



## **CITY OF MENIFEE**

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SUBJECT: Authority to Resolve Field Claims for Department Directors

MEETING DATE: December 7, 2022

TO: Mayor and City Council

PREPARED BY: David Gutierrez, Police Captain

REVIEWED BY: Ed Varso, Police Chief

APPROVED BY: Armando G. Villa, City Manager

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### **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

1. Adopt a resolution delegating Department Directors and/or their designee the authority to resolve field claims of \$500 or less; and
2. Authorize the City Manager, or his designee, to execute all necessary documents to implement the field claims procedure.

### **DISCUSSION**

The City of Meniffee understands that keeping residents safe is critical and, in the process, may lead to field claims. Field claims are used to resolve incidents involving damage to property (and/or lost items) that occur while the City is assisting the public in the field. Field Claims include the negotiation and payment of a monetary amount to the affected party (claimant). Some of the examples leading to a field claim may include damages to a fence, mailbox, cellphone, etc. Should the City cause damage to an affected party, the City would have the claimant sign a "Release of All Claims" form associated with the negotiated amount (not-to-exceed \$500). Following consideration, the City would begin the field claim process as indicated in the attached Field Claims Procedure that has been created.

To assess the feasibility and benefit of instituting a field claims procedure, the Police Department (PD) developed and implemented a pilot program modeled after similar programs used in other Police Departments. While the use of the field claims procedure has been limited, with only two field claims processed since the pilot program was implemented in July 2020; in both cases Meniffee Police Officers were able to work with claimants to quickly resolve the claim, provide a higher level of service, and minimize the administrative costs associated with processing small claims.

Although it is anticipated that the use of, and need for field claims will remain relatively low, staff recommend integration of the field claims procedure as a standard process, providing City

Departments with the ability to handle small claims in the field if/when the need arises. The ability to expedite the processing of small claims would ensure timely and premier customer service while continuing to minimize the administrative costs associated with handling claims valued under \$500. Field claims that are not able to be handled under the \$500 threshold would continue to follow the City's standard claim process.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE**

Safe and Attractive Community

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There would be no additional fiscal impact resulting from the adoption of the resolution authorizing the Chief of Police or his or her designee the authority to resolve claims field claims of \$500 or less. Associated claims expenses are budgeted within the adopted fiscal year 2022/2023 budget, within Account No. 100-4223-50430 (Claims Expense). No additional budget appropriation action is required.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Resolution
2. Field Claims Procedure
3. Release of all Claims form