



City of Rochester Hills
AGENDA SUMMARY
FINANCIAL ITEMS

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Legislative File No: 2025-0447

TO: Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Captain Paul Workman, Captain OCSO – Rochester Hills Contingent

DATE: October 20, 2025

SUBJECT: Citywide Drone as First Responder (DFR) Program

REQUEST:

City Council is requested to authorize the purchase of one (1) Drone as First Responder (DFR) unit and DJI Dock 3 in the amount not-to-exceed \$26,412 to DroneNerds, Miami, Florida and authorization for the payment of annual costs including software maintenance and licensing fees in the amount not-to-exceed \$3,500 to Oakland County, Pontiac, Michigan.

REASON FOR PURCHASE:

The Oakland County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) Drone Unit, operating under the Drone as First Responder (DFR) program, provides a safe and effective aerial observation platform to support law enforcement during public safety incidents. All missions will be conducted with the highest regard for safety, constitutional rights, privacy protections, and applicable laws.

The DFR may be deployed for, but is not limited to, the following purposes: responding to active 911 and emergency calls; locating missing people or suspects; assisting specialized units during high-risk incidents; documenting crash or crime scenes; supporting hazardous materials or public health operations; providing tactical and situational awareness at large events; and conducting post-incident or disaster damage assessments.

All DFR personnel must be thoroughly familiar with relevant FAA regulations, Federal and State laws, and official guidance governing governmental drone operations. Compliance with these requirements is mandatory for every flight under OCSO policy. The DFR shall be deployed only for legitimate law enforcement purposes and shall not be used for "random patrols."

Operators shall act in full accordance with applicable Sheriff's General Orders concerning Search and Seizure, and Warrantless and Search Warrants. When operating a DFR over private property where no lawful exception to a warrant applies, a search warrant must be obtained prior to flight. If a warrant exception exists, it must be clearly justified and documented. The DFR shall not be used solely to monitor activities protected under the First Amendment or other constitutionally secured rights, except when necessary to ensure public and officer safety—such as for lawful crowd or traffic control operations.

DFR operations will never be conducted based on an individual's real or perceived personal characteristics, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, age, disability, or political affiliation.

The DFR shall not intentionally record or transmit imagery of locations where a person has a reasonable expectation of privacy. Operators and observers must take all reasonable measures to prevent the inadvertent recording or transmission of such imagery.

The DFR program and Drone Unit are considered a “Special Unit” under the umbrella of Patrol Services – Technical Support Group. The use of this unit, and assets, is covered under the current contract for law enforcement services.

The drone package pricing will be as follows:

- \$26,412 = "Drone in a Box" outfit one (1) time purchase
- \$3,500 = Annual service cost, starting in year one and at the time of implementation.
- \$29,912 = Total start-up initial cost for year one

- \$3,500 = Each additional year not to exceed annual service cost (agreed service price is set for the next 2.5 years)

The cities of Waterford, Taylor, Warren, and Orion Township are all implementing this project with others in the County and elsewhere evaluating their options.

Oakland County Sheriff’s Office went through a competitive process in order to select the drone unit that is being recommended for purchase. This purchase is being requested as a Single Source, based on the standardization of equipment by the OCSO to allow for this unit to be easily deployed into operations as staff has already received the appropriate training for using this unit, as well as integrating with the software the OCSO already has in place.

PROCESS:

Vendor Name and Address:

DroneNerds
20815 NE 16th Ave.
Miami, FL 33179

Oakland County
1200 N. Telegraph
Pontiac, MI 48341

Reason for Selection:

Single Source

Method of Purchase:

Purchase Order

BUDGET:

Funding is not currently included in the FY 2025 Adopted Budget.

If approved by City Council, the Fiscal Division shall prepare a 4th Quarter Budget Amendment in the amount of +\$26,500 for the cost of the DFR unit in the Capital Improvement Fund, as well as +\$3,500 for the annual software maintenance costs in the Police Fund. Both increases are proposed to be funded from Fund Balances in each respective fund.

Annual recurring costs including software maintenance shall be included in the FY 2026 and beyond Police Fund Budget and will be presented as part of the FY 2026 1st Quarter Budget Amendment.

Fund Name	Department Account No	Account No. Description	2025 Budget	2025 Cost	2025 Remaining Budget
Capital Improvement Fund	420.977000	Equipment – Capitalized	\$0	\$26,412	(\$26,412)
Police Fund	207.801000	Professional Services	\$0	\$3,500	(\$3,500)

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that City Council authorize the purchase of one (1) Drone as First Responder (DFR) unit and DJI Dock 3 in the amount not-to-exceed \$26,412 to DroneNerds, Miami, Florida and authorization for the payment of annual costs including software maintenance and licensing fees in the amount not-to-exceed \$3,500 to Oakland County, Pontiac, Michigan.

APPROVALS:	SIGNATURE	DATE
Department Review		
Department Director		
Budget Content: Chief Financial Officer		
Purchasing Process: Supervisor of Procurement		
Mayor		
Deputy Clerk		

Contract Reviewed by City Attorney ☐ Yes ☒ N/A