



Legislation Text

File #: Ord. 2019-10, **Version:** 1

AGENDA CAPTION:

Consider approval of Ordinance 2019-10, on the first of two readings, amending the City's 2018-2019 Fiscal Year Budget to allocate a total amount not to exceed of \$65,000.00 from State Seized Asset Funds to provide funding for Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (drone) equipment and supporting hardware to support the capabilities of the Police Department's unmanned robotics team; and providing an effective date.

Meeting date: March 5, 2019

Department: Police

Amount & Source of Funding

Funds Required: \$65,000.00

Account Number: 12055230.60125

Funds Available: \$172,712.35

Account Name: State Seized Assets

Fiscal Note:

Prior Council Action: Council has not taken prior action on this item

City Council Strategic Initiative: [Please select from the dropdown menu below]

N/A

Choose an item.

Choose an item.

Comprehensive Plan Element (s): [Please select the Plan element(s) and Goal # from dropdown menu below]

☐ Economic Development - Choose an item.

☐ Environment & Resource Protection - Choose an item.

☐ Land Use - Choose an item.

☐ Neighborhoods & Housing - Choose an item.

☒ Parks, Public Spaces & Facilities - Funding and staffing to ensure quality public safety and community services

☐ Transportation - Choose an item.

☐ Not Applicable

Master Plan: *[Please select the corresponding Master Plan from the dropdown menu below (if applicable)]*

Choose an item.

Background Information:

The advancement of unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV or drone) technology has given law enforcement, fire departments, and cities as a whole a new set of tools allowing for a much safer and effective delivery of services. Before this technology became available, the need for aerial video and photography had to be met using fixed wing or rotary aircraft or with the use of elevated platforms such as ladder-equipped fire apparatus. The City of San Marcos is not in a financial position to be able to fund an aircraft division. Approximately three years ago, the police department acquired a very basic drone for the purpose of assisting our collision investigation team with the documentation of fatal and serious injury crashes. Since that time, the use of drones by municipal entities including police departments has become more commonplace, and we have seen how this technology can help us deliver a higher level of service to the community without incurring the costs of a true aircraft division.

Realizing these same benefits, the Hays County Sheriff's Department has begun to expand their UAV capabilities. In order to maximize resources and build efficiencies into the respective programs, the Sheriff's Department has approached the Police Department and proposed a cooperative effort in the form of the Hays County Unmanned Robotics Team. We have worked together with the Sheriff's Department and subject matter experts to draft a robust policy to ensure that these aircraft are flown under the strictest guidelines possible. This policy will ensure the appropriate and lawful use of this technology and will protect the privacy of individuals in the area of proposed flight operations. The policy is attached to this item for Council's review.

This ordinance, if approved, will allow the expenditure of state seized asset funds for the purchase of four UAV aircraft, miscellaneous spare parts, state of the art cameras, a toolkit, and supporting equipment such as protective carrying cases. These aircraft will allow specially trained and federally licensed members of the Police Department to support our operations in ways that previously would have required assistance from manned aircraft from neighboring agencies. Examples of some of these operations include crime scene surveying and photography, search and rescue operations, safety enhancement of tactical operations, and vehicle crash scene documentation. In addition, this equipment and our pilots will be available to assist other city departments with tasks such as project photography and video documentation, damage assessments, and site surveying.

Attached to this action request is the aforementioned policy, the 2018 annual report required to be filed with the State by our agency, and quotes for the equipment we intend to purchase.

Council Committee, Board/Commission Action:

N/A

Alternatives:

An alternative is obviously to deny this funding or to approve a lesser level of funding. Neither would be preferred or recommended by staff.

Recommendation:

The staff request and recommendation is to approve this action item.