

Board of County Commissioners

Agenda Request

Date of Meeting: May 19, 2009

Date Submitted: May 1, 2009

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Benjamin H. Pingree, County Administrator
Lindsay Stevens, Assistant County Administrator
Scott McDermid, Director, Department of Public Safety
Louis Lamarche, Interim Fire Chief

Subject: Request Board Approval to Purchase an Eagle Raptor 6000psi Compressor and Cascade Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Filling Station

Statement of Issue:

This agenda item requests Board approval to purchase an air compressor and cascade system to fill the breathing air bottles used in conjunction with the self contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). This project is proposed to be funded from the Fire Division's Major Equipment Purchase Fund 180-9000-522-992-000. The total price of the selected system is \$26,835.00.

Background:

Firefighters use self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) as a means to provide clean breathing air when operating in hazardous environments. This piece of firefighting equipment has become the standard throughout the world for protecting firefighters during fire suppression activities. SCBA units use a removable bottle that contains breathing air. The SCBA bottles are used until they are empty. The bottles are then removed from the SCBA unit and replaced with a fresh bottle of breathing air. All of the SCBA bottles used by firefighters within Wakulla County are currently being filled by local SCUBA diving shops.

Over the years, self-contained breathing apparatus technology has improved, with improvements to the units' weight, safety, and the length of time one bottle can be used. These increases in operational usage time directly correlate with an increase in the air pressure required within the bottles. With these improvements, the filling systems maintained for SCUBA are no longer capable of filling to the high pressures required by the newest of SCBA bottles. As a result, the County's SCBA bottles are only able to be partially filled by our local SCUBA diving shops. By utilizing only partially-filled SCBA bottles, the operational usage time is decreased, which in turn decreases the amount of time our firefighters can spend inside a building concentrating on fire suppression objectives.

Additionally, our local SCUBA diving shops are not open and available to fill our SCBA bottles after normal business hours. While the local SCUBA shops have been very helpful to Wakulla County by providing this service over the years, the County is now in position where it needs the

Agenda Request: Request Board Approval to Purchase an Eagle Raptor 6000psi Compressor and Cascade Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Filling Station

May 19, 2009

Page 2

capability to completely fill its SCBA bottles on a 24 hours a day/7 day a week basis. Purchase of a Compressor and Cascade SCBA Filling Station will allow the County to completely fill the SCBA bottles to their maximum capacity, since it operates at the higher pressure required by the SCBA bottles. The Compressor and Cascade SCBA Filling Station will also provide continuous monitoring of the air being supplied; which includes air purification, temperature, oxygen content, and humidity levels.

Analysis:

With the purchase of a Compressor and Cascade SCBA Filling Station, all fire departments within the County will be able to refill their own bottles to their maximum capacity, on a 24 hours a day/7 day a week basis. Wakulla County Fire proposes to house the Compressor and Cascade SCBA Filling Station within a garage bay at the Crawfordville Volunteer Fire Department (Station 8), as it is centrally located and accessible 24 hours per day.

Additionally, the Crawfordville Volunteer Fire Department Building also currently houses the County-paid firefighters, who will be available to assist in refilling the SCBA bottles, when needed. Having the Compressor and Cascade SCBA Filling Station available will also allow for the efficient filling of air bottles that can then be immediately returned to use during an extended emergency scene.

Staff researched the many options, manufacturers, models, and system designs available on the marketplace today. Staff requested and received three quotes (Attachment #1). Based upon its review of the manufacturer's quotes, staff recommends the purchase of the Eagle Raptor 6000psi SCBA filling station, which is also the least expensive unit quoted at \$26,835.00. There are no expected short term fiscal savings and minimal long term savings in this project. The SCUBA shops are charging approximately \$5.00 per filled bottle; however the bottles are filled to ½ the capacity – effectively reducing the efficiency and safety of fire suppression activities. The Eagle Raptor 6000psi unit is well known within the firefighting community and is the unit that was purchased by the City of Tallahassee in September 2008. The Eagle Raptor brand and model is known as a reliable brand that is expected to serve the County's firefighters, and in turn the County's citizens, for decades to come.

Options:

1. Approve the purchase of an Eagle 6000psi SCBA filling station.
2. Do not approve the purchase of an Eagle 6000psi SCBA filling station.
3. Board Direction.

Agenda Request: Request Board Approval to Purchase an Eagle Raptor 6000psi Compressor
and Cascade Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Filling Station

May 19, 2009

Page 3

Recommendation:

Option #1

Attachment(s):

1. Three quotes for SCBA Filling Station units