



Staff Report

TO: City Council
FROM: Doug Story, Community Services Director
DATE: November 18, 2025
SUBJECT: 2026 Freedom Festival Update

Description: An update and request for City Council direction regarding the 2026 4th of July celebration.

Background and Analysis:

On May 6, 2025, staff provided an update to City Council on the annual 4th of July celebration, highlighting the pyrotechnic operator shortage in Southern California. This shortage, ongoing since the COVID-19 pandemic, stems from an aging workforce, retirements, and limited certification opportunities due to stringent training and background requirements.

In response, the City reallocated the fireworks budget to produce an enhanced drone show, one of the first in the region to feature overlapping drone sequences for an extended performance. The result was a re-branded event, *Red, White, and LIGHTS at Beaumont Nights*, featuring a 22-minute aerial display with animations of Beaumont landmarks, local sports, first responders, and traditional Independence Day imagery. Following the show, many residents expressed a desire for the return of traditional fireworks in future celebrations.

Pyrotechnic Request for Proposals Process

In response, Staff began working to restore traditional fireworks for the 2026 4th of July Celebration with the intent of maintaining a smaller but still high-quality drone experience. A Request for Proposals (RFP) for pyrotechnic services was released on August 29, 2025, and published on the City's public bidding software PlanetBids. The proposal due date was initially set for September 29, 2025. Beyond PlanetBids, Staff also directly notified six fireworks companies and three procurement management companies of the opportunity via email and submitted web inquiries to vendors without public contact information. However, as the due date approached, there were no prospective bidders in the software, and unfavorable responses via email. Preemptively, Staff extended the deadline to October 21, 2025, and expanded eligible show dates to encourage vendors' participation and to provide the City with options.

Eligible Dates Included:

2026: July 2, 3, and 4

2027: July 1, 2, 3, and 4

2028: July 1, 2, 3, and 4

Request for Proposals Results

On October 21, 2025, the submission period closed, and unfortunately, the City did not receive any bids. Subsequently, staff reached out to vendors to provide some insight into the reasons or constraints that may have impacted their decision in bidding. Based on the results and vendor inquiries, it has been determined that many vendors are already booked, as it is the 250th anniversary of the United States. Additionally, many have prioritized much larger fireworks displays than the historical scope and budget of Beaumont's Freedom Festival.

Alternate Process and Analysis

Through an alternate procurement process, Staff was able to obtain one proposal from Garden State Fireworks in the amount of \$100,000 for a show on the 4th of July for 2026. The proposed large-scale display includes the following:

- 6,000 total shots from multi-shot devices, ranging from 20 shots to 665 shots per device.
- 1,000 3" Professional Display Shells
- 20-22 Minute Display Duration

In comparison to Beaumont's display in 2024, this represents an increase of approximately 33% in total shots, a 47% increase in show duration, a 20% increase in display shell size, and four times the amount of display shells. While the cost is significantly more than the City's typical budget, this cost is consistent with the larger display size and the supply and demand in Southern California, especially in regard to the United States' historical milestone in 2026. Additionally, recent increases in federal tariffs on imported pyrotechnic materials have contributed to higher overall costs for fireworks displays across the industry, further impacting pricing for next year.

Based on previous community feedback and the contractor's ability to perform the services on July 4, 2026, Staff recommends that City Council authorize the budget increase to allow Staff to execute an agreement under the City Manager's signing authority, which is \$200,000 for a General Services Agreement. The proposed large-scale fireworks display will allow the City to host a grand community celebration honoring the 250th Anniversary of the United States of America, creating a memorable

and unifying event that reflects both Beaumont’s community pride and the historic significance of this national milestone.

A breakdown of the current and proposed 4th of July Budget is below:

Line Item	FY 2025/2026 Budget Amount (Current)	FY 2026/2027 Budget Amount (Proposed)
Concerts	\$25,000	\$25,000
Drone Show	\$56,500	\$56,500
Equipment Rental	\$5,000	\$5,000
Fireworks	\$35,000	\$100,000
Total	\$121,500	\$186,500

Fiscal Impact:

For Fiscal Year 2025/2026, the City budgeted a total of \$35,000 for fireworks. Approval of the larger fireworks show will increase expenditures for the next fiscal year by \$65,000. As the Fiscal Year 2026/2027 budget has not yet been adopted, this increase will need to be addressed during the annual budget process. Subsequent fiscal years would be subject to the Council’s direction and approval.

The cost to prepare this staff report is estimated to be \$500.

Recommended Action:

Direct Staff to Include the \$65,000 Increase in the Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget; and

Authorize Staff to Execute a General Services Agreement Under the City Manager’s Signing Authority.