



Legislation Text

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City Council Meeting Date: September 20, 2016

To: Mayor and City Council
City Administrator

From: Monte Nelson, Chief of Police

Authorizing execution of the 2017 Rice County Toward Zero Deaths Enforcement Grant

Action Requested:

The Northfield City Council is asked to approve the attached resolution - Authorizing the Northfield Police Department as fiscal agent of the 2017 Rice County Toward Zero Deaths Enforcement Grant.

Summary Report:

For many years, the Northfield Police Department (NPD) has partnered with other Rice County Law Enforcement agencies to provide increased traffic enforcement opportunities funded by Office of Traffic Safety grants. The member agencies have taken turns as the fiscal agent and administrator of the annual grant. The NPD has been the fiscal agent for the 2016 TZD Grant period, and has applied for the 2017 grant on behalf of partner agencies. The NPD seeks Council approval to be the fiscal agent and authorized agent of the 2017 grant, October 1, 2016 - September 30, 2017. After the resolution is approved and submitted to the State, they will send us the grant agreement for signatures. A copy of last years' grant agreement is attached.

The Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) provides annual grant funding to states for increased traffic enforcement and education. The Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) administers these funds to local agencies for area-based traffic safety education and enforcement in the form of Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) Enforcement grants. Until 2014, Rice County had been in the top 25 Minnesota counties for alcohol related fatality and serious injury crashes. The Rice County Safe Roads Coalition along with local law enforcement agencies and other community groups has worked to decrease the number of fatalities and injuries on local roads via increased education and enforcement. The grant partners believe part of the decrease of these types of crashes in Rice County is at least partially due to the grant-funded efforts.

The NPD was asked to continue as the fiscal agent for the upcoming 2017 TZD Grant period, October 1, 2016 - September 30, 2017. Sgt. Kevin Tussing applied for the grant on behalf of the Northfield, Faribault, and Dundas Police Departments, the Rice County Sheriff's Office, and the Rice-Steele Consolidated Dispatch Center. The application sought grant funding for:

- Traffic Safety Education via local schools, media outlets, and roadway signage.
- Overtime Enforcement Waves related to Impaired Driving, Seatbelt Use, Speed and Move-Over laws, and Distracted Driving. The majority of grant funds are used for reimbursement of these overtime costs.
- Additional dispatch services during enforcement waves.

In August, Sgt. Tussing was notified the grant was approved in the amount of \$34,925; the 2016 grant amount was \$48,855. The grant is contingent on approval by the Northfield City Council.

The NPD and other partner agencies rely on the annual TZD Enforcement grant funds to reimburse officer overtime for increased traffic enforcement waves and for traffic safety education around the county each year. Many of the enforcement and education projects funded by this grant involve partnerships between Law Enforcement and local groups such as the Mayor's Task Force on Youth Alcohol and Drug Use, Safe Roads Coalition, Students Against Drunk Driving, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the Rice County Chemical Health Coalition, and others. This grant helps these groups provide a county-wide effort to educate the public and increase enforcement related to traffic safety.

Alternative Options:

The Council could choose not to approve the resolution; if so, it is likely the 2017 Rice County TZD Grant would not be awarded.

Financial Impacts:

The City of Northfield would see little financial impact as the fiscal agent of the grant. Sgt. Tussing and the Administrative Assistant would gather officer overtime hour totals from each participating agency and submit check requests to the Finance Department on a quarterly basis. Sgt. Tussing would also be responsible for coordinating enforcement and education waves, as well as gathering and submitting participation numbers.

The Finance Department will track this grant program via a fund specifically dedicated to the grant dollars and reimbursement checks. This keeps the accounting clean and grant funds won't be intermingled with City of Northfield dollars. This fund was approved by Council in 2015.

In the past several years, Northfield has been reimbursed approximately \$10,000 annually for overtime worked on TZD Enforcement Grant projects.

Tentative Timelines:

As soon as the resolution is approved, it will be submitted to DPS to complete the grant approval process before October 1, 2016. As noted above, after the resolution is approved and submitted to the State, they will send us the grant agreement for signatures.