



City of Oceanside

300 North Coast Highway,
Oceanside, California 92054

Staff Report

File #: 26-1265

Agenda Date: 3/25/2026

Agenda #: 15.

DATE: March 25, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

FROM: Fire Department

TITLE: ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FIRE DEPARTMENT HAND CREW PROGRAM TO PERFORM EMERGENCY SERVICES AND FIRE PREVENTION VEGETATION MANAGEMENT IN COORDINATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES ON A COST-RECOVERY BASIS AND ADOPTING A SUPPORTING FEE SCHEDULE

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution authorizing the Oceanside Fire Department to enter into mutual aid or similar agreements with other governmental agencies under which the Fire Department Hand Crew Program will be loaned out on a cost recovery basis to assist with vegetation and fuels management for the purpose of fire prevention or emergency response and adopt a corresponding fee schedule in support of the program.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

On November 5, 2025 the City Council approved the creation of a new part-time employee classification of Fuels Crew Member and initial funding to stand up the Hand Crew Program. The goal of the Hand Crew Program is to develop a self-sustaining operational model supported through partnerships with local agencies, other City departments, and mutual aid deployments.

The program is intended to support wildfire resilience and community safety through project-based work and emergency response capabilities. The crew will conduct project-based work through service agreements with local and regional partners, including vegetation management, fuel reduction, fire prevention, and related public safety services. These projects will support wildfire resilience efforts in Oceanside and surrounding communities while providing a local resource to address emerging fuel management needs in coordination with partner agencies and other City departments. Cost recovery for these activities will occur through project-based service agreements that reimburse for personnel, administrative, and equipment costs associated with providing the service.

In addition to project-based work, the Hand Crew Program will function as an emergency response resource available for local and statewide wildfire incidents through California's mutual aid system. When deployed, the crew will operate in the same capacity as other similar hand crews supporting fire suppression, line construction, mop-up, and related incident operations. Cost recovery for

emergency deployments will occur pursuant to existing statewide mutual aid agreements and practices. Reimbursements received through both project work and emergency deployments would be applied to ongoing operational needs and long-term program sustainability.

Adoption of the proposed resolution would establish the Fire Department’s authority to enter into such agreements with the approval of the Fire Chief, and would outline a cost-recovery fee schedule for the Fire Department Hand Crew Program. The fee schedule would apply to project-based service agreements and provide the basis for calculating reimbursable costs. Revenues generated through the fee schedule would be deposited into designated revenue accounts to offset program costs and support ongoing operations, as well as potential program expansion. Clear delineation of scope of work along with appropriate insurance and indemnity provisions will be required in any MOU or other agreement.

Program expenditures, including staffing and equipment costs, are supported by existing, approved budgets. Adoption of this resolution does not request any additional appropriation or increase in expenditure funding.

Cost-recovery for fire prevention activities under this program will be based on the estimated reasonable cost of providing services and includes the following components:

- **Personnel Fees:** For non-emergency services, personnel fees are calculated using the City’s fully burdened overtime hourly rates for a 56-hour Fire Battalion Chief (Step D), 56-hour Fire Captain (Step C), 56-hour Fire Engineer (Step C), 56-hour Firefighter-Paramedic (Step F), and the Fuels Crew Member straight pay hourly rate. For emergency mutual aid deployments, personnel fees are calculated in accordance with the methodology and formulas established under the California Fire Assistance Agreement (CFAA). Any Council-approved salary adjustments for these positions will automatically be reflected in the cost-recovery fees.
- **Administrative Fee:** An administrative fee of 25.93 percent is proposed to recover overhead costs, including program administration, supervision, training, logistics, and support services. This fee is consistent with the administrative fee currently charged by the Fire Department for state and federal wildfire response and special event programs. The administrative fee will be adjusted annually on July 1 based on calculations submitted to the California Office of Emergency Services.
- **Equipment Fees:** Equipment usage rates will be based on the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Schedule of Equipment Rates. Any future updates to FEMA’s rates will be automatically incorporated into the fee schedule.

The fee schedule is included as an attachment to the resolution.

Hand Crew Fees		
Fee Name	Fee	Account Number

on the number and scope of vegetation management and fuel reduction services requested, as well as the number of mutual aid deployments. All reimbursements received and related program expenditures will be recorded in the Hand Crew Program cost recovery account (836204725270).

COMMISSION OR COMMITTEE REPORT

The Police and Fire Commission will receive an update at its regular meeting on April 14, 2026.

CITY ATTORNEY'S ANALYSIS

The City Attorney has reviewed the referenced documents and approved as to form.

Prepared by: Alicia Mendoza, Senior Management Analyst

Reviewed by: David Parsons, Fire Chief

Submitted by: Jonathan Borrego, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Staff Report
2. Resolution