



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR

May 14, 2019

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager  
Submitted by: David Brannigan, Fire Chief  
Subject: Contract: Falck for Mental Health Ambulance Transport Services

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a contract and any amendments with Falck Northern California Corp (Contractor) to provide mental health related ambulance transportation (from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2021, in an amount up to \$5,670,000, with an option to extend for two additional years, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$11,340,000.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Mental Health Transport Billing:

- a. The City shall compensate Contractor for the difference between the cost of service provision and corresponding revenue received by the Contractor as determined, less any performance penalty, for each 5150 response in the Berkeley exclusive operating area (EOA).
- b. In response to this RFP, contractor provided a cost per service estimate of \$2025 per call. Based on historical data, an estimate of 1400 calls per year is expected, resulting in an estimated total cost to the City of up to \$2,835,000. The actual cost will vary depending on the number of transports and costs recovered by Falck patient billing.
- c. Revenue may come from general Fund associated with measure P or otherwise.

### CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Berkeley Fire Department operates four, 24-hour, Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulances. The four ambulances are staffed with two sworn firefighter paramedics. Additionally, the department has nine fire engines and trucks, staffed with a minimum of one firefighter paramedic. When responding to emergency medical incidents, a fire engine or truck is always dispatched along with an ambulance. In most cases the fire engine/truck arrives at the call faster than the ambulance and begins to provide life-saving emergency medical care at an ALS level

A subset of emergency medical treatment and transport is for people experiencing psychiatric emergencies. These patients are always contacted by a Berkeley Police Officer and sometimes a member of Berkeley Mental Health's Mobile Crisis Team. Once they have made a determination that the patient requires further treatment and transport, the County's private ambulance provider, Paramedics Plus, is requested and responds. The Alameda County Emergency Medical Services Agency (LEMSA) reimburses Paramedics Plus for the costs related to the treatment and transport of these patients that they are unable to collect from the patient.

According to the California Code of Regulations (CCR), 5150(a) "When a person, as a result of a mental health disorder, is a danger to others, or to himself or herself, or gravely disabled, a peace officer, ...designated members of a mobile crisis team, ...may, upon probable cause, take, or cause to be taken, the person into custody for a period of up to 72 hours for assessment, evaluation, and crisis intervention, or placement for evaluation and treatment in a facility designated by the county for evaluation and treatment..."

### New City of Berkeley Transport Responsibilities

In 2017, the Alameda County LEMSA conducted a Request for Proposal (No. EMS-901017 Emergency Ambulance Service, 911 Response, ALS Transport) to select a private ambulance transport provider that would provide emergency medical transport services to Alameda County except Berkeley, Alameda City, Albany and Piedmont. Berkeley is one of four exclusive operating areas (EOA) in Alameda County. The four EOAs correspond with the fire departments that started providing emergency ALS ambulance response and transport prior to 1980. When the new contract for Alameda County, per their RFP, goes into effect on July 1st, 2019 the City will have to assume responsibility for the transport and cost of transport for psychiatric patients in Berkeley.

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City of Berkeley No. 18-11181-C:

On March 21, 2019, a Request for Proposal (RFP) for MENTAL HEALTH PATIENT TRANSPORT, Specification No. 19-11305-C, was issued. The RFP closed on April 23, 2019. One (1) bid was received and reviewed by staff and was found to meet the requirements of the RFP.

### BACKGROUND

Since 2002, the private ambulance provider for the Alameda County exclusive operating area (EOA) has provided transport for non-emergency mental and behavioral health patients in Berkeley and the other three cities that have exclusive operating areas (EOA) for ambulance service in Alameda County. The four city EOAs correspond with the fire departments that started providing emergency ALS ambulance response and transport prior to 1980. When the new contract for Alameda County's EOA ambulance provider goes into effect on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 Berkeley will assume responsibility for the transport of non-emergency mental and behavioral health patients in the City's EOA.

In 2018 the County's private transport provider transported 1090 mental and behavioral health patients in Berkeley. During the same time, the Berkeley Fire Department transported an additional 253 mental and behavioral health patients. In total, there are nearly 1400 mental and behavioral health transports that occur annually in the City.

To absorb the new requirement to provide transport to mental and behavioral health patients, the City seeks a private ambulance provider to supplement the existing transport capacity in the City and be the primary mental and behavioral health transport service in Berkeley.

### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no identifiable environmental effects associated with the subject of this report.

### RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The impacts of absorbing psychiatric transport within the Fire Department include less time for responding to other emergencies, and less training and development for personnel, which is already greatly impacted by call volume. Additionally, there would likely be increased employee fatigue (both chronic and acute), greater attrition of employees to other fire departments that do not transport and increased "burnout" and other associated mental health conditions (depression, PTSD, suicide, anger management, etc). Additionally, there is an immediate need to take on this work, and staffing up internally to fill the need would have been impossible with such little time.

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ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

1. Creation of Basic Life Support (BLS) Ambulance Division. : Though this may be a good long term alternative, it would be impossible to implement by July 1st, 2019. The milestones that would need to be implemented prior to upstaffing a BLS transport division are: creation of a new job classification, recruitment and hiring of at least 12 FTE, ambulance specification/design and purchase, and modifications to fire stations to accommodate additional personnel.
2. Transport by EMT and Berkeley Mental Health: The legal authority to place a person on an involuntary psychiatric hold lies with the police, mental health professionals, and physicians. Berkeley Mental Health and Berkeley Police are the primary contacts with the patient population in question. An alternative to EMT ambulance transport is a hybrid where an EMT and a Mental Health Provider could team up and transport to John George. This adds significant cost due to the higher salaries of licensed mental health providers.
3. Transport by Berkeley Police: At times, police officers transport patients on a 5150 hold to John George Pavilion. This option would remove police officers from Berkeley for extended periods. This option also puts care and transport of psychiatric patients with law enforcement and not health care professionals.

CONTACT PERSON

Dave Brannigan, Fire Chief, (510) 981-3473

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

CONTRACT: FALCK FOR MENTAL HEALTH AMBULANCE TRANSPORT SERVICES

WHEREAS, Alameda County will no longer provide transport service for mental health patients on a 5150 hold in the City of Berkeley as of July 1, 2019; and

WHEREAS, Berkeley Police and Berkeley Mental Health place approximately 1,400 people on 5150 holds annually; and

WHEREAS, the Berkeley Fire Department provides Advanced Life Support (Paramedic) ambulance transport services in an exclusive operating area for the City of Berkeley and UC Berkeley; and

WHEREAS, Measure P was passed by voters in November 2018 and included a provision to provide funding for mental health support and emergency transport; and

WHEREAS, the costs for mental health ambulance transport services will be appropriated in the Biennial Budget beginning FY 2021.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager is authorized to execute a contract and any amendments with Falck Northern California Corp. to provide mental health ambulance transport services to the City of Berkeley from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2022, in an amount up to \$5,670,000, with an option to extend for two additional years in two one-year increments, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$11,340,000.

