for BN 2023-2025, the total budget for the Fire Department is \$28,552,434 (source: Resolution 2023-10), which generally remained consistent from the previous biennium after removing the accounting treatment of ambulance revenue that was implemented in BN 2023-2025. Within the Fire Department budget, the Wildfire Division's approved budget for BN 2023-2025 was \$3,393,463. It was subsequently increased by Council by an additional \$65,000 bringing the total in the adopted budget to \$3,458,463. With that, the total Wildfire Division's budget *increased 10%* from the previous biennium.

As Staff reviewed the assertion that the Wildfire budget was cut in half and confirmed that it was incorrect, it prompted a deeper discussion on how the division has been funded historically. In previous, more recent biennium budgets, specifically for 2015-2023, the division has been funded through various allocations of grant money, the Water Fund and the AFR (Ashland Forest Resiliency) utility bill surcharge. During this time, the City's need for wildfire mitigation have expanded from the original watershed forestland fire prevention and mitigation initiative to also include urban interface programs.

The City works to strategically balance the Wildfire Division's prevention and mitigation initiatives conducted in both the Ashland watershed and in the urban interface, as well as through the collective efforts of other City departments that contribute to this goal. The presentation will review the 2023-2025 BN Wildfire budget and provide background information on the City's overall wildfire prevention and mitigation efforts.

FISCAL IMPACTS

N/A

REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

N/A





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