



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number: 15-3574

Agenda Item Number: 36.

Agenda Date: 6/18/2015

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Police

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Anthony L. Treviño, Jr.

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT

Proposed Changes to Municipal Code Chapter 25, Article IV (Alarm Systems)

SUMMARY

This ordinance authorizes a waiver of the City's alarm fees for residents who are victims of family violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and stalking; this action also reduces the senior residents annual alarm fee from \$35 to \$20 effective October 1, 2015.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In January 2015, Councilmember Alan Warrick, through a Council Consideration Request (CCR), requested that City Council consider a waiver of alarm permit fees for victims of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault and stalking. In response to the CCR, Interim Police Chief Treviño made a presentation to the Council Governance Committee on April 15, 2015. During the presentation, Chief Treviño noted that current alarm fee data bases are not programmed to track the type of waiver proposed as well as a number of other issues for consideration when making the determination to waive alarm permit fees. At the Governance Council Committee meeting, Councilmember Rebecca Viagran asked whether alarm permit fees could be waived for senior citizens. After discussion by the Governance Council Committee, the Committee referred the issue to the Council Public Safety Committee.

On May 6, 2015, Chief Treviño addressed the Public Safety Committee and recommended an Alarm Fee Waiver program be instituted to benefit victims of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault and stalking and senior citizens. The Public Safety Committee voted to have staff bring forward to the full City Council a

waiver of alarm fees for victims of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault and stalking and to present senior citizen alarm fee alternatives during the proposed budget process.

This council action recommends the following changes to the City's alarm permit fees by amending the City Code Chapter 25, Article IV:

- For victims of Family Violence, Child Abuse, Sexual Assault, and Stalking:
 - Waiving the residential alarm fee for all victims of these crimes,
 - Victims will submit with a new or renewal permit application a completed waiver eligibility certification letter,
 - The certification letter is modeled after a similar letter developed by the Texas Council on Family Violence in coordination with Public Utility Commission of Texas and the Texas Legal Services Center to waive utility deposit fees.
 - Certification letters will be accepted from the following sources:
 - Law Enforcement Agency
 - Office of a State District or County Attorney
 - Office of the Attorney General
 - Victims Advocacy Organization

The proposed changes will be effective October 1, 2015. During the months of June through September, the Police Department will make preparations to implement the changes authorized with this council action including preparation and publication of new alarm fee applications, information pamphlets, and updating the SAPD website.

ISSUE

This council action will waive the City's alarm fees for residents who are victims of family violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and stalking effective October 1, 2015.

ALTERNATIVES

City Council may adopt the proposed changes in their entirety, or in part, or opt to leave Municipal Code Chapter 25 as it is currently written.

FISCAL IMPACT

The financial impact of waiving alarms fees for victims of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault and stalking is unknown at this time. The Police Department current alarm permit database does not track how many of these victims have alarm permits. The Department will report to the City Council after one year the affects of the waiver.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adopting the proposed changes to Municipal Code, Chapter 25, Article IV to waive fees selected victims of crime effective October 1, 2015, and to address senior citizen permit fees as part of the budget process for FY 2016. The proposed changes will be effective October 1, 2015, to allow sufficient time

to reprogram the False Alarm Management System (FAMS) used to track permits and revenues. The October 1 effective date will provide time to revise business practices, prepare and publish new applications and informational pamphlets, and to revise the SAPD website to announce the new waiver program.