

Date: June 10, 2024

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager *T.M.*

From: Kevin Riper, Director of Financial Management *KR*

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Update on the Fire Department's Peak Load Unit (Rescue 2)**

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As part of the Fiscal Year 2024 Adopted Budget, the Fire Department received a General Fund one-time allocation of \$500,000 to operate a peak load advanced life support (ALS) ambulance unit, known as the Peak Load Unit. This initiative aims to enhance the 911 medical service capacity of the structurally funded ALS ambulances within the City of Long Beach (City). With the growing volume of 911 medical calls requiring transportation to emergency medical care providers, this additional unit is crucial. The Fire Department currently operates nine ALS ambulances on 24-hour shifts, ensuring consistent 24/7 service for the community. The Peak Load Unit currently provides staffing seven days a week for 12 hours each day, effectively bolstering the City's emergency medical response capabilities.

On January 13, 2024, the Peak Load Unit, operationally named Rescue 2, was put into service. The Fire Department utilized its workload software program to analyze the best location for the Peak Load Unit. The analysis concluded that Fire Station 2, located in downtown Long Beach, is the most optimal station for the Peak Load Unit to support Citywide 911 ALS ambulance transport needs. This placement of the Peak Load Unit at Fire Station 2 results in Rescue 2 as the first arriving ALS ambulance transport for 92.5 percent of calls in the downtown Long Beach area.

The Peak Load Unit is staffed with a dedicated team of four firefighter paramedics, which ensures its availability seven days a week for 12-hour shifts. The deployment of Rescue 2 has significantly stabilized ALS ambulance transport calls across Long Beach, effectively reducing patient wait times and transport times. This strategic temporary addition to our emergency services demonstrates our commitment to enhancing community safety and delivering timely medical care.

The \$500,000 of one-time appropriation will support the Peak Load Unit between January 13, 2024, through June 21, 2024. On average, the Peak Load Unit expends \$44,000 on labor costs per pay-period. To continue this community resource from June 22, 2024, through the end of the FY 24, the cost impact totals \$352,000 (in addition to the \$500,000 FY 24 one-time allotment).

### **Recommendations and Next Steps**

If approved, the Fire Department is not anticipating the ability to absorb the cost within its current General Fund Group appropriations, as they are already anticipating going over budgeted expenditures by the end of FY 24 primarily due to spending on emergency medical

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service equipment and supplies, facility maintenance expenses, as well as an eight (8) percent increase in emergency 911 calls requesting paramedic and ambulance services over the past 5 years, which has resulted in a 10 percent increase in ambulance transport requests over the same period, resulting in an impact on resources available.

Thus, as requested at the June 4, 2024, City Council meeting, if the City Council wish to continue this temporary additional service until the end of the fiscal year, an additional FY 24 appropriation increase in the amount of \$352,000 would be needed. The best available funding source would be from one-time funds expected to be available at the end of FY 24 in the General Fund. Taking this funding from year end will result in less funds available in the FY 25 budget for one-time priorities as part of the Mayor and City Council adopted budget, and staff will need to evaluate this model as part of next year's budget, as the City does not have the fiscal resources to fund a permanent additional rescue, and one-time funds used for peak load staffing are not expected to be able to fund a peak load resource 7 days a week for 12 hours for the entire year. Although the General Fund FY 24 projection reflects an improved outlook, there are many variables that may impact the fiscal year. If sufficient year-end funds do not materialize in FY 24, operating reserves may need to be utilized to cover the cost of this program. Staff will return to City Council on June 18, 2024 to share the FY 24 Mid-Year Budget Performance Report providing an update on the City of Long Beach's FY 24 financial status and projections.

If you have any questions regarding this resource, please contact me at (562) 570-6427.

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