

TO: Andrew P. Powers, City Manager

FROM: Alexandra South, Director of Strategic Communications & Public Affairs

DATE: June 18, 2024

SUBJECT: Regional Defense Partnership Dues Increase

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Authorize expenditure in the amount of \$25,088 in FY 2024-25 from A/C #001-1120-611-5640 (General Fund, Legislative – Management Fees) for Regional Defense Partnership annual dues.
2. Approve budget appropriation and authorize expenditure in FY 2024-25 in the amount of \$10,088 from A/C #001-0000-311-1000 (General Fund, Fund Balance) to A/C #001-1120-611-5640 (General Fund, Legislative – Management Fees) for increase in Regional Defense Partnership annual dues.
3. Find that this action is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act.

LEVINE ACT ITEM: No

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

\$10,088 Increase to Adopted FY 2024-25 General Fund Budget. \$10,088 increase to the Adopted FY 2024-25 General Fund Budget is requested for the FY 2024-25 Regional Defense Partnership Dues. With the increase, total annual dues will be approximately \$25,088. Budget for future annual dues will be included in the upcoming biennial budget process.

BACKGROUND:

Regional Defense Partnership (RDP) (formerly Regional Defense Partnership-21st Century) is Ventura County's community-based organization that advocates for and supports the county's military facilities and defense contractors as community assets that are essential to national defense. Ventura County's military commands and defense contractors, which total more than 17,000 employees among military, federal, civilian, and contractor jobs, generate approximately \$2 billion annually for

the regional economy.

RDP consists of elected officials from the County of Ventura (County) and a majority of cities, retired federal and state political leaders, senior military officials, defense contractors, local colleges, and other community organizations. Participation in RDP is voluntary. RDP's primary mission is to advocate for and support the county's military facilities and defense contractors. Military operations are community assets that are essential to national defense and support the regional economy.

The County has a large military presence. It is the home to Naval Base Ventura County (NBVC) which consists of Naval Air Station Point Mugu (NAS) and Construction Battalion Center Port Hueneme (CBC) known for the Seabees. NBVC also features the San Nicolas Island landing field/test site, and Coast Guard Air Station Los Angeles, the only full-service air station in Southern California. Ventura County is also home to the California Air National Guard 146th Aircraft Wing, which operates a fire suppression aircraft. The military footprint spans 125,000 square miles in air space and 36,000 square miles in sea range. NBVC is the largest employer in the County with more than 16,000 employees.

The origins of RDP began in the late 1980s when the U.S. Department of Defense issued a Base Realignment and Closures Act or BRACA for NBVC in 1988. A local group of stakeholders including the County, City officials, and retired military personnel formed RDP to lobby federal agencies and officials to spare the base realignment closures (BRACs) of NAS and CBC. BRACs were issued four additional times in 1991, 1993, 1995, and 2005. RDP was successful in saving NBVC regional military operations through all these subsequent attempts.

RDP in its current iteration was officially formed in 2005 with the assistance of County administrative and finance staff and a paid federal lobbyist. Later, RDP employed a part-time executive director and administrative staff. The RDP Board meets monthly, conducts annual advocacy trips to Washington D.C., and coordinates local activities in cooperation with NBVC. RDP board leadership consists of a Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer. RDP board membership is comprised of two representatives from the County Board of Supervisors, six cities, and public organizations including the Port of Hueneme, Navy League, California State University Channel Islands, and Ventura County Veterans Services. Military representatives also attend meetings.

The six member cities are Camarillo, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Ventura, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks. Currently, Councilmember Mikey Taylor serves as the Thousand Oaks representative.

Through the years, RDP's role has grown and expanded to:

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- Preserve and enhance the unique value of the military facilities located in the County.
- Lobby appropriate federal and state representatives for military mission enhancement and effectiveness.
- Collaborate with military organizations to leverage existing capabilities and technologies.
- Strengthen existing military and community partnerships formed to attract new military missions to the bases.
- Encourage technology-based industries to utilize existing military base capabilities and resources.
- Develop cooperative ventures.
- Explore ways to meet mission requirements at reduced cost.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

RDP has maintained the same budget and dues structure for the last 20 years. RDP operations were initially voluntary. To formalize the organization, they began assessing dues in 2005. The budget is funded primarily by the County and member cities. The County contributes a substantial portion to RDP budget, while member cities contribute the balance in dues based on the percentage of civilian employees employed at NBVC. The percentage of civilian employees from Thousand Oaks is 15 percent which is the percentage of the total budget assessed in dues. Currently, the City pays annual dues of \$15,000.

Since its formation, operational expenses have shifted from voluntary to professional. These costs include:

- A federal lobbyist
- Part-time Executive Director
- Part-time Administrative Assistant
- Paid accounting services by the City of Camarillo
- Consultant to support research and production of white papers
- Rental of a small office
- Storage space
- Membership to state and national organizations
- Travel
- Website Development
- BRAC Reserves

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As inflation increased, the Board was reluctant to increase dues and began to dip into reserves. The Executive Director soon after began to forfeit his salary. The RDP Board realized the use of reserves and salary savings was not sustainable, resulting in a budgetary shortfall of \$82,315 (Attachment #1 and Attachment #2).

The RDP Board held two membership meetings to discuss a new budget proposal. The board approved a new FY 2024-25 budget in February to increase dues and address the shortfall. The Board also directed the Executive Director to propose budget adjustments on an annual basis to avoid large assessments in the future. The approved budget resulted in a dues increase for the City of \$10,087.16. The total new dues starting in FY 2024-25 will be \$25,087.16.

Staff recommends approval of the dues increase to support the longevity of NBVC and the economic vitality of the county.

COUNCIL GOAL COMPLIANCE:

Meets the following City Council goal:

B. Provide municipal government leadership which is open and responsive to residents, and is characterized by ethical behavior, stability, promoting public trust, transparency, confidence in the future, and cooperative interaction among civic leaders, residents, business representatives, and staff, while recognizing and respecting legitimate differences of opinion on critical issues facing the City.

PREPARED BY: Mina Layba, Legislative Affairs Manager

Attachments:

- Attachment #1 – RDP Budget Request for 24/25
- Attachment #2 – RDP 24/25 Budget Breakdown