



Legislation Text

File #: 18-1680, Version: 1

AGENDA REPORT REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

DATE: 4/18/2018

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Fire Department

SUBJECT:

City Council consideration to adopt Resolution No. 2018-020 amending the Policy for Emergency Medical Services Subscription Program and Emergency Medical Services Fee

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council adopt Resolution No. 2018-020 amending the Policy for Emergency Medical Services Subscription Program and Emergency Medical Services Fee

ANALYSIS:

The Corona Fire Department provides fire, rescue, and emergency medical services to the citizens of Corona. In 1998, the Fire Department upgraded its emergency medical services from basic life support to advanced life support, vastly improving survival rates and quality of life for the citizens and visitors of Corona. The Fire Department is funded through taxes to provide fire protection services. The Emergency Medical Services Subscription Program and Emergency Medical Services Fee ("EMS Program") were established in March 2004 to recover a portion of the costs of providing emergency medical care, as the demand increased. The EMS program protects Corona citizens and businesses from out-of-pocket expenses related to emergency care provided by the Fire Department.

Membership in the EMS program allows residents to receive emergency medical care provided by the Fire Department at the pre-paid monthly rate, currently \$4.00 per month, without incurring further expenses. The subscription rate for businesses without residents is on a sliding scale based on the number of employees covered. The subscription rate for businesses with residents (e.g. care facilities and apartments) is on a sliding scale based on the number of rooms, beds or apartments covered. Non-residents or residents who decline to participate in the subscription program, will be billed directly for emergency medical services. The current rate is \$350.00 per emergency/patient.

The EMS Program's policies and fees have remained constant since 2004. The Fire Department has reviewed and is recommending revisions to the Policy for Emergency Medical Services Subscription

Program and Emergency Medical Services Fee (“EMS Policy”) to make the program more efficient and equitable to our customers. Also, clarifying language has been added to reduce the opportunity for confusion between the EMS fee language and the City’s Master fee schedule.

The proposed changes to the EMS Policy are as follows:

Section 4.2: The original language of the EMS Policy only allowed non-water bill customers to enroll in the EMS Program during the May/June enrollment period. If enrollment was declined at that time, a customer could enroll at any time during the following fiscal year, upon payment of the full annual fee and a \$10.00 processing charge. The amended EMS Policy has been revised to allow customers who do not receive a water bill to enter the program at any time on a pro-rated basis and eliminates the \$10.00 processing fee.

Section 8.2: The original EMS Policy authorized EMS fee waivers for low income or very low income families utilizing the income thresholds established by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”). The amended EMS Policy is changing the determination of an EMS fee waiver from HUD’s guidelines to the Federal poverty guidelines issued annually by the Department of Health and Human Services (“HHS”). Using the HHS poverty guidelines is consistent with healthcare industry standards for low income waivers. A majority of clients our billing company represents use this as a standard. This change was also recommended during the Fire Department’s Agreed Upon Procedures audit conducted in 2017.

Section 8.3 and Section 8.4: The original EMS Policy addressed the Chief’s requirement to create a written record of every EMS fee waived in Section 8.3. The amended EMS Policy moves this language from Section 8.3 to a newly created Section 8.4. Section 8.4 also added a provision that allows for an electronic record, as well as a written record, of every EMS fee waived.

Section 10: The original EMS Policy imposed a 10% interest penalty upon unpaid EMS fees after 30 days. The interest penalty has been removed from the amended EMS Policy. The provision to send bills to a collection agency after 90 days remains.

The EMS Program implemented in 2004 provided a mechanism to recoup a small portion of the actual costs to provide emergency medical services. Even though the demand for emergency medical services continues to increase, the fees established in 2004 for the EMS subscription program and the EMS service fee for non-subscribers have not been changed. These fees are included in the City’s Master Fee Schedule and will be reviewed and updated, if necessary, on a biennial basis.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

Not applicable

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This item supports the City’s Strategic Plan Goal 1: Promote Public Safety: Protect our Residents and Business; Objective a: Ensure adequate funding for police and fire services.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no immediate fiscal impact related to amending the Policy for Emergency Medical Services

Subscription Program and Emergency Medical Services Fee.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

No environmental review is required because the proposed action is not a project governed by the California Environmental Quality Act.

PREPARED BY: JENNIFER SCHAEFER, FINANCE/CDBG MANAGER

REVIEWED BY: DAVID DUFFY, FIRE CHIEF

REVIEWED BY: JAMIE RAYMOND, CHIEF DEPUTY CITY ATTORNEY

REVIEWED BY: DEAN DERLETH, CITY ATTORNEY

REVIEWED BY: KERRY D. EDEN, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER/ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED BY: DARRELL TALBERT, CITY MANAGER