

# STAFF REPORT



**Meeting Date:** February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Michael J. Aho, District Administrator  
**Subject:** Request for Approval for Parks Equipment – Brush Chipper  
**Prepared By:** Sean Ventura, Park & Facilities Manager

## **I. Recommendation**

Staff requests that the Board of Directors approve the purchase of a tow-behind brush (wood) chipper, utilizing Landscape & Lighting funds, for use in tree and grounds maintenance and adoption of Resolution No. 021721-02:

- Amendment Of The Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget Of The General Fund (341A), Fund Center 9349341 To Reflect An Increase In The Equipment/Vehicles Account (43430300) To Fund Costs Related To The Purchase Of A Chipper.

## **II. Background**

Tree maintenance and the preservation of the District's urban forest asset is an integral part of the District's yearly maintenance plan. No matter how small an individual parcel is in the overall scope of the District's landholdings, tree maintenance remains a factor.

Each year, the District produces more than 320 cubic yards of green waste in the process of these maintenance tasks. Currently, the District supplements its tree maintenance plan with a biannual rental of a wood chipper. During these periods, roughly 150-300 additional cubic yards of plant matter are processed. These rental periods last for a total of two weeks out of the year and are a significant portion of parks' rental budget for the year. When the District is unable to obtain a chipper, whether for budgetary reasons or because of high regional demand, the District's tree management plan becomes burdensome due to requiring more staff members per individual task, requiring more time between the cutting or felling of trees and the removal of plant matter, and delays caused by inefficient storage options for plant matter in between retrieval and return of the District's green waste disposal bin.

The District has previously utilized scrap or lay down yards to stockpile cut wood and branches until a chipper can be rented, but these scrap yards have brought complaints from the public due to their ugliness and potential for becoming a fire hazard. As such, and due to fewer acceptable areas to house this scrap, the District no longer utilizes the lay down yard approach when performing tree work. Because of this, tree work can often be delayed due to a lack of room for the resulting materials.

Over the last year, the District has established a strict safety training regimen when renting chippers, including mandatory safety trainings and videos from Cal/OSHA and individual chipper manufacturers, a daily safety training prior to starting any work related to a wood chipper, a sign off sheet for each individual who works a chipper to ensure they have attended the trainings, and a three-person minimum work crew to ensure all employees are able to watch out for one another and assist in case of emergencies. If the District were to purchase its own chipper, the safety program would be expanded to a required safety certification for all employees assigned to chipper duties.

## **II. Problem /Situation/ Request**

Tree maintenance needs within the District are an ever-present requirement of annual operations. Without a District-owned wood chipper, maintenance will continue at a speed slower than what could otherwise be considered efficient and costs will continue to rise on an annual basis. These delays and cost increases affect seasonal trimming which allows groundskeepers to operate under a tree's drip line, mandatory trimming to maintain the health of mature trees (such as end weight reduction, crown pruning, and the removal of hazardous limbs), the removal of downed limbs due to environmental effects, and trimming to protect the safety of the public when removing potential hazards around parking lots, walking paths, seating areas and playgrounds.

Without a chipper, tree work involves cutting each limb double or triple the amount necessary as compared to having a chipper on-hand. This reduces staff productivity, as they would be forced to cut a limb to bring it to the ground, load it into a District vehicle, drive to another location, unload the limb at a storage or disposal facility, and then potentially cut the limbs once more when a chipper was present in order to free it from the wood pile in which it was placed and remove the entangling grass and vines that have grown through the wood pile. With this process, each tree maintenance task becomes an unnecessary hurdle to meeting the District's maintenance needs.

Having a chipper on-hand would also enable staff to respond much more quickly to emergencies involving downed or hazardous limbs.

Owning a chipper would enable to District to participate in hands-on safety trainings with qualified trainers without having to leave District property.

#### **IV. Financial Analysis**

The chipper the District seeks to purchase is available under a cooperative purchasing agreement through Sourcewell. Sourcewell is a government cooperative purchasing alliance which competitively bids products and services in order to remove the time requirement from public agencies. The Sourcewell contract is held and honored by local retailer RDO Equipment Co. and provides access to Vermeer products. The quoted price for the desired wood chipper is \$40,256.76.

Annually, the District spends an average of \$5000 on chipper rentals and green waste disposal. Over the last three and a half years, the District has spent approximately \$20,069 on to meet those needs. Without the purchase of a wood chipper, it is estimated that the District will have spent enough on rentals and disposal to have bought a wood chipper by the end of 2024. These costs are expected to rise on a yearly basis, as the cost for waste disposal has been regularly increased by 7.84% annually. Ultimately, the needs of the District would not be adequately met due to the continuing need for wood chipper rentals.

Of course, there will be recurring regular maintenance tasks related to owning the wood chipper. There will also be recurring registration and reporting costs. These costs should total less than \$500 per year.

Staff proposes funding for this purchase be found within the District's assessment districts: the Landscaping & Lighting funds. These funds are not a part of the general operating budget, nor do they absorb funding from capital expenditures. These funds can only be used on maintenance of specific areas and on the equipment and materials required to perform that maintenance. Staff proposes that \$30,000 be appropriated from the Fair Oaks Landscape & Lighting Fund (out of a total fund, as of the time of this writing, of \$67,000) while the remaining balance, which would be approximately \$10,257, be pulled from the Gum Ranch Landscape & Lighting Fund (out of a total fund of \$35,000). These Landscape & Lighting funds are the locations which require the most tree maintenance and therefore should shoulder the cost of the equipment required to perform that maintenance.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael J. Aho  
District Administrator

Attachment A: Resolution No. 021721-02

**RESOLUTION NO. 021721-02  
BEFORE THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE  
FAIR OAKS RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT**

**County of Sacramento, State of California**

**AMENDMENT OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021 BUDGET OF THE GENERAL FUND  
(341A), FUND CENTER 9349341 TO REFLECT AN INCREASE IN THE  
EQUIPMENT/VEHICLES ACCOUNT (43430300) TO FUND COSTS RELATED TO  
THE PURCHASE OF A CHIPPER**

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Directors for the Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District passed Resolution No. 021721-02 recognizing \$40,257 within the Revenue Account 97979000 - Misc.- Other, and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Directors for the Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District passed Resolution No. 021721-02, authorizing an increase of \$40,257 in Capital Budget Equipment Account 43430300, and

**WHEREAS**, the procedure to allow use of these now recognized and released funds requires appropriate action by the Board of Directors,

**THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** that the Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District Board of Directors approve the transfer as follows:

- A. Increase the Revenue Account 97979000 - Misc.- Other for Fund 341A, Fund Center 9349341 by \$40,257;
- B. Increase the General Fund Appropriation for the Fund 341A, Fund Center 9349341, Capital Budget Equipment Account (43430300) by \$40,257.

Passage of the Resolution was moved by \_\_\_\_\_ and seconded by \_\_\_\_\_.

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

RECUSE:

\_\_\_\_\_  
John O' Farrell  
Board Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael J. Aho  
District Administrator

Date: February 17, 2021