



COUNTY OF MENDOCINO
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 6, 2021

TO: HONARABLE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

FROM: PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

SUBJECT: PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES REQUEST FOR PG&E FUNDS

Based on the Board of Supervisor's discussion and direction regarding the requested PG&E funds request, Planning and Building Services has prepared this memorandum summarizing the department's request for the PG&E funds and how it is anticipated that these funds will be utilized by the department, should the Board wish to allocate the requested funds to Planning and Building Services. Below is a summary of the department's request along with a table that provides a brief summary and amounts requested.

Reimbursement of Fees and Staff Time

As part of the Planning and Building Department's reorganization of staffing and programs for the next fiscal year, the department is proposing a request to utilize the one-time Pacific Gas and Electric funds allocated to the County as a result of the wildfires that were experienced by the County. As a result of the County working with fire survivors, the Board of Supervisors waived fees for Administrative Permits for the temporary use of travel trailers for fire survivors, which amounted to \$88,559.00 of revenue not realized by the Department. Additionally, staff time that was devoted to the wildfires that is not reimbursable for straight time under the 214's in the amount of \$324,339.00 is also being requested for reimbursement. These monies could be reinvested back into the department for additional positions, such as the addition of a Senior Program Manager and part-time Analyst for a new fiscal and grants management division, as we pursue more opportunities for CDBG grants and Planning Grants, especially for Housing, Planning and Economic Development opportunities. Additionally, the Department is looking at adding a dedicated Administrative Assistant for the Code Enforcement Division. This will be more detailed during the upcoming budget for FY 2021/2022, if the department is provided a reimbursement of the administrative permit and staff time associated with the wildfires.

Facilities Modifications

Currently the department is looking at the reorganization of various staffing functions, including the recruitment of staff, and the reorganization of the front counter operations to provide enhanced customer services to our clients. It is also proposed that an estimated \$800,000 dollars could be allocated for internal remodeling of the department, including removal of 3 walls to create Mapping/GIS work area for two or more employees, and the removal of one additional wall to create a dedicated plans examination room, as the space currently does not lend itself to the current workload; installation of carpet in the conference room, several offices and replacement of carpet in the front lobby. Additionally, to better serve the public, it is proposed to eliminate the western wall counter and replace it with four (4) individual work stations, similar to what is used in other counties for permit centers. The concept was developed for the department in 2011, but due to the recession at the time, a limited amount of funds were afforded to the department when the department was relocated to the current location. This approach would utilize 4 modular work stations with privacy partitions between them and provide work stations for Fire agencies, Building, Planning, and Environmental Health personnel thus implementing a one-stop shop approach for obtaining/issuing permits.

These stations would need to be accommodated with 4 new computers, desktop printers and telephones to be fully functional. Additionally, the proposal also includes the installation of two new security doors at the front counter and the construction of a new wall at the west end of the front counter to safely separate the public from the front counter staff, and the separation of the public from the new 4 work stations to be used for appointments to maintain social distancing. Previously the removal of walls and carpeting was programed into last year's budget, but were not funded. The department is requesting that funding be allocated from the PG&E funds to address these necessary building remodels.

Vehicle Abatement

The Department has recently been inundated with numerous calls for vehicle abatement of non-operating vehicles and recreational vehicles on private property throughout the County. Currently the County's vehicle abatement program is not set up under State law to remove vehicles from private properties, but does address the removal of vehicles from public property, roadways, etc. The department has done a preliminary assessment of the number of vehicles and recreational vehicles throughout the County. Based on complaints and a review of staff's records in Code Enforcement, the County is divided into six (6) code enforcement districts and cumulatively the County has identified approximately 925 non-operating vehicles and recreational vehicles. The department is requesting approximately \$850,000 to \$900,000 to perform a one-time Vehicle Amnesty Program covering the entire county. These costs are based on the fees charged by the County's current AVA contractor (which is \$500/car to \$3,500/RV). The proposed amnesty program would allow Planning and Building to work with a contractor to extract vehicles from private property, have these vehicles appropriately removed and processed with DVM paperwork, etc. Staff would need to work on procuring several contractors and it is anticipated that this program can be instituted as soon as July 1, 2021, utilizing the summer months to remove the vehicles/RVs. County Code Enforcement would be responsible for processing the DMV paperwork on site, while the contractor(s) would remove, crush and transport the vehicles away.

Software/Hardware for Plans Examination Efficiency

The Department is requesting a one-time investment in plan check software to be able to do electronic plan-check and reduce the level of paper coming into the department. This would allow for the public to submit PDF plans for plan checking, and would allow for the software to integrate with the Department's existing trakit permit tracking system. The intent would be to roll the system out to the public over a 12 to 18 month period to accustom the public to an online plan submittal process. This would be an essential approach in light of our current virtual environment. To implement the program, would include new large monitors (estimated at \$10,000), software licensing, and education and training. It is envisioned that the system would be used by both planners and building inspectors. The cost to implement this would be \$50,000.00, which is for the initial training, software and hardware costs. Other request, include funds for IT improvements

Vehicle Purchases

The next request is the cost for two new vehicle purchases (a Truck and SUV) to accommodate the Code Enforcement Division at a cost of \$68,000.

In summary, the requested funds are to address current deficiencies within the department and provide for an opportunity for an investment that would result in several aspects of the department becoming more efficient, such a staffing requests and the electronic plan checking software/hardware, and most importantly provide enhanced customer service which in turn would be a contributor to the economic development of the County.

The following table provides a summary of the requested funds and where they would be allocated:

1. Reimbursements for Admin Permits and staff time for related disasters. (monies to be used for new Fiscal/grants personnel)	(\$412,899.00)
2. Facilities modifications, remodels, permit stations, etc. This cost would factor in telecommunication install	\$800,000.00
3. Vehicle purchase for Code Enforcement	\$68,000.00
4. One-Time County-Wide Vehicle Amnesty Program	\$900,000.00
5. Purchase of Hardware, Software, and Training for Plan Check – Blue Beam	\$ 50,000.00
6. IT updates for the Department for monies to be devoted infrastructure needs to assist the Department for online permitting. This to be phased in over 2 year period,	\$ 350,000.00
7. Purchase of large monitors for electronic plan check	\$10,000.00
8. Code Enforcement admin staffing \$78,353, Senior Program Manager at \$130,108, and ½ time Analyst at \$45,173 (these would be a new position with on-going yearly costs.)	\$253,634.00
TOTAL REQUESTED FUNDS FOR PBS	\$2,844,533.00