



## **CITY OF SALINAS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT**

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**DATE:** August 27, 2019

**DEPARTMENT:** FIRE DEPARTMENT

**FROM:** PABLO BARRETO, FIRE CHIEF

**BY:** DOUGLAS DIRKSEN, BATTALION CHIEF

**TITLE:** DIRECT PURCHASE OF BODY ARMOR FOR FIREFIGHTERS

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:**

A motion to approve the direct purchase of Aardvark body armor and ballistic helmets for the fire department in the amount of \$96,173.21.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends Council approve the direct purchase of body armor and ballistic helmets for firefighters from the Aardvark brand to expedite the receipt of much needed equipment for fire department operations.

This body armor is unique because it employs one-piece light weight laser cut panels of a heavy-duty material making it lighter and more durable than other competitors' products built from dozens of separate components sewn together. Firefighters will be more comfortable and experience less fatigue with this product while still being provided protection from knife slashes and gunshots. This body armor is only available through direct purchase from the manufacturer (a sole source letter stating so is attached to this report).

We believe these unique features allow this purchase to meet the exception from the formal bid process under Salinas Municipal Code Section 12-27 which states, "if the City Council determines that, due to the nature of the purchase, low-bid based competition is not likely to serve the best interest of the City, yield the best value, or result in the lowest price."

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The fire department is in need of body armor and ballistic helmets. The acquisition of this equipment will provide necessary protection to firefighters who are called upon to render aid and rescue victims of violent incidents.

Staff methodically selected equipment that would provide ballistic protection to firefighters with consideration to comfort, durability, and value.

## BACKGROUND:

The fire department does not currently have ballistic protection for firefighters. The fire department needs forty (40) sets of body armor and ballistic helmets to provide necessary protection to firefighters when they may be called upon to rescue and provide emergency care to injured victims of shootings, stabbings, or periods of civil unrest.

In 2015, our firefighters responded with police officers to render aid to several victims who were shot near our Social Security office. As police isolated the suspect for arrest, our firefighters could not enter the scene to render emergency care to the victims because they were not equipped with body armor.

Furthermore, our firefighters have attended large scale active shooter exercises involving dozens of responders and role players at Northridge Mall and California State University at Monterey Bay. The After-Action Reports of each recommended that firefighters come equipped with body armor and ballistic helmets to protect themselves. This recommendation is reflected in national, state, and local standards such as National Fire Protection (NFPA) Standard 3000, FIRESCOPE Incident Command System (ICS) 701, and the Monterey County Operational Area Active Shooter Guideline.

The use of body armor and ballistic helmets by firefighters has become industry standard. This has again been highlighted locally in the recent Gilroy Garlic Festival mass shooting incident where police and firefighters responded side-by-side to render aid to multiple victims with an unknown threat potentially still in the area.

## CEQA CONSIDERATION:

**Not a Project.** The City of Salinas has determined that the proposed action is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378).

## STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

This purchase fits within the current concepts of the strategic plan:

- Safe, livable community.
- Effective, sustainable government.

## DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

Staff will work closely with Purchasing to ensure an efficient order and delivery of goods.

## FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

An expedited purchase is needed to provide ballistic protection for firefighters to safely rescue and provide emergency care to injured victims of violent incidents. Ballistic vests and helmets can be

purchased utilizing current CIP line 5800.45.9377 accounts as approved by Council at mid-year budget review.

ATTACHMENTS:

Aardvark quote  
Safariland sole source letter