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**For Immediate Release**

**COUNTY BACKS NORMAN FIRE DEPARTMENT'S FUNDING REQUEST  
Cleveland County Justice Authority Green Lights NFD Drone Purchase**

Monday, the Cleveland County Justice Authority trustees voted unanimously to approve the [Norman Fire Department's](#) (NFD) funding request for a duo of new, cutting-edge drones.

The request, which totaled \$45,218, will supply NFD with two drones, two cameras, supporting hardware, and training. The monetary allocation, which was a grant authorized from the Public Safety Sales Tax (PSST) fund, was a project the trustees were eager to support.

“Grants from the PSST fund for Cleveland County first responders are awarded for equipment or support when the municipality is unable or unwilling to fund it,” said District 1 County Commissioner Rod Cleveland. “The Justice Authority is committed to supporting county fire departments with projects like these because it ensures our firefighters have the up-to-date equipment they need.”

The long-awaited new equipment will have a significant, positive impact on not only Norman's public safety capabilities, but also those of agencies across Cleveland County.

“Currently, we don't have any drones, and this is something we've been trying to get approved in our budget for some time,” said NFD Fire Inspector Tim Miller. “This is not only for our fire grounds here in Norman, these drones will benefit agencies county-wide, especially in mutual aid situations.”

The cooperative use across the county was an important aspect of the project for District 3 Cleveland County Commissioner Rusty Grissom.

“I think it's commendable that this initiative will save lives across the entire county,” Grissom said. “Investing in projects of this nature makes perfect sense when we have the opportunity to do so.”

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The drones will substantially increase the technical capabilities of the NFD. According to Miller, there are endless scenarios where this technology will be a game-changer. Primarily, the imaging capabilities of the drones will allow for better understanding of scenes, especially for incidents that involve large structures, expansive areas, or multi-agency collaboration.

“If we have a major event where multiple agencies are involved, such as a widespread grass fire, the drones can help us more easily overcome the challenges inherent in those situations,” Miller said. “With the cameras we can find entry points, surveil where our firefighters are, and coordinate our crews on the ground. The cameras can also give us aerial views to better understand the fire patterns, or, if we need to enter a building, the drone has the capability to 3D map it out for us before we send personnel inside. The drones can also ping coordinates and relay that info to command staff, which will help direct rescue crews to the exact location they are trying to find.”

Moreover, the drones will significantly improve search and rescue missions. According to Miller, the incorporation of 4K cameras will offer advanced aerial surveillance capabilities during daylight hours, while thermal imaging will enhance nocturnal and low-light search operations. The drones can also play a crucial role in water rescue operations, serving as a communication proxy or facilitating life-saving measures while rescue boats and personnel are being prepared.

The funding package also includes dedicated instructional time for Miller and select colleagues. Drone team members at NFD will undergo comprehensive training with the drones, acquiring [FAA 107 certifications](#) in the process.

“The opportunities this initiative provides our first responders is truly remarkable,” said District 2 Cleveland County Commissioner Jacob McHughes. “This is the purpose of PSST funds, and I am pleased that we could extend financial support to such a great project.”

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