



MEMORANDUM

Resolution 26-004 A Resolution of the City Council of Homer, Alaska, Authorizing the Staff of Homer Volunteer Fire Department to Apply for a 2026 Alaska Department of Natural Resources Volunteer Fire Capacity (VFC) Grant. City Manager/Fire Chief

Item Type: Backup Memorandum
Prepared For: Mayor Lord and City Council
Date: January 2, 2026
From: Dan Jager, Fire Chief
Through: Melissa Jacobsen, City Manager

Purpose: To inform City Council of the Homer Volunteer Fire Department's intention to apply for a 2026 Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Volunteer Fire Capacity (VFC) Grant and to request Council support and authorization of the required local match.

Discussion: HVFD has successfully received VFC grant funding in prior years. The department intends to apply for the 2026 VFC Grant, due December 12, 2025, to purchase sixteen pagers.

Pagers will serve as HVFD's primary emergency alerting system, improving the reliability of responder notifications when cellular service is unavailable. Dispatch already has the infrastructure to support pager operations, and no additional dispatch-related costs are anticipated. The additional pagers would bring the department's total to twenty-eight, providing nearly all staff and volunteers with a dedicated alerting device.

Due to the timing of the grant notice and the absence of a City Council meeting in December, staff provided advance notice and City Manager approval and now seeks formal Council approval through the accompanying resolution.

Fiscal Impact: The total project cost is \$9,539.04, with \$8,585.14 funded by the VFC Grant and a required 10% local match of \$953.90. The local match may be funded through the Fire Department Operating Communications Budget or CARMA funds, which will be determined at the time the funds are accepted.

Recommendation: Staff recommends adoption of the accompanying resolution supporting the 2026 VFC Grant application.

Attachment:
November 2025 memo from Dan Jager, Fire Chief



MEMORANDUM

Application for Volunteer Fire Capacity (VFC) Grant 2026¹

Item Type: Informational Memorandum
Prepared For: Mayor Lord and Homer City Council
Date: November 20, 2025
From: Dan Jager, Fire Chief
Through: Melissa Jacobsen, City Manager

Purpose: To inform City Council of the Homer Volunteer Fire Department's intention to apply for a 2026 Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Volunteer Fire Capacity (VFC) Grant.

Discussion: HVFD was recently made aware of the opportunity to apply for a 2026 VFC Grant, due December 12, 2025. We plan to apply to the program for funds to purchase sixteen pagers.

Pagers will serve as our primary alerting method for emergency responders, significantly improving notification reliability for fire calls and resource deployment. Currently, we rely on a phone app for alerts, but cell service can be unreliable—when it fails, responders miss critical notifications. By designating pagers as our primary system and moving the phone app to a backup role, we can effectively mitigate this risk. Dispatch already has the infrastructure to support pager operations, so no additional dispatch-related costs are anticipated.

The department currently has 12 pagers. Acquiring the 16 additional units would bring our total to 28 pagers, providing nearly every responder—both staff and volunteers—with a dedicated alerting device.

HVFD has successfully applied for and received the VFC Grant for several years. The 2026 grant totals \$10,000, of which \$9,000 is provided through the grant and \$1,000 is funded by the city as required match funds. The department's \$1,000 match can be covered through either the Fire Department Operating Communications Budget or CARMA funds, and together these funds would fully support the purchase of 16 pagers.

Typically, Departments seek City Council approval for grant applications; however given our late grant notice and that City Council does not meet in December, we are providing this memo in advance and will bring a Resolution of support before Council at the first meeting in January.

Recommendation: For information.

¹ Clerk's Note—this memorandum was provided in November of 2025 after the packet deadline for the final Council meeting of 2025.