

22. Approve the Proposed 2025-26 Budget for County Fire Protection, including any supplemental materials, and take related actions, as outlined in the referenced budget documents, and as recommended by the County Executive Officer ()



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: General Services Department

Subject: Proposed 2025-26 Budget for County Fire Protection

Meeting Date: June 4, 2025

Formal Title: Approve the Proposed 2025-26 Budget for County Fire Protection, including any supplemental materials, and take related actions, as outlined in the referenced budget documents, and as recommended by the County Executive Officer

Recommended Action

Approve the Proposed 2025-26 Budget for County Fire Protection, including any supplemental materials, as provided in the referenced budget documents:

- [Proposed Budget](#)
- [Fixed Assets](#)
- [Continuing Agreements List](#)
- Presentation

Executive Summary

The Proposed 2025-26 Budget for County Fire Protection supports two divisions: County Fire, which includes County Service Area (CSA) 48, and CSA 4, Pajaro Dunes. Volunteer Firefighters and Emergency Medical Responders (EMR) make up the bulk of Santa Cruz County Fire Department staffing with supplemental staffing provided through a cooperative agreement with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE).

Discussion

The mission of County Fire Protection is to protect the life, property, and natural resources of its citizens and visitors through effective emergency response, preparedness, education, and prevention. Department and division operational objectives are shown in the Proposed 2025-26 Budget document and 2025-27 Operational Plan. Both are available online at: www.SCCVision.us

Budgeted funding will continue to support structural fire protection, first responder emergency medical services, technical rescue, public fire safety education, and fire marshal services including code inspections for the unincorporated areas of the County that are not included in an autonomous fire district with a new CAL FIRE contract that has been updated to more accurately reflect the emerging needs of Santa Cruz County Fire.

The overall County Fire Protection budget is status quo and includes funding from CSA 48, Proposition 172 funding for the Fire Chiefs Association, and funding for Santa Cruz County Hazardous Materials Response Incidents Team. The County Fire contract with CalFire is currently under negotiation and represents a minimal change contract budgeted for maximum contract liability which will allow status quo services to the extent possible, which includes fire protection for CSA 4 Pajaro Dunes.

Over the next fiscal year, the department will focus primarily on creation of a new strategic plan for County Service Area 48, implementation of a year-round recruitment and onboarding strategy, and continued modernization of its fleet.

Financial Impact

The County Fire Protection Proposed Budget includes \$16,106,626 in expenditures offset by \$14,689,434 in revenues and other fund contributions of \$1,417,912. This reflects a total expenditure decrease of \$558,947, or 3.4% from the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Adopted Budget.

Strategic Initiatives

Operational Plan - Comprehensive Health & Safety, Sustainable Environment
Climate Action - Wildfire Prevention

Submitted By:

Michael Beaton, General Services Director

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Executive Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.



Santa Cruz County Fire Protection



2025-2026 Budget



Presentation Intro & Achievements



Mission and Vision, Organizational Structure



How We are Organized



Our Successes



2025-26 Requested Budget



Budget Goals, Changes & Community Benefit



Budget Details



Future Considerations

Mission

The mission of the Santa Cruz County Fire Department is to protect the life, property, and natural resources of its citizens and visitors through effective emergency response, preparedness, education, and prevention.

Our Vision is to...

To provide quality service to all communities in the county and to be a leader in fire protection, fire prevention, and emergency response.

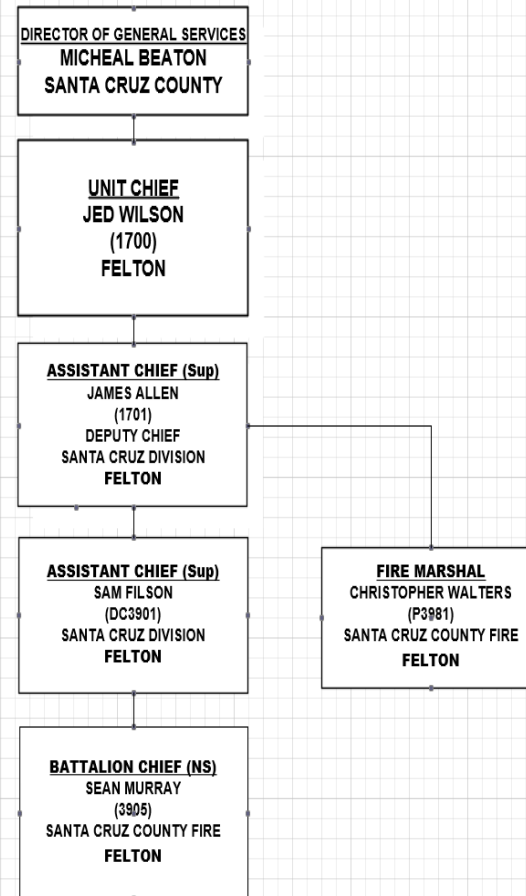
Support for Climate & Equity Goals

- Providing emergency services to all members of the public within Santa Cruz County.
- Expanding volunteer opportunities to include those who don't have the ability to attend required courses for emergency response.
- Support climate-impacted communities at risk of natural disasters
- Reduce community wildfire risk
- Protect structures at-risk of wildfire
- Protect forested landscapes from wildfire risk
- Research options for clean energy systems for County Fire facilities

Organizational Leadership

SAN MATEO-SANTA CRUZ UNIT SANTA CRUZ

SANTA CRUZ DIVISION



Divisions and Services



STRUCTURAL FIRE
PROTECTION



FIRE PREVENTION



HAZARDOUS
MATERIALS
RESPONSE



TECHNICAL RESCUE



FIRE MARSHAL
SERVICES



COMMAND
LEADERSHIP/COORDINATION



EMERGENCY MEDICAL
RESPONSE



PUBLIC FIRE
SAFETY
EDUCATION

Our Achievements

- Competition of the Master Plan
- Hiring of Division Chief
- County Fire Website
- Increased Community Event Participation
- Utilization of County Fire Equipment for Fuels Reduction Projects with CALFIRE.
- 2024-25 County Objectives completed
- RMS System and County Fire Policy ready for 2025 implementation
- CSA4 returned to 3-0 staffing

2025-26 Budget Request

	FY 2024-25	FY 2025-26	Change
Revenues	\$10,812,943	\$13,767,491	\$2,954,548
Expenditures	\$16,478,073	\$16,106,626	(\$371,447)
General Fund Contribution	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Funded Staffing Full-time Equivalents (FTEs)	00.00	00.00	00.00

Primary Budget Goals

1

Provide the desired staffing level and services to CSA 4 that budget can support.

2

Increase Firefighter staffing for CSA 48 to meet CAL FIRE standard.

3

Improved Resiliency from climate change and improve infrastructure.

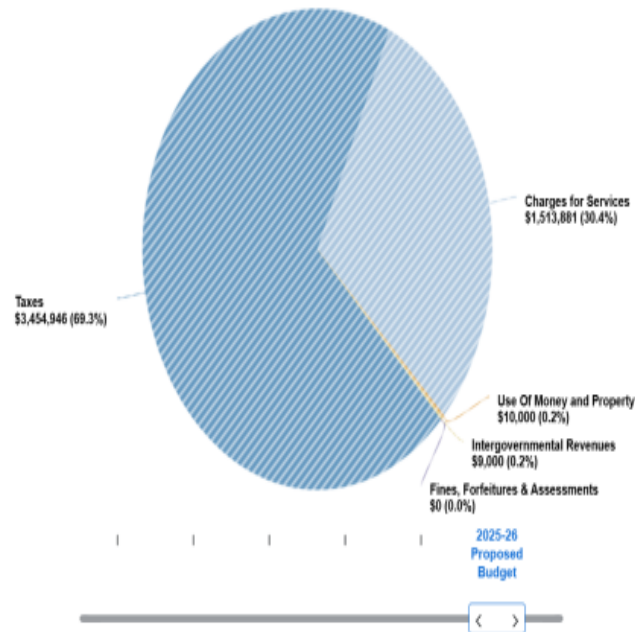
Requested Changes

- Two year agreement with CALFIRE
- Improvements to Davenport Fire Station
- Water Tender purchase for replacement of WT2951
- Two (2) Type 6 engines

FUND BALANCE Key Drivers (CSA 4)

FY 25-26 Proposed Budget - CSA 4 Revenues

Visualization



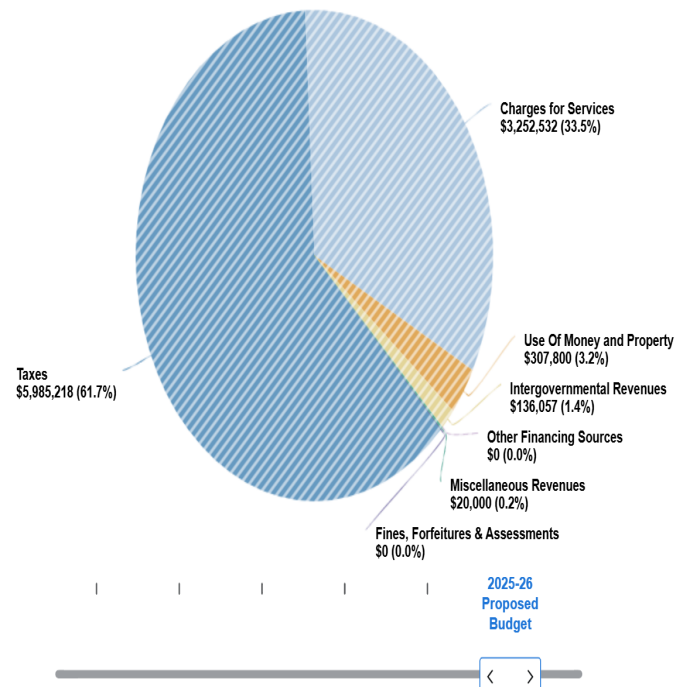
Data filtered by Revenues, CSA 4 - Pajaro Dunes and exported on March 11, 2025. Created with OpenGov

- 24/25 fund balance start of \$920,098
- 25/26 budgeted revenue of \$4,065,884
- 25/26 budgeted expenditure of \$2,745,997 + 800K for 3-0
- CALFIRE CONTRACT TO INCREASE TO 3-0 Staffing

FUND BALANCE & Key Drivers (CSA 48)

FY 25-26 Proposed Budget - CSA 48 Revenues

Visualization



Data filtered by Revenues, County Fire Department and exported on March 11, 2025. Created with OpenGov

- 24/25 fund balance start of \$12,408,400
- 25/26 revenue \$6,426,711
- 25/26 budgeted expenditure \$9,835,921
- Projected CAL FIRE contract savings Historically (62%)
- \$3,416,637 decrease to 24/25 fund balance

FUND BALANCE CSA 48

FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
Beginning Balance	Beginning Balance	Beginning Balance	Beginning Balance	Beginning Balance
6,279,738.47	9,221,786.23	11,398,515.59	11,996,023.99	12,408,399.98
6,279,738.47	9,221,786.23	11,398,515.59	11,996,023.99	12,408,399.98

Capital / System Requests

Current Projects

- Fire Apparatus Replacement

New Project Requests

- Davenport Fire Station

Future Considerations

Long-term Opportunities & Risks

- Continue to utilize analytics and recommendations from the AP Triton Study
- Roll out of First Due platform (2025)
- Completion of County Fire Policy Manual (2025)
- Continued effort for varied volunteer efforts
- LRA Fire Hazard Severity Zones
- CAL FIRE Labor contract
- 5 year Strategic Plan
- Pajaro Valley FPD annexation
- IAFCO



Santa Cruz County
FIRE DEPARTMENT
California

November 2023

**Long-Range
MASTER PLAN**

