

Details

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Title: Adoption of Resolution Approving Workforce Changes to Add Three New Positions to the Fire Department Fire Prevention Bureau Effective May 28, 2017: One Fire Captain and Two Fire Inspectors at the Firefighter or Apparatus Operator Rank for an Annual Cost of \$799,206; and Recommendation to Authorize the City Manager or Designee to Negotiate and Execute an Agreement for the Purchase of Three Staff Vehicles and Miscellaneous Equipment in an Amount Not to Exceed \$188,684 to Support the Reinstatement of the Fire Prevention Bureau. (Fire 3220)

Attachments: 1. [Exhibit 1 - Police Interceptor Quote](#), 2. [Resolution](#)

Text

Adoption of Resolution Approving Workforce Changes to Add Three New Positions to the Fire Department Fire Prevention Bureau Effective May 28, 2017: One Fire Captain and Two Fire Inspectors at the Firefighter or Apparatus Operator Rank for an Annual Cost of \$799,206; and

Recommendation to Authorize the City Manager or Designee to Negotiate and Execute an Agreement for the Purchase of Three Staff Vehicles and Miscellaneous Equipment in an Amount Not to Exceed \$188,684 to Support the Reinstatement of the Fire Prevention Bureau. (Fire 3220)

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Jill Keimach, City Manager

Re: Adoption of Resolution Approving Workforce Changes to Add Three New Positions to the Fire Department Fire Prevention Bureau Effective May 28, 2017: One Fire Captain and Two Fire Inspectors at the Firefighter or Apparatus Operator Rank for an Annual Cost of \$799,206; and

Recommendation to Authorize the City Manager or Designee to Negotiate and Execute an Agreement for the Purchase of Three Staff Vehicles and Miscellaneous Equipment in an Amount Not to Exceed \$188,684 to Support the Reinstatement of the Fire Prevention Bureau

BACKGROUND

At the start of Fiscal Year 2009-10, in response to declining revenue during the economic downturn and in order to achieve a balanced budget, the City made significant cuts in staffing throughout the organization. Included in this was the reduction in staffing at the Fire Department. This was achieved by reducing the Fire Prevention Bureau from seven positions (four sworn and three non-sworn) to two non-sworn positions. This reduction left only one non-sworn Senior Fire Code Compliance Inspector and one Administrative Technician II. At this same time, the City also closed Fire Station 5 at the Alameda Naval Base.

In response, the workload for fire prevention was redistributed in an attempt to continue providing critical fire prevention services to the citizens and businesses in the Community. The one remaining Senior Fire Code Compliance Officer was responsible for all initial plan checks and permits, fire code complaints, and state mandated inspections (non-residential). Suppression staff at the City's fire stations were assigned responsibility for completing additional business and commercial inspections in addition to their regularly assigned residential inspections.

With calls for service increasing, along with increased training requirements, existing staff have not been able to meet the full scope of Fire Prevention duties. In order to better meet the needs of the Community, the Fire Department is requesting to reinstate the Fire Prevention Bureau and add three staff to support the Fire Prevention activities needed in the City of Alameda.

DISCUSSION**A. Current Status of Fire Prevention**

The existing Fire Department staff have been unable to complete the additional workload that was shifted to them following the reduction of the Fire Prevention Bureau.

The Department's lone Senior Fire Code Compliance Officer has been consumed with a growing number of plan checks, permits, and inspections for new and existing construction, as well as a steady flow of fire code complaints. In addition to this, he also completes state mandated inspections, such as day care facilities and schools, as time allows. When needed, he assists suppression staff with complicated inspections. With such a heavy workload, it has become increasingly difficult for him to complete these duties on his own and, as a result, many inspections are not completed timely, if at all. Without back up, the inspection process halts whenever the Department's Senior Fire Code Compliance Officer is out of the office for illness, vacation, or another reason. This results in inconvenience and delays for both citizens and businesses, as well as City staff who are waiting on input or decisions from the Department.

Having already been responsible for residential inspections prior to 2009, suppression staff attempted to complete the additional business and commercial inspections in between calls for service, training, maintenance, etc. However, only a limited number of inspections are able to be completed due to other duties and responsibilities. Since being assigned the additional inspections, completion of fire prevention duties have been greatly impacted by the following:

- Calls for service have increased by 22% from 5,768 calls in 2009 to 7,012 calls in 2016;
- The closure of Fire Station 5 in 2009 reduced the available personnel for fire responses and inspections;
- Firefighter training requirements (in accordance with OSHA mandates) have increased due to the addition of programs that have allowed the Department to provide increased services to the community. These programs include: Inflatable Rescue Boats (2011), Tiller Ladder Trucks (2012), Fireboat (2014), and Open Water Rescue Swimmers (2015); and
- Training requirements will continue to increase in 2017 with the addition of the following programs: Emergency Water Supply (water tenders), Rescue Task Force, and Trench Rescue.

There have been a number of negative impacts on the City, as well as its residents and businesses, as a result of the reduction of the Fire Prevention Bureau. These impacts include:

- Inability to complete the full scope of fire prevention work;
- Increased potential liability to the City due to a decreased inspection completion rate;
- Reduction in inspection revenue;
- Decrease in service to residents, contractors, and businesses needing construction or event permit inspections or complaint follow up;
- Decrease in ability to provide Fire Prevention Safety Education to the public; and
- Increased hazards to firefighters due to build-up of unsafe conditions in uninspected structures.

B. Rebuilding the Fire Prevention Bureau

In an effort to ensure the safety of the community, the Fire Department respectfully requests that the Fire Prevention Bureau be reinstated. After a thorough review of the existing needs and workload, the Department recommends reinstatement at the following levels:

- Staffing

Staffing

At this time, the Department recommends the immediate addition of three sworn positions: one supervisor at the Fire Captain rank and two Fire Inspectors at the Firefighter or Apparatus Operator rank. The level will depend on the qualifications of the employees selected for this office assignment to the Fire Prevention Bureau. The addition of these positions would bring the total staffing level to five: three sworn and the existing two non-sworn.

In evaluating the staffing model for the reinstatement of the Fire Prevention Bureau, staff explored the option of using sworn staff or non-sworn staff to fill the fire inspector positions and supervisor level position. Sworn staff would include employees who are career firefighters at various ranks (i.e. Firefighter, Apparatus Operator, or Captain). Non-sworn staff would include employees who are not career firefighters, but are trained in fire prevention/inspection. There are two significant benefits to staffing the Fire Prevention Bureau with sworn firefighters: 1) fire suppression experience provides inspectors with a unique perspective when conducting inspections and identifying potential hazards that would affect both the building occupants and firefighters; and 2) additional sworn staffing will create an available surge capability for staffing disasters or large scale emergencies.

The increase in staffing will allow the Department to maintain records, inspect buildings as required, provide fire education, issue and enforce code violations, and review plans. It will also allow unsafe conditions to be corrected before they lead to fires.

The requested staffing level of three positions is less than the five positions that were previously in place. The Department recommends City Council consider the addition of a Division Chief position at a later date as part of the FY 2017-18 / FY 2018-19 budget process. The Department does not recommend replacing the non-sworn Code Compliance position that previously existed. The Department feels the three requested positions will be able to complete the Fire Prevention scope of work without further impacting the non-sworn Code Compliance Officer

Starting in January 2018, the Fire Department will present on an annual basis a report to the City Council on the number of commercial and residential inspections both needed and completed, percent of total scheduled inspections completed, and revenue generated by type of inspection.

The current annual cost of adding the three sworn positions is estimated to range between \$763,916 and \$799,206, depending upon the classification of employees appointed to the Fire Prevention Bureau.

Staff has met and conferred with the International Association of Firefighters, Local 689 (IAFF) on the reinstatement of the program and the parties are in agreement on the staffing recommendations. Should City Council approve this recommendation, staff will work with IAFF to memorialize this agreement in a Letter of Understanding.

Office Equipment

Due to the length of time since the reduction of the Fire Prevention Bureau, all new work station equipment will need to be purchased. The following is a breakdown of cost estimates:

	Cost
Computers and Monitors	\$ 11,000
Desk/Cubicles	\$ 12,000
Cubicle Installation	\$ 1,200
Office Chairs	\$ 4,300
Book Shelf	\$ 450
Conference Table	\$ 450
Cell Phones	\$ 1,100
Desk Phones (hard lines)	\$ 1,500
Reference Materials (Code Books)	\$ 550
Refrigerator	\$ 550
Large White Board	\$ 350
TOTAL:	\$ 33,450

Vehicles

The Fire Department requests that three Ford Police Interceptor utility vehicles be purchased. The purchase of police interceptor utility vehicles will continue the standardization of the vehicles being purchased for public safety and make it easier for fleet maintenance to maintain these vehicles in the future.

The most efficient and cost-effective method of vehicle purchase is to "piggy-back" onto existing competitively bid purchase contracts. This purchase method is consistent with the City of Alameda's Municipal Code Subsection 2-61-7 "Joint Purchases with Public Agencies". With the assistance of Fleet Services, Staff obtained a quote for one Ford Police Interceptor utility vehicle under the City of Sacramento Contract Number C2016-0531 with Downtown Ford in the amount of \$31,477.11. Quotes for the remaining accessories were obtained from several vendors in the amount of \$20,267.58. The total cost of one Ford Police Interceptor is estimated at \$51,744.69. The total cost for the three requested vehicles is \$155,234.07.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The total cost of reinstating the Fire Prevention Budget is \$987,890, including staffing (\$799,206 annually), supplies (\$33,450) and vehicles (\$155,234). The cost for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2016-17 is approximately \$188,684 for the needed supplies and vehicles, as well as \$65,268 for one month of staff salary and benefits. These costs will be covered by existing appropriations in the Fire Department budget.

The annual staffing cost will be included in the FY 2017-18 and 2018-19 two year budget. For FY 2017-18, the estimated cost will range between \$763,916 and \$799,206. For FY 2018-19, the estimated cost will range between \$810,196 and \$847,860.

It is expected that as result of increased inspections, the Department's annual revenue will increase by approximately \$355,000, which will also be included in the FY 2017-18 and 2018-19 two year budget. The Fire Department will also be reimbursed annually for budgeted transport costs (GEMT) that will also be used to offset these additional costs.

MUNICIPAL CODE/POLICY DOCUMENT CROSS REFERENCE

This action is consistent with the Alameda Municipal Code.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This action is not a project for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines section 10561(b)(3) as there is no possibility that this action may have a significant effect on the environment.

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution approving workforce changes at the Alameda Fire Department to add one Fire Captain and Two Fire Fighters/Fire Apparatus Operators for an annual cost of \$799,206 to support the reinstatement of the Fire Prevention Bureau; and authorize the City Manager or designee to negotiate and execute an agreement for the on-time purchase of three staff vehicles and miscellaneous equipment in an amount not to exceed \$188,684 to support the reinstatement of the Fire Prevention Bureau.

Respectfully submitted,
Doug Long, Fire Chief

By,
Darci Vogel, Fire Admin Supervisor

Financial Impact section reviewed,
Elena Adair, Finance Director

Exhibit:
1. Police Interceptor Quote