



AGENDA REPORT


TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: Damon Covington
Fire Chief

SUBJECT: Agreement to Sell Fire Boat

DATE: March 17, 2026

City Administrator Approval


Jestin Johnson (Apr 22, 2026 09:42:34 PDT)

Date: Apr 22, 2026

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The Sale Of The Former Oakland Fire Boat, Known As The Sea Wolf, To The Azul Marine Group, Inc For Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) And, Finding That The Sale Is In The Best Interests Of The City Pursuant To OMC 2.04.120(D)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Approval of this proposed resolution will ensure that the Oakland Fire Department recovers a fair portion of the remaining value of its outdated 30-year-old fire boat, while sparing the City of Oakland (City) of any additional costs associated with repairs, ongoing maintenance and/or storage for the Sea Wolf.

This is a non-auction sale to a regional third-party nonprofit, Azul Marine Group, Inc. Based on a professional evaluation of the former currently non-operational vessel, staff is confident that the amount offered by the interested buyer is at or above fair market value and it is in the best interest of the city to authorize the sale to limit any future financial or environmental risk associated with retaining the Sea Wolf.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The City and the Oakland Fire Department have a responsibility to ensure the safety of its residents, businesses, and visitors both on land and in its miles of waterways. For over 30 years, the Oakland Fire vessel known as the Sea Wolf has operated as a key response tool in the Oakland Fire Department fleet, responding to fires, medical emergencies and search and rescue efforts in the Oakland/Alameda Estuary, at the Port of Oakland, and the Bay. However, the former boat has reached the end of its life span, is no longer operational, and has begun to drastically deteriorate over the last few years .

City Council
May 5, 2026

The Sea Wolf was acquired with funds provided by Measure I (1992), which is related to Oakland's Emergency Response and Seismic Safety initiatives.

Over the course of 25 years in service, the Sea Wolf began to show signs of decline and ultimately no longer meets the original need of the vessel or mission of the fire department.

In November of 2021, the City Council adopted [Resolution No. 88902](#) which authorized the City Administrator to enter into an agreement and formally accept a Department of Homeland Security Port Security Grant in the amount of Eight Hundred and Twenty Five Thousand Dollar (\$825,000) to fund the construction and purchase of a state of the art fire boat for use by the Oakland Fire Department and to be docked on the estuary at Fire Station #2 where the Sea Wolf currently occupies space.

In 2025, the Oakland Fire Department welcomed a new state-of-the-art fire boat to its fleet, the Bay Wolf, enhancing regional response capabilities and waterfront protection.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

The City of Oakland is a complex jurisdiction for emergency response. In addition to a large diverse population of over 400,000 people, the fire department responds to over 70,000 calls year-round in downtown high-rise structures, on multiple freeways, bridges, tunnels, in the city's expansive wildfire urban interface, and along approximately 19–20 miles of shoreline that leads into the San Francisco Bay.

When the Oakland Fire Department was awarded a federal grant to purchase and build a new vessel to provide regional coverage for the Port of Oakland, waterways, and neighboring cities, the department was tasked with determining what to do with the Sea Wolf which has been out of service for over a decade and no longer operational.

To determine the next steps for the Sea Wolf, a comprehensive independent evaluation and appraisal of the boat was completed by Starboard Marine Surveyors in December 2024 and provided to the department in 2025 (See attached for the completed appraisal of costs for repairs, and the detailed assessment of the vessel's current condition). The analysis of the Sea Wolf's condition included a comprehensive external and mechanical inspection of the vessel. The appraisal was done after interest was shown by a potential buyer.

The interested party, Azul Marine Group, seeks to buy the vessel, repair it, and restore it for educational and training purposes, as well as firefighting support in the Port of Stockton.

The pro-bono analysis and appraisal report shows that the Sea Wolf needs over \$250,000 in repairs and new parts to be restored to a functional capacity (see attached estimate from J & H Marine). Considering the analysis was done over 12 months ago, it is fair to say that the condition of the boat has only diminished since then.

Soliciting a costly formal independent inspection and preparing the vessel for an auction that may or may not generate the same as is being offered already (\$25,000) does not seem prudent for the City.

A retired member of the Oakland Fire Department (SME) who has had the most direct involvement in the Sea Wolf for the last 30 years shared the following message with Fire Administration when asked to review the inspection materials:

“Sir, I have Reviewed attached Documents. They appear to be correct, Based on my 30-year history with the vessel. If anything, the costs are a little understated. The current material condition of the vessel is non-operational. It will cost money just to let it sit mainly because holes will start to develop in the hull due to excessive bottom growth and lack of cathodic protection. The City has already realized its sales value by not spending on maintenance. I can provide past estimates and spread sheets as well as copies of all boatyard work summaries and costs as needed.”

The Fire boat and the Fire Engine and crew at Station 2 were taken out of service from the late 90s to 2020 due to City budget reductions. During that time, the Sea Wolf was underutilized and continued to deteriorate and depreciate. Over the last 5 years, its condition has only gotten worse, while becoming a potential environmental hazard for the Port and Oakland estuary.

The Fire Department is seeking City Council authority to waive that costly formal appraisal process and bypass the public auction process. The department is not confident that based on the analysis of the boat’s condition that the boat would garner more than what is being offered. The longer the boat sits in the water, the more it will further depreciate.

Attached are the lists of uses that the interested buyer has identified which will benefit from a fully restored Sea Wolf. A sale to Azul Marine Group ensures that the Sea Wolf will continue to serve the public good, as the buyer has designed a series of initiatives that support firefighter and boat safety training, recruitment, and professional development and environmental education, as well as some firefighting activity, once the vessel is fully operational again.

Selling the Sea Wolf will allow to recoup critical funding to support the Bay Wolf’s rising fuel costs and pay for future maintenance or aesthetic enhancements for the city to alleviate the current environmental risks that could arise.

Leaving a boat docked in water for extended periods exposes it to significant hazards, primarily marine growth (algae, barnacles), galvanic corrosion, hull blistering, and sinking due to failed pumps or leaks. Constant water exposure weakens fittings, ruins paint, and reduces performance, requiring consistent maintenance and protective, expensive anti-fouling paint. The Sea Wolf has been exposed to all these hazards for the last several years.

Because is a non-auction sale to a named third-party nonprofit, [OMC 2.04.120\(D\)](#) applies, meaning the City Council must authorize by resolution/ordinance and must make a finding that the sale is in the City’s best interests.

The Sea Wolf has served the City of Oakland well, but the time is now to part ways with this vessel to save money, reduce environmental risk, and to ensure that the boat is transitioned safely to a responsible party that is prepared to put up significant resources to restore it and put it back in the water for new innovative uses in the neighboring Port of Stockton.

FISCAL IMPACT

As mentioned earlier in the report, the sale of the Sea Wolf will allow the fire department to recoup funds to cover fuel costs and pay for future maintenance or aesthetic enhancements on the new vessel that is already in use.

The sale will also reduce the threat of any hazardous material mitigation costs that could arise should the Sea Wolf begin leaking fuel or other liquid into the estuary.

Funds recouped from the sale of the Sea Wolf would require a one-time City Council appropriation of revenue in the amount of \$25,000.00 deposited into the following Oakland Fire revenue account(s):

Fund Source	Organization	Account	Project	Program	Amount
General Purpose Fund 010	20813 – Fire: Boat	48114 – Sale of Vehicle	1000009 – DP200 Fire Administrative Project	PS18 – Special Operations – Emergency Response	\$25,000.00
Total Project:					\$25,000.00
Total One-Time:					\$25,000.00

Expenditure budget for this revenue collected will be established in the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Midcycle Budget or future Biennial Budget Adoptions.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

No public outreach was determined to be necessary in the development of this report.

COORDINATION

The Fire Department coordinated with the City Attorney’s Office, as well as the Budget Office in the development of this report.

RACE AND EQUITY

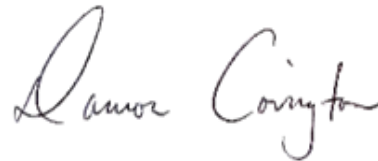
The sale of the Sea Wolf to Azul Marine Group, Inc. will allow the vessel to be restored and put into use in support of a host of local and regional initiatives and educational programs that support vulnerable children who may otherwise not have exposure to boating and educational opportunities on the water.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The Sale Of The Former Oakland Fire Boat, Known As The Sea Wolf, To The Azul Marine Group, Inc For Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) And, Finding That The Sale Is In The Best Interests Of The City Pursuant To OMC 2.04.120(D)

For questions regarding this report, please contact Assistant Chief Christopher Foley at (510) 238-4056.

Respectfully submitted,



Damon Covington
Fire Chief

Prepared by:
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Oakland Fire Department