TOWN OF PRESCOTT VALLEY
REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION
Date: November 21, 2013

SUBJECT: False Alarm Ordinance

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT: Police Department

PREPARED BY: James Edelstein, Interim Chief of Police

AGENDA LOCATION: Comments/Communications ☐, Consent ☐, Work/Study☐,
New Business ☐, Public Hearing ☐, Second Reading ☒

ATTACHMENTS: (a) Resolution No. 1854, (b) Alarm Systems, and (c) Ordinance No. 779

SUMMARY/BACKGROUND: The Police Department has responded to approximately 1200 calls for burglar and robbery alarms from residences and businesses each year for the last decade. Less than 1% of these calls are actual criminal events. The rest are commonly known as false alarms. A cost analysis of our local response cost including dispatch, vehicle and man-hours is $52.20 per call or $62,640.00 annually.

Most false alarms are caused by failure to maintain, properly arm/disarm, and train employees in the proper operation of the systems. These systems are very common and normally involve a combination of contacts that, if severed, trigger an alarm, glass breakage alarms that are triggered by noise and motion detectors. Once the alarm is triggered, a signal is sent to a monitoring station. An employee at the monitoring station calls one phone number contact for the location, and unless they reach someone responsible for the location who tells them not to send the Police, the monitoring station calls our dispatch center. Our dispatchers create a call for service and dispatch two Police Officers to the location to check and see if there is something going on. Our Officers respond and 99% of the time find it was a false alarm caused by someone who is still on site; or they find the location secure and no one is present leaving us to wonder what caused the alarm; or the building is unsecure and we have to enter and clear the building wherein we normally don't find anyone in the building. In the last case we attempt to contact the building's owner and make them aware of the unsecure nature of the building.

Currently, Town Code provides a criminal penalty after more than two false alarms in the same month of $8.00. The fine increases to a maximum of $25.00 if the incidents are repeated often enough in the same month. This code is not used by the agency because our prosecutor and Judge find it difficult to assign criminal liability to someone who may not be the individual responsible for the alarm.

Besides the cost to the Town of Prescott Valley created by false alarms, the citizens suffer due to the time our Officers spend responding to these alarm calls. In 2011, approximately 620 hours of time was spent responding to these false alarms instead of providing other pro-active patrol or more time conducting investigations.

At work study on 8/15/13 & 10/17/13 council directed staff to pursue creation of new Town Code and outsourcing enforcement of new Town Code with a 30 day grace period to require registration by only those alarm users that have false alarms, assessments for the second false alarm within a 365 day period, an opportunity for waiver of the first assessment upon completion of a false alarm education class each

365 day period, collections for unpaid assessments and registrations, and a process for appeal of the assessments.

Staff has crafted and presents for Council approval a new Town Code which includes civil assessment for false alarms in the amount of $52.00, a registration process for those who have false alarms, an educational opportunity that would allow users to avoid one assessment each 365 days, a requirement called enhanced verification whereby the alarm monitoring station must make two phone calls before contacting the Police Department, and allows for enforcement of the new Town Code through a third party vendor (no cost) with the appointment of an alarm coordinator who is an employee of the Police Department.

At the November 7, 2013 regular meeting the Council adopted Resolution No. 1854 declaring a public record of the proposed amendments to the Town Code and approved the first reading of Ordinance No. 779 adopting those amendments.

ACTION OPTION: [the Mayor instructs the Town Clerk to read Ordinance No. 779 by title only for the second reading, then asks "Shall the Ordinance Pass?"] **VOTE**.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends final approval of this Ordinance.

FISCAL ANALYSIS: Revenue estimated at $16,000.00 per year. Upon implementation of a contract with a third party vendor, the revenue would drop to an estimated $2,000.00 per year.

REVIEWED BY:

Management Services Director _____

Town Clerk _____

Town Attorney _____

Town Manager _____

COUNCIL ACTION:

☐ Approved ☐ Denied ☐ Tabled/Deferred ☐ Assigned to _____