



SAN RAFAEL
THE CITY WITH A MISSION

Agenda Item No. 3.a

Meeting Date: February 2, 2026

SAN RAFAEL CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

Department: Police Department

Prepared by: Todd Berringer, Lieutenant

City Manager Approval: 

TOPIC: SAFE TEAM PILOT PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION FOR PROGRAM CONTINUATION

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE AN AMENDMENT TO THE AGREEMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES WITH PETALUMA PEOPLE SERVICES CENTER TO EXTEND THE TERM THROUGH JUNE 30, 2027 FOR CONTINUATION OF THE SPECIALIZED ASSISTANCE FOR EVERYONE (SAFE) TEAM IN A NOT TO EXCEED AMOUNT OF \$775,000 PER YEAR THROUGH THE TERM OF THE CONTRACT EXTENSION.

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute an amendment to the Professional Services Agreement with Petaluma People Services Center to extend the term of the contract through June 30, 2027, to continue the operation of the SAFE Team in a not to exceed amount of \$775,000 per year through the term of the contract extension.

BACKGROUND

The Specialized Assistance for Everyone (SAFE) Team was launched as a three-year pilot program to provide an alternative, health-centered response to nonviolent calls for service involving behavioral health crises, substance use, homelessness, and quality-of-life concerns. The program was designed to enhance public safety outcomes by pairing a crisis counselor with an emergency medical technician, allowing sworn personnel and firefighters/paramedics to remain available for higher-acuity emergencies while ensuring individuals in crisis receive appropriate, compassionate, and timely care.

Since its inception, the SAFE Team has become an integrated component of San Rafael's emergency response framework. Working in close coordination with the Police Department (SRPD) and Fire Department (SRFD), the SAFE Team responds to calls dispatched through the 9-1-1 emergency response system, non-emergency reporting, and via officer-initiated referrals. The SAFE Team in San Rafael has operated 12 hours/day, 365 days/year since their inception. This integrated model ensures continuity of care, improves response times for behavioral health-related incidents, and reduces unnecessary law enforcement involvement when a crisis intervention response is more appropriate.

FOR CITY CLERK ONLY

Council Meeting:

Disposition:

Petaluma People Services Center (PPSC), the contracted service provider, has operated the SAFE Team throughout the pilot period. PPSC brings extensive experience in behavioral health services, crisis intervention, and community-based outreach. Over the course of the pilot, PPSC has built institutional knowledge specific to San Rafael, developed operational protocols aligned with SRPD and SRFD practices, and trained all SAFE Team personnel to function effectively within the City's emergency response environment. From an organizational perspective, the SAFE Team has matured from a pilot concept into a reliable, expected service for community members, first responders, and partner agencies.

From a community perspective, the SAFE Team has been well received as a compassionate, humane and effective response to individuals experiencing crisis. Community members, service providers, and emergency responders have increasingly come to rely on the SAFE Team as a first-line response that emphasizes stabilization, voluntary services, and connection to long-term resources rather than enforcement or hospitalization when not clinically necessary.

ANALYSIS

During the pilot period, the SAFE Team handled nearly 3,000 calls for service annually, accounting for approximately 8.5% of the San Rafael Police Department's total call volume. These calls predominantly involved nonviolent behavioral health crises, welfare checks, substance use-related incidents, and quality-of-life issues. By diverting these calls from traditional law enforcement-only responses, the SAFE Team has measurably reduced the demand on patrol officers while ensuring individuals in crisis receive appropriate care.

Analysis of call data demonstrates that SAFE Team responses frequently result in on-scene stabilization, voluntary service referrals, and follow-up care, rather than arrests, emergency department transports, or involuntary psychiatric holds. Both housed and unhoused individuals are served through the program, with a significant proportion of contacts involving high utilizers of emergency services. The SAFE Team model has contributed to reductions in repeat calls for service, ambulance utilization, and emergency department admissions for non-emergent behavioral health issues.

Since the pilot program's inception, the Police Department has achieved a 12% reduction (43 seconds) in Priority 1 response times. Staff believe there is a correlation between the SAFE Team's handling of calls for service and officers' timelier availability to respond to critical incidents. Throughout the past three years, the SAFE Team successfully diverted community members 233 times from emergency departments and 182 times from the justice system. Furthermore, the team's intervention allowed San Rafael Fire Department ambulances to remain in service on 333 occasions, ensuring Advanced Life Support (ALS) resources remained available for acute medical emergencies. Additionally, the Police Department reported a 32% decrease in use-of-force incidents, dropping from 53 incidents in 2023 to 36 incidents in 2024.

Financial analysis of the pilot program reflects the phased growth and stabilization of the SAFE Team. Program costs are projected to total \$1,882,466 over the course of the three-year pilot program, well under the budgeted \$2,425,000 for this program. These expenditures reflect staffing, training, equipment, and operational integration costs necessary to sustain a reliable crisis response program. Currently, there is no identified or ongoing funding source to sustain this program beyond FY 2026–2027, and the current funding structure beyond FY 2027–2028 is limited (Opioid Settlement Fund). Absent new, dedicated revenues, the City will be unable to continue this service at its current level over the long term. Accordingly, staff are using the current funding period to evaluate sustainable funding options and to

communicate both to the City Council and the community on the importance of securing stable revenue to support these critical public safety services. Staff will continue to explore and assess potential revenue measures, including future ballot options, to ensure the long-term viability of programs that provide essential crisis response and community safety benefits.

Staff is recommending the City Council authorize the City Manager to enter into an amendment to the Professional Services Agreement with Petaluma People Services Center to continue to operate the SAFE Team. The amendment would extend the contract until June 30, 2027, and provide additional funding for the extension of services. This time frame of the proposed agreement would align the contract term with the City's fiscal year cycle, eliminating the operational and budgetary challenges associated with mid-fiscal year expenditures. Aligning the agreement with the fiscal year improves financial planning, grant administration, and service continuity. In addition, staff would also amend the scope of work to comply with the Department of Justice [Byrne SCIP Grant agreement](#) and modify the insurance requirements of the contract to clarify those requirements.

Non-competitive Procurement Justification

The Department of Justice requires a competitive bidding process under certain circumstances when a grant is awarded; however, there are specific exceptions that allow for noncompetitive procurement when justified by operational necessity and continuity of services. Staff recommends approval of a sole source agreement with Petaluma People Services Center in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.320(c). Noncompetitive procurement is justified due to the lack of contractual coverage between the date the applicable grant agreement was executed on December 18, 2025, and the date a new contract is required to be in place by February 28, 2026. Entering a competitive procurement process within this timeframe would result in a service gap, disrupting crisis response services relied upon by the community and emergency responders.

Additional justification for sole source procurement is based on prior competitive efforts. A Request for Proposals for the same services was advertised and distributed approximately three years ago, and Petaluma People Services Center was the only organization that met the City's requirements. Since that time, PPSC has developed and maintained the existing SAFE Team staffing model, completed extensive training, and achieved full interoperability with San Rafael Police and Fire dispatch and response protocols.

PPSC's three years of operational integration, institutional knowledge, and demonstrated performance cannot be readily replicated without significant fiscal cost and delay. Transitioning to a new service provider during the active grant period (August 1, 2025, through September 30, 2027) would require recruitment, onboarding, training, and system integration that would delay implementation, increase reliance on sworn and fire personnel for behavioral health calls, and negatively impact individuals in crisis who have come to expect a SAFE Team response. For these reasons, staff find that sole source procurement is in the best interest of the City and consistent with federal procurement regulations.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Police Department staff have provided information and outreach regarding the SAFE Team and its services through formal San Rafael City Council meetings, in addition to meetings of the Police Advisory and Accountability Committee. Promoting the SAFE Team and its support services that are available to the community continue to be highlighted by the department through social media, community engagement events, and community meetings. Additionally, the SAFE Team has had a presence at

nearly all planned protests occurring in San Rafael over the past few years as a frontline, de-escalation and medical resource for participants.

FISCAL IMPACT

The SAFE Team pilot program has been implemented in a fiscally responsible manner, with actual expenditures remaining under budget year-over-year throughout the three-year pilot period. Program costs to date reflect a measured ramp-up of services, staffing stabilization, and operational efficiencies gained through integration with San Rafael Police Department (SRPD) and San Rafael Fire Department (SRFD) emergency response system.

Staff is recommending a new one-year and four-month Professional Services Agreement with Petaluma People Services Center that aligns with the City's fiscal cycle and provides budget predictability through the end of Fiscal Year 2026–27. Projected SAFE Team operating costs to continue the program through the remainder of this current fiscal year are projected to be \$171,675. PPSC's costs projections are \$714,170 for FY 2026–27. These projections include staffing, wages and benefits, training, equipment, and administrative costs necessary to sustain program operations and meet service demand.

Funding for the SAFE Team during the recommended agreement period will be supported through a combination of grant funding and dedicated local revenue sources. As previously approved by the City Council on [October 20, 2025](#), the City of San Rafael was awarded a Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program (SCIP) Cohort grant totaling \$483,282. Of this amount, \$369,671 is eligible to be applied directly toward SAFE Team operations through June 30, 2027.

The remaining program costs will be funded through a combination of the City's Cannabis Fund and Opioid Settlement Fund. The Cannabis Fund is projected to contribute \$326,898 in FY 2025–26, \$216,125 in FY 2026–27. The Opioid Settlement Fund is projected to contribute \$193,489 in FY 2025–26, \$148,526 in FY 2026–27. These funding sources were specifically established to address substance use, behavioral health impacts, and community harm reduction, and are therefore well aligned with the SAFE Team's mission and service outcomes.

Table 1: SAFE Team Actual and Projected Program Costs

Fiscal Period (Actual)	Program Expenditures	Opioid Settlement	Cannabis Fund	Grant Funding	Total Revenue	General Fund
3/31/23 – 6/30/23	\$207,491	\$207,491	\$0	\$0	\$207,491	\$0
FY 2023–24 (7/1/23 – 6/30/24)	\$608,594	\$113,580	\$245,015	\$250,000 (County)	\$608,594	\$0
FY 2024–25 (7/1/24 – 6/30/25)	\$551,355	\$400,227	\$151,128	\$0	\$551,355	\$0
FY 2025–26 (Projected)	\$686,702	\$193,490	\$431,602	\$61,610	\$686,702	\$0
FY 2026–27 (Projected)	\$714,170	\$148,527	\$319,196	\$246,447	\$714,170	\$0

Staff recommends that the City Manager negotiate and enter into an amendment to the Professional Services Agreement in a not to exceed amount of \$775,000 per fiscal year through the term of the contract extension (\$171,675 during March 1, through June 30, 2026, and \$714,170 for fiscal year 2026–27), which is supported by a combination of grant funding and the above-mentioned revenue sources. The term of the agreement would be extended to June 30, 2027.

While there is a desire to enter into a longer professional services agreement with PPSC, there would be a projected \$400,000 impact to the City's General Fund during the second half of FY 2027-28. Staff will continue to apply for grants to explore additional funding strategies to offset the impact on the General Fund. Aligning the contract with the fiscal year further enhances fiscal planning, simplifies grant administration, and ensures continuity of services for community members experiencing crisis. Funding for this program is currently supported through time-limited and non-recurring sources, with no ongoing revenue identified to sustain operations beyond FY 2026–27. While limited funding is anticipated through FY 2027–28, including the use of Opioid Settlement Funds, these resources are finite and will not provide long-term fiscal support. Without the establishment of a new, dedicated funding source, continuation of this service at its current level will not be fiscally sustainable. Staff will continue to evaluate long-term funding strategies and potential revenue options, including future ballot measures, to support the continuation of critical public safety and crisis response services. Staff will continue to report annually to the City Council on program expenditures, funding sources, and outcomes as part of the City's ongoing budget and performance review process.

OPTIONS:

The City Council has the following options to consider in this matter:

1. Adopt the resolution as presented.
2. Adopt the resolution with modifications.
3. Direct staff to return with more information.
4. Take no action.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute an amendment to the Professional Services Agreement with Petaluma People Services Center to extend the term of the contract through June 30, 2027, to continue the operation of the SAFE Team and to increase the not to exceed amount by \$775,000 per year through the term of the contract extension.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution Authorizing the City Manage to Negotiate and Enter Into an Amendment to the Professional Services Agreement with Petaluma People Services Center for the continuation of SAFE TEAM

RESOLUTION NO.

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN RAFAEL AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE AN AMENDMENT TO THE AGREEMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES WITH PETALUMA PEOPLE SERVICE CENTER TO EXTEND THE TERM THROUGH JUNE 30, 2027 FOR CONTINUATION OF THE SPECIALIZED ASSISTANCE FOR EVERYONE (SAFE) TEAM IN A NOT TO EXCEED AMOUNT \$775,000 PER YEAR THROUGH THE TERM OF THE CONTRACT EXTENSION

WHEREAS, the City recognizes that there are individuals and entities that are better trained, suited, and equipped to navigate and deliver services related to mental health, substance abuse, and unsheltered and housing services available to individuals in need; and

WHEREAS, the City has a need for the SAFE Team to respond to a wide range of mental health related crisis, including conflict resolution, welfare checks, substance abuse and suicide threats; and

WHEREAS, community members will be diverted from the criminal justice system, emergency departments and crisis stabilization units by providing a more specialized response; and

WHEREAS, following a competitive procurement, on January 17, 2023, the City Council selected and authorized the City Manager to enter into a contract with Petaluma People Services Center (PPSC) for specialized assistance for everyone (SAFE) team services; and

WHEREAS, Petaluma People Services Center (PPSC) has a proven track record of providing wrap-around services to clients as a trusted community partner; and

WHEREAS, PPSC has the capabilities, staff, and experience to implement an Alternative Response Team in San Rafael; and

WHEREAS, PPSC will provide a two-person mobile team of Crisis Counselors and Emergency Medical Technicians 12 hours per day / 7 days per week / 365 days per year; and

WHEREAS, the noncompetitive procurement is justified due to the lack of contractual coverage between the date the applicable grant agreement was executed on December 18, 2025, and the date a new contract is required to be in place by February 28, 2026. Entering into a competitive procurement process within this timeframe would result in a service gap, disrupting crisis response services relied upon by the community and emergency responders; and

WHEREAS, Additional justification for sole source procurement is based on prior competitive efforts. A Request for Proposals for the same services was advertised and distributed approximately three years ago, and Petaluma People Services Center was the only organization that met the City's requirements. Since that time, PPSC has developed and maintained the existing SAFE Team staffing model, completed extensive training, and achieved full interoperability with San Rafael Police and Fire dispatch and response protocols; and

WHEREAS, PPSC's three years of operational integration, institutional knowledge, and demonstrated performance cannot be readily replicated without significant fiscal cost and delay. Transitioning to a new service provider during the active grant period (August 1, 2025 through September 30, 2027) would require recruitment, onboarding, training, and system integration that would delay implementation, increase reliance on sworn and fire personnel for behavioral health calls, and negatively impact individuals in crisis who have come to expect a SAFE Team response; and.

WHEREAS, the City having been awarded the grant funding and having identified dedicated local funding sources, such as Cannabis Fund and the Opioid Settlement fund, to cover the cost of the contract extension.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the City Council of the City of San Rafael hereby finds the foregoing recitals true and correct and authorizes the City Manager to negotiate and execute an amendment to Professional Services Agreement with Petaluma People Services Center to: 1) extend the term to June 30, 2027, 2) in the not to exceed amount of \$775,000 per year through the term of the contract extension,, 3) to amend the scope of work to conform to the parties' existing practices and 4) to amend the insurance requirements for clarity. .

I, Lindsay Lara, Clerk of the City of San Rafael, hereby certify foregoing resolution was duly and regularly introduced and adopted at a regular meeting on the City Council of said City held on Monday, the 2nd day of February 2026, by the following vote to wit:

AYES: COUNCILMEMBERS:

NOES: COUNCILMEMBERS:

ABSENT: COUNCILMEMBERS:

Lindsay Lara, City Clerk