



**AGENDA NO: 6.c**

**MEETING DATE: October 14, 2025**

# Staff Report

**TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council**

**DATE: September 29, 2025**

**FROM: Daniel K. McCrain, Fire Chief**

**SUBJECT: Type 3 Fire Engine Vehicle Replacement**

## **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Authorize the Fire Chief to sign a purchase agreement in the amount of \$669,101.49 for a Pierce Type 3 Wildland Fire Engine to replace Engine 5371 through South Coast Fire Equipment using a Sourcewell Cooperative purchasing agreement.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

Provide alternate direction.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The total budget for this vehicle is \$770,000. This includes an estimated purchase price of \$669,101.49 for the vehicle and \$100,000 to allow for minor changes to the final build design and purchase of the required ancillary equipment such as radios, tools, hose, etc. Approximately \$350,000 of mutual aid reimbursement received in FY 2024-25 has been reserved for a down payment on this apparatus. Payment in full is due upon delivery of the vehicle approximately 18-36 months from the date of order. Mutual aid vehicle reimbursement received from the use of engine 5371 will be utilized to replace money encumbered from the City's vehicle replacement fund for the purchase of this apparatus. This apparatus purchase will be a piggyback Sourcewell contract through a cooperative purchasing program.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Fire Department currently operates a 2001 WestMark Type 3 Wildland Engine that we received as part of an apparatus exchange with the City of Atascadero in April of 2024. The City exchanged a 2009 Kenworth T370 Rescue for the WestMark Type 3 engine. During the discussion about the vehicle exchange, it was decided the vehicle replacement schedule would remain on a similar timeline due to the age and mileage of the vehicles. With manufacturing times currently 30 to 36 months from the date of order from the major apparatus manufacturers, we need to plan at least 3 years ahead to replace the fire engine. If we were to place an order for this engine this fiscal year we would anticipate receipt of the vehicle by July of 2028. We have been informed a limited number of chassis are available on a first-come, first served basis through Pierce Fire Apparatus in approximately 18 months and that we may be able to acquire one of these chassis for this apparatus build. If the supply chain changes and the limited number of available chassis are purchased by other

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agencies before we finalize an agreement, the timeline will extend to 36 months as that is the current standard production time reported by the apparatus manufacturers. This Type 3 fire engine was heavily utilized during the summers of 2024 and 2025. Within hours of being put into service, the engine was staffed and assigned to cover for County Fire Station 30 in Templeton due to local fire activity. This engine also provided more than 500 hours of reimbursable mutual aid support statewide. Although a Type 3 engine is designed for wildland use, it is routinely used as a first out apparatus when one of the Type 1 engines are out of service for maintenance, allowing for flexibility in our operations. This also ensures we have the ability to complete the required vehicle maintenance and remain fully staffed and operational. The new engine has been designed to optimize this interoperability with a larger pump, storage for a ground ladder, and the capacity to carry larger fire hose for connection to a hydrant for structure operations.

## **DISCUSSION**

Fire apparatus typically have a 15-to-20-year lifespan depending on the type and use although this is often being extended to 25 years due to supply chain issues. Most agencies operate a fire engine 10 years frontline or daily service, and 10 years as a back-up engine to be put in service on a periodic basis. This is done to ensure reliability as breakdowns during an emergency response or fire situation can have life threatening consequences. Supply chain issues, as well as mergers among fire apparatus manufacturers, have created a substantial delay in acquiring fire engines and other specialty vehicles. These factors have caused significant inflation of pricing and resulted in long delays in receipt of a vehicle after the date of order.

For the 2024/25 fiscal year, the Fire Department was able to generate approximately \$350,000 of mutual aid reimbursement from participation in fires statewide and those funds have been earmarked for the replacement of this vehicle. As of the date of this report, the Fire Department has also generated approximately an additional \$140,000 in vehicle reimbursement that can be applied to this project from mutual aid responses during this summer. Each vehicle used on a mutual aid assignment receives either a daily or hourly rate to offset depreciation of the vehicles as it is used for this mission. This vehicle reimbursement will assist in funding the purchase of a replacement apparatus. The Fire Department anticipates utilizing reimbursement generated by the use of engine 5371 on mutual aid assignments over the next 2 or 3 years to offset the purchase of the apparatus by repaying the city's vehicle replacement fund as is intended by the mutual aid reimbursement program. I want to emphasize that mutual aid reimbursement is not revenue that the city can budget for other needs such as additional positions, it is reimbursement for services provided and depreciation of vehicles used on these assignments so that participation in mitigating these emergencies is not a financial burden on local agencies. We cannot guarantee responses to mutual aid assignments every summer as weather and multiple other factors determine the need. Ultimately, the City will need to provide the necessary funding to complete this purchase. Typically, cities have a vehicle replacement policy that budgets annually for the replacement of this fire equipment. Those that do not will pay out general fund or emergency reserve funds, others will finance and make payments if the city does not have adequate cash reserves. We are in a unique position as we do not have funding budgeted for capital replacement of fire apparatus but have been able to put aside nearly half of this purchase using reimbursement funds.

The frequency of devastating wildfires across the state and nation is increasing. The State Fire Marshal has recently released maps with an increased fire hazard severity zones identified statewide and here in Morro Bay. By having tools designed for responding to these changing fire conditions we are demonstrating a level of preparedness and improved response capabilities for both the public and potentially to insurance companies evaluating the risk to their customers. The type 3 engine provides equipment better designed to meet the needs of the wildfire environment while still being capable of performing day-to-day responses within the city if needed. The higher ground clearance

and four-wheel drive capabilities of the new engine will also provide another resource during flood events and other natural disasters that can limit travel of a traditional engine.

### **CONCLUSION**

Fire apparatus are a form of capital equipment required to provide fire suppression service. These vehicles have an expected lifespan of approximately 20 years and must be replaced at an interval designed to ensure reliability. This engine is currently 24 years old and would be 26 years old when replaced if we are successful in receiving an engine in 18 months. Supply chain issues and other industry changes have resulted in extended build times for fire vehicles requiring departments to plan further ahead in anticipation of replacement needs. Most vendors are reporting 30- 36 months or more. The Morro Bay Fire Department has managed to earmark a down payment of approximately half the money required for this purchase. We are requesting that Council approves entering into a purchase agreement with South Coast Fire Equipment for purchase of a Pierce Wildland BX3 Fire Engine using a Sourcewell cooperative purchasing agreement to comply with competitive bid procedures.

### **ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. South Coast Fire Equipment proposal