AGENDA COVER MEMORANDUM

AGENDA DATE: December 18, 2024

PRESENTED TO: Board of County Commissioners

DEPARTMENT: County Administration

PRESENTED BY: Christine Moody, Budget & Financial Planning Manager

AGENDA TITLE: In the Matter of Awarding Projects under Title III of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Program under Public Law 117-58; Initiating Projects and Obligating Funds

I. MOTION

Move Approval of Project Awards under Title III of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Program under Public Law 117-58; Initiating Projects and Obligating Funds.

II. AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda item is to approve and initiate projects under Title III of Public Law (PL) 117-58 (SRS 2022) and obligate funds for future use.

III. BACKGROUND/IMPLICATIONS OF ACTION

A. Board Action and Other History

Lane County has received federal funding through seven different public laws related to Secure Rural Schools funding since 2000, before PL 117-58 as follows:

PL 106-393 (SRS 2000)
PL 110-343 (SRS 2008)
PL 112-141 (SRS 2012)
PL 113-40 (SRS 2013)
PL 114-10 (SRS 2014)
PL 115-141 (SRS 2017)
PL 116-94 (SRS 2020)

The most recent Board Order related to Title III project funding was 22-09-27-08 which approved and obligated funding for projects related to Search & Rescue, Law Enforcement on Federal Lands, Lane County Firewise Program and Community Wildfire Protection Plan with the funding from SRS 2020.

The US Congress reauthorized the Secure Rural Schools Act for three additional years in Public Law 117-58. Internally referred to as SRS 2022, PL 117-58 provided additional funding to Lane County in Fiscal Years 21-22, 22-23, and 23-24. Total Title III revenue received by Lane County from SRS 2022 was $2,731,783.

SRS 2022 also contains a change in allowable uses for Title III funds, which are as follows:

Expenditures are limited to five uses specified by the law:

(1) to carry out activities under the Firewise Communities program to provide to homeowners in fire-sensitive ecosystems education on, and assistance with implementing, techniques in home siting, home construction, and home landscaping that can increase the protection of people and property from wildfires;

(2) to reimburse the participating county for search and rescue and other emergency services, including firefighting and law enforcement patrols, that are

(A) performed on Federal land after the date on which the use was approved under subsection (b);

(B) paid for by the participating county;

(3) to cover training costs and equipment purchases directly related to the emergency services described in paragraph 2; and

(4) to develop and carry out community wildfire protection plans in coordination with the appropriate Secretary concerned; and

(5) to provide or expand access to –

(A) broadband telecommunications services at local schools; or

(B) the technology and connectivity necessary for students to use a digital learning tool at or outside of a local school campus.

Under SRS 2022, Title III projects must be initiated by September 30, 2025. Title III Funds from SRS 2022 must be obligated by September 30, 2026.

A required public comment notices on projects being considered for award and requesting new project submissions were published in the Register Guard on June 27, 2024, and again on September 24, 2024. The second notice occurred in order to add clarification recommended by County Counsel on how Lane County is defining the term “law enforcement patrols” in connection with the County’s Community Wildfire Protection Plan. No comments were received, and a total of 4 projects were submitted for:

Project Title	Amount Requested
Search & Rescue:	$590,000
Law Enforcement of Federal Lands:	$545,000
Lane County Firewise Program	$740,517
Community Wildfire Protection Plan	$549,365
TOTAL REQUEST	$2,424,882

More details on each project submitted can be found in the Analysis Section below.

B. Policy Issues

None.

C. Board Goals

Lane County's budget and financial management policies support the County's Strategic Plan priorities and the commitment to open and accountable government and wise stewardship of public funds.

D. Financial and /or Resource Considerations

The requested funding into the Sheriff Office will enable the Sheriff's Office to maintain existing General Fund levels for Search & Rescue and Law Enforcement of Federal Lands into FY 27-28.

The additional funding for the Firewise program will provide funding for that program through FY 26-27.

The funding for the Community Wildfire Protection Plan will provide funding through FY 27-28.

In addition to expenses associated with the projects submitted, the Title III Fund also pays countywide overhead expenses associated with staff support of the Title III program (currently the Central Budget Office) as well as indirect charges related to financial and legal support.

There are also previously obligated funds remaining for all four projects from prior Title III project awards and the additional awards provide longer term stability for the critical services provided by these projects/services.

E. Health Implications

Funding of the proposed projects will improve both personal and property safety by providing for emergency response and mitigation of the potential impact of wildfires on homes.

F. Analysis

The applications received for each of the projects are attached to this Memo. A summary of projects is as follows:

The project submissions total $2,424,882. There is adequate funding available to fund all project submissions and still leave funds available for the necessary overhead expenses in the coming years.

Project Name	FY 25-26	FY 26-27	FY 27-28	TOTAL
Firewise	$ 460,995	$ 279,522		$ 740,517
CWPP	$ 173,862	$ 182,948	$ 192,555	$ 549,365
Law Enforcement	$ 314,000	$ 114,500	$ 116,500	$ 545,000
Training & Equip	$ 248,000	$ 170,000	$ 172,000	$ 590,000
TOTAL	**$ 1,196,857**	**$ 746,970**	**$ 481,055**	**$ 2,424,882**

G. Alternatives

The recommendation on projection initiation and the obligation of the Title III funds is found below. Board of Commissioners may also choose to delay approval of projects provided that project initiation occurs before the deadline of September 30, 2025.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the four submitted projects be awarded at this time. The work on the projects will be initiated prior to September 30, 2025. It is also recommended that the Board obligate the funds for the designated projects. Meeting the project implementation and obligation deadlines eliminates the risk of needing to return funds to the US Treasury.

V. TIMING/IMPLEMENTATION

Approving projects at this time provides time for projection initiation prior to September 30, 2025, and provides funding certainty for the projects in the coming budget year.

VI. FOLLOW-UP

Budget changes associated with these awards will be added to the budget through the annual budget process.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

Project Submission Forms
Board Order

PL 117-58 Title III Project Application

LANE COUNTY

NAME OF PROJECT: CWPP Maintenance & Implementation Project

PROJECT SPONSOR: Lane County Sheriff's Office

SPONSOR'S ADDRESS: 125 E. 8th Ave. Eugene Or 97401

CONTACT PERSON: Tim Chase

PHONE: 541-682-8560 **E-MAIL ADDRESS**: Tim.chase@lanecountyor.gov

Project is authorized under the following category: (see authorized use description on last page)

- ☐ 1. To carry out activities under the Firewise Communities
- ☐ 2. To reimburse participating county for search & rescue and other emergency services including firefighting and law enforcement patrols
- ☐ 3. To cover training costs and equipment purchases directly related to emergency services described in #2 above.
- ☐ 4. To develop and carry out community wildfire protection plans
- ☒ 5. To provide or expand access to –
  - (a) broadband telecommunications services at local schools; or
  - (b) the technology and connectivity necessary for students to use a digital learning tool at or outside of a local school campus.

PROJECT LOCATION: Lane County

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Provide funding to support and oversee the implementation or execute the action items outlined in the Lane County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Analyst is responsible for working with Lane County Emergency Management and Lane County Sheriff's Office to develop and implement evacuation plans and documentation. This may include working with county partners on plan development and responding in the event of fires to assist in implementation of the plans. Lane County Emergency Management is responsible for documenting the outcomes of the five-year plan review in the required implementation and maintenance documentation.

This plan is intended to:

- Provide countywide leadership through partnerships to implement wildland-urban interface fire mitigation strategies in Lane County.
- Improve community strategies for reducing the impacts of wildland- urban interface fires.
- Promote wildfire risk reduction activities for private and public lands in Lane County.

The CWPP identifies 24 action items that reflect goals and objectives outlined by the CWPP Advisory Committee. This position is charged with the execution of the action items and drives the work outlined in the plan, as well as incorporating the work in the action items outlined in the DLCD Wildfire Adapted Communities Recommendations. This position allows Lane County to undertake wildfire preparedness, evacuation, adaptation, mitigation, and recovery planning specific to areas with high wildfire risk.

PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

The priority Action Items outlined in the plan are intended to be the primary focus for the next implementation term of the plan and will be reevaluated by the Advisory Committee during future plan updates.

Action Item 2.1.3 Identify and prioritize areas for local evacuation plan development across Lane County's Rural Fire Protection District, potentially including data from the CWPP Rural Response: Priorities for Fuel Reduction Map.

Action Item 2.3.1 Utilize maps in the CWPP risk assessment to guide and identify new partners and opportunities for cross-boundary collaboration. Coordinate the implementation of landscape scale hazardous fuel projects.

Action Item 3.1.1 Develop a coordinated multi-agency seasonal outreach campaign that includes county-specific educational materials to promote effective risk reduction practices and communicate landowner assistance programs in the wildland/urban interface.

Action Item 3.2.1 Implement landowner assistance for fuel reduction projects including cost-share incentives. Increase local capacity, establish incentive programs to support yard debris disposal to assist landowners with hazardous fuels removal. Create disposal opportunities using alternative methods to burning.

TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT (must be October 1, 2024, forward): September 2024 – September 2027

How does Project meet the purpose of the Legislation?

Under PL 116-94 Title III Authorized uses a participating county, including any applicable agencies of the participating county, shall use county funds, in accordance with this subchapter, only (4) to develop and carry out community wildfire protection plans in coordination with the appropriate Secretary concerned.

Is there an opportunity to tie this Project to an associated Title II Project? No

Explain:

Explain how the Project will create or produce a benefit to the Federal resource:

Proposed Method of Accomplishment:

- ☐ Contract
- ☐ Volunteers
- ☐ Agency (FS/BLM) Employees
- ☒ County
- ☐ County Corrections (Adult or Juvenile)
- ☐ Non-Profit
- ☐ Other:

How does the Project benefit your community?

CWPP Planning for wildfire is most likely to be successful when the entire community participates in the effort. Plans to mitigate wildfire must recognize the many ways that people interact with and depend on the built and natural environment. Understanding Oregonians' lived experiences and needs, especially socially and economically vulnerable community members, and prioritizing such needs in planning outcomes can increase overall community resilience and the ability to recover.

How does the Project improve cooperative relationships among people who use Federal lands and the Federal Management Agency?

In accordance with Action Item 1.1.1, this project/work supports the plan development and the advisory committee, and should: oversee implementation, identify and coordinate funding opportunities, and sustain the CWPP.

The Advisory Committee acts as the coordinating body and serves as a centralized resource for wildfire risk reduction and wildland-urban interface issues in Lane County. Additional roles and responsibilities of the Committee include:

- Serve as the local committee to coordinate projects to be submitted for wildfire funding programs such as National Fire Plan grants, Senate Bill 360, and the Pre-Disaster Mitigation program as needed;
- Develop and coordinate ad hoc and/or standing subcommittees as needed;
- Prioritize and recommend funding for wildfire risk reduction projects;
- Document successes and lessons learned;
- Assist in evaluating the CWPP in accordance with the prescribed maintenance schedule.

Anticipated cost of the Project (itemize by type & amount – i.e., salaries, materials & supplies, capital). If this is an internal Lane County government project, please also specify position #s funded if applicable:

FISCAL YEAR	FY 24-25	FY 25-26	FY 26-27	FY 27-28	FY 28-29
Personnel Expenses		141,561.52	149,747.68	158,455.17	
Position #s 51911					
Materials & Supplies		32,300.00	33,200.00	34,100.00	
Capital (explain below)					
TOTAL BY YEAR		173,861.52	182,947.68	192,555.17	

Identify other sources of funding for Project: (including amounts)

None

Anticipated outcomes:

Staff is charged with overseeing the work of the CWPP and executing outlined action items in coordination with the CWPP Advisory Committee. Increased collaboration, development and implementation of evacuation plans including zones that may be used in an emergency.

PL 117-58 Title III Authorized uses

A participating county, including any applicable agencies of the participating county, shall use county funds, in accordance with this subchapter, only—

(1) to carry out activities under the Firewise Communities program to provide to homeowners in fire-sensitive ecosystems education on, and assistance with implementing, techniques in home siting, home construction, and home landscaping that can increase the protection of people and property from wildfires;

(2) to reimburse the participating county for search and rescue and other emergency services, including firefighting and law enforcement patrols, that are

(A) performed on Federal land after the date on which the use was approved under subsection (b);

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(A) broadband telecommunications services at local schools; or

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BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF LANE COUNTY, OREGON

ORDER NO: 24-12-18-XX	In the Matter of Approving Project Awards under Title III of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Program under Public Law 117-58; Initiating Projects and Obligating Funds

WHEREAS, the County has received Title III funds as part of the continued funding of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Program (SRS) and the Board of Commissioners reviews and authorizes the appropriate expenditure of these funds;

WHEREAS, the most recent amendment to SRS occurred in Public Law 117-58 (SRS 2022) is available to initiate projects;

WHEREAS, the required 45 Notice of Proposed Title III County Projects was published in the Register Guard on June 27th and again on September 24th, 2024. The Notice identified the four known projects and no comments or additional project proposals were received; and

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of County Commissioners of Lane County ORDERS as follows:

1. Approves the following projects be awarded and initiated from the SRS 2022 funds:

   Search & Rescue – up to $590,000
   Law Enforcement on Federal Lands – up to $545,000
   Lane County Firewise Program – up to $740,517
   Community Wildfire Protection Plan Maintenance & Implementation - up to $549,365

2. Hereby obligates SRS 2022 funds for the projects listed above to be expended for uses allowable by law.

ADOPTED this ___ day of December, 2024.

_____
Laurie Trieger, Chair
Lane County Board of Commissioners