



AGENDA REPORT

TO: G. Harold Duffey
Interim City Administrator

FROM: Darren Allison
Acting Chief of Police

SUBJECT: OPD RSI Helicopter Maintenance
Contract

DATE: February 16, 2023

City Administrator Approval

Date: Feb 17, 2023

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator Or Designee To Enter Into A Professional Services Agreement With Rotorcraft Support, Inc. (RSI) To Provide Helicopter Maintenance Services To The Oakland Police Department (OPD) For Helicopter Use In Assisting Various Departments With Responding To Emergencies Throughout The City, For The Period Of July 1, 2023 To June 30, 2025 In An Amount Not To Exceed Eight Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$850,000) Per Year For A Total Contract Not To Exceed One Million, Seven Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,700,000).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Oakland City Council approved the last helicopter maintenance contract previously at the June 16, 2020 meeting with recommendation entitled: Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator Or Designee To Enter Into A Professional Services Agreement With Rotorcraft Support, Inc. (RSI) To Provide Helicopter Maintenance Services To The Oakland Police Department (OPD) For The Period Of July 1, 2020 To June 30, 2022 In An Amount Not To Exceed Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$750,000) Per Year, Or One Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,500,000) For July 1, 2020 To June 30, 2022, With An Option To Extend The Contract For One Additional Year To June 30, 2023, At The Same Rate Of Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$750,000) Per Year, For A Total Contract Not To Exceed Two Million, Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$2,250,000).

Oakland Police Department (OPD) uses helicopters as backup for vehicle-based police patrols during pursuits, arrests, and for directing the deployment of officers at crime scenes. OPD has two patrol helicopters; both of which are over 30 years old, in addition to a newer training helicopter. These air vehicles are used every day and require increasing levels of on-call mechanical support to maintain safe operational functionality. OPD conducted a Request for Quote (RFQ) and Rotorcraft Support, Inc. (RSI) was the sole vendor to respond so OPD will retain their services. OPD seeks a contract with RSI for up to \$850,000 per year for two years, for a two-year contract total not to exceed \$1,700,000.

The current OPD-RSI contract which expires June 30, 2023, specifies an hourly rate for

helicopter maintenance of \$65 per hour to \$135 per hour depending on the type of mechanical support, plus a cost structure for vehicle parts – a new contract would maintain a similar hourly rate and cost structure. OPD has spent approximately \$750,000 total per year on maintenance (labor and parts) but must budget for a higher level of annual maintenance costs as the OPD helicopter fleet continues to age while also seeing a greater frequency of use. The proposed contract, as outlined in the resolution accompanying this report, will provide for a continuity of maintenance service for OPD's helicopter fleet.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

OPD uses helicopters for backup for vehicle-based police patrols during pursuits and arrests and directing the deployment of officers at crime scenes. Helicopters are used most days if not every day for operational support – averaging approximately 1,200 flight hours per year or 100 hours per month. Helicopters play a critical role in policing because they can respond very quickly throughout the city. OPD air patrol can respond in approximately 30 seconds to a crime pursuit or investigation, when called for support – whereas motor vehicles may take much more time to respond in situations where every minute counts.

Air patrol has provided coverage for incidents in 2020-2021, connected to approximately 950 felony arrests. These cases include homicide, robbery, stolen cars, and house burglaries. This support also includes over 216 vehicle pursuits - air patrol vehicle pursuits are much safer than pursuits via road-based police vehicles due to the inherent danger of the latter type of pursuit for the public, as well as for the suspect and patrol officer. Helicopters also offer unique situational awareness support during sideshows, where hundreds if not thousands of people in vehicles gather to engage in highly dangerous and illegal vehicular activity.

Need for Helicopter Maintenance

OPD has two patrol helicopters and one training helicopter. The two patrol helicopters are MD500E model helicopters of which one was built in 1990 (32 years old) and the other was built in 1993 (29 years old). The training helicopter is a Schweizer 300 CBI built in 2005. These helicopters are used consistently and require more expensive parts and mechanical support to maintain safe operational functionality.

The cost for new helicopters exceeds OPD's current budget capacity – new similar aircraft would cost approximately \$4.8 million each – and then require an additional one to one and a half million for new law enforcement equipment (e.g., radios, lights, cameras, special electrical wiring). A total refurbishment of current helicopters would cost approximately \$3.5 million each plus additional costs for law enforcement equipment; these options would still require a maintenance contract as well, although the maintenance would be less expensive on newer vehicles.

The cost for leasing helicopters is also cost-prohibitive. A ten-year lease would be required to lease a helicopter at the cost of \$722,224 per year. That cost does not include maintenance or fuel.

The following history outlines recent maintenance contracts and related spending authority:

- Rotorcraft Support, Inc. (RSI) for an amount not to exceed \$400,000 per year (July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2017) via a cooperative contract agreement with the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office.
- RSI (July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018) through a cooperative agreement with the City of San Diego.
- RSI (July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2020) through a cooperative agreement with the City of San Diego.
- RSI (July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2023) through a cooperative agreement with the City of San Diego.

The cost per year for maintenance has increased from \$750,000 to \$850,000 per year because flight time hours have increased in response to increase in crime. Therefore, fuel costs have increased. An estimate of 13% increase over 7 years is reasonable considering the increase in fuel costs and flight hours.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

OPD's helicopters are used for obtaining visual information. The department uses the helicopter as a rapid response patrol unit. The Air Unit can respond to in-progress shootings and violent crimes rapidly and frequently find the situation abruptly ending upon the arrival of the helicopter. During violent incidents in-progress, the Air Unit can expedite the Patrol officer's response by directing the officer to injured victims and fleeing subjects. The Air Unit is assigned citywide and responds anywhere in the City that OPD dispatch sends it. The Air Unit will occasionally assist outside agencies as requested. These requests frequently have a direct nexus to Oakland. The Air Unit assists Ceasefire and other specialized teams when requested. These requests usually include maintaining a visual on a subject and advising when the safest opportunity arises for arrest (exited vehicle or house).

The Air Unit assists with crowd control by advising the ground units the size and activity of the crowd. The Air Unit also assists with giving public announcements when needed. One example is the Air Unit directing officers to intersections for traffic control to safely facilitate mobile protests. Many protests do not supply OPD with march routes which prevents the department from safely protecting the crowd from vehicle traffic. The public health use is spotting fires (from smoke) and assisting Oakland Fire in safely evacuating areas. The Air Unit also assists Oakland Fire with identifying safe ingress and egress points to battle the fires. Lastly, the Air Unit can locate and direct Oakland Fire to hot spots that pose additional risks. The daily public health impact is commonly locating missing persons at risk and rapid intervention of violent crimes.

OPD advertised a Request for Quote (RFQ) for helicopter maintenance services, on September 2, 2022, which closed on September 19, 2022. RSI can provide all the labor, personnel, material, tools, and supplies necessary to maintain OPD's helicopter fleet on an on-call, as-needed basis. RSI has a valid Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) repair station certificate and can offer a full staff of FAA certified airframe and powerplant (A&P) mechanics with factory training and recurrent training on the relevant OPD equipment.

The OPD-RSI contract for the period of July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2025 would allow for a spending authority not to exceed \$850,000 per year. Rather, OPD is requesting a contract with this spending maximum based on expectations that the aging helicopter fleet may need additional parts that will become scarce over time and based on the historical increase in

maintenance cost.

Recent Uses of OPD Helicopters

- Recently Oakland had two school shootings. The first was On August 29th, 2022, at Madison Park Academy and the second was on September 28th, 2022, at King Estates Jr. High School. The OPD helicopter was instrumental in both events. The helicopter was able to coordinate with responding outside agencies including California Highway Patrol (CHP) and Alameda County Sheriff's Office (ACSO). The helicopter was used in establishing an inner and outer perimeter, facilitated evacuation of victims, and students. The helicopter also aided in coordinating ingress and egress of emergency personnel, and parents. Ground resources do not have the overview ability to deal with these rapidly evolving situations.
- On January 12th, 2022, the OPD helicopter assisted Violent Crimes Operation Center (VCOCC) with the apprehension of three robbery suspects. The helicopter followed the suspect vehicle from East Oakland to West Oakland. When the suspect vehicle parked, the helicopter directed ground units to the three suspects. Three robbery suspects were taken into custody and three firearms were recovered.
- On June 6th, 2022, the OPD helicopter responded to assist ground units that were in an active pursuit of a carjacking vehicle. When the helicopter arrived overhead the ground units terminated their pursuit. The helicopter continued to follow the suspect vehicle as it drove recklessly on city streets and freeways. The suspect vehicle stopped at High and Foothill after it collided with another vehicle. The suspect fled to a nearby market. The helicopter directed ground units to the suspect who was arrested, and one handgun was recovered.
- Over the last two years the OPD helicopter has assisted the Sideshow Operations Unit every weekend with increasing mitigation and preventing dissemination of sideshows. The helicopter can report the size, location, and direction of sideshow crowds. The helicopter can give the safest approach paths for ground units. The helicopter can see the exact suspect vehicles and later direct ground units to those vehicles.

In addition to the recent uses cited, this is a comprehensive view of vehicle use since the last contract renewal:

2020:

- Flight hours 1,283
- Calls for service 4,696
- Response time and percentage of time first of scene 24 seconds & 91%
- How many missing person searches, felony arrests, and vehicle pursuits
- 7 missing person searches, 541 felony arrests, and 132 vehicle pursuits
- 35 murder arrests, 105 robbery arrests

2021:

- Flight hours 1,195
- Calls for service 5,198
- Response time and percentage of time first of scene 25 seconds 91%
- How many missing person searches, felony arrests, and vehicle pursuits
- 9 missing person searches, 409 felony arrests, 84 vehicle pursuits
- 26 murder arrests, 63 robbery arrests

2022 (through October 2022):

- Flight hours 1,158.3
- Calls for service 4,092
- Response time and percentage of time first of scene 28 seconds 91%
- How many missing person searches, felony arrests, and vehicle pursuits
- 26 missing person searches, 460 felony arrests, 58 vehicle pursuits
- 24 murder arrests, 49 robbery arrests

The Air Unit has a very focused, prioritized use as explained in the daily functions and usage. The focused priorities are preservation of life by rapidly responding to life threatening incidents.

Other uses of the Air Unit include mitigating high-risk incidents such as vehicle pursuits with deescalating from removing ground units (which usually results in subjects slowing down and abandoning their vehicle where ground units can make the arrest) as well as quickly locating missing persons at risk by covering large areas that would be time and resource consuming for ground units. The capabilities of the Air Unit are impossible to duplicate, making alternative strategies unpractical.

This recommended policy action advances the Citywide priority of responsive, trustworthy government as helicopters serve as the backup for patrol for arrests and directs officers at crime scenes. Having helicopters allow OPD officers to be more responsive and effective at the scene of a crime.

FISCAL IMPACT

OPD is asking for spending authority for a contract with RSI for up to \$850,000 per year for a two-year period. Funding for this spending authority will be added into OPD's baseline for FY 2023-2025 budget, increasing OPD's budget baseline annually by \$850,000 to cover the contract term. Funding will be paid from the following funding codes: Fund: 1010 - General Fund: General Purpose, Organization: 107710 - Special Operations, Project: Project to be determined, and Program: PS13 – Special Operations.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

No outreach was necessary beyond the standard City legislation publication.

COORDINATION

The Budget Bureau and the Office of the City Attorney were consulted on the development of this report and accompanying resolution.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: The City of Oakland can more readily attract economic activity in a safer city. Helicopter support provides vital support to daily patrol operations which support public safety.

Environmental: There are no environmental issues associated with this report.

Race and Social Equity: OPD uses helicopters to aid in all variety of patrol operations. Policing operations serve to enhance public safety especially in areas more prone to violent crime. Residents and visitors living in areas with a greater proportion of crime will particularly benefit from police services that promote public safety in these neighborhoods. All Oakland residents and visitors also benefit from efforts to address criminal activity and promote public safety.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator Or Designee To Enter Into A Professional Services Agreement With Rotorcraft Support, Inc. (RSI) To Provide Helicopter Maintenance Services To The Oakland Police Department (OPD) For Helicopter Use In Assisting Various Departments With Responding To Emergencies Throughout The City, For The Period Of July 1, 2023 To June 30, 2025 In An Amount Not To Exceed Eight Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$850,000) Per Year For A Total Contract Not To Exceed One Million, Seven Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,700,000).

For questions concerning this report, please contact Sergeant Jonathan Vanerwegen, OPD, Helicopter Unit, at (510) 615-5875.

Respectfully submitted



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