



## STAFF REPORT

**TO:** Board of Fire Commissioners

**FROM:** Chief Mason

**DATE:** July 22, 2015

**SUBJECT:** Staffing Proposal

Attached is the draft 2016 preliminary budget. The proposal includes a number of both operational and non-operational program adjustments while maintaining a primary goal of fire and emergency medical services to the communities we serve. The result represents a significant "right-sizing" of the department at every level and places a priority on mission-critical functions.

The proposed budget provides career staffing at four (4) stations beginning in January 2016. Those stations are Station 23 (LaCenter), Station 24 (Ridgefield), Station 26 (Dollars Corner), and Station 29 (Woodland). Staffing at those four stations is based on the current collective bargaining agreement (CBA) requirement of 2 career firefighters per station/apparatus. This will result in a reduction of 11 firefighter positions beginning in 2016. This figure represents a 22% reduction. The proposal also includes the elimination of 1 battalion chief position and the reversion of 3 captains back to firefighter.

On the non-firefighter side of the organization, 6 positions are being eliminated along with a reduction of reception hours to 20 hour per week. This figure represents a 50% reduction in non-firefighter staff.

The draft budget and staffing proposal is based on the following assumptions:

- With the exception of the EMS Coordinator position, the proposed layoffs will not occur until December 31, 2015.
- The plan includes an across the board pay freeze to be implemented in 2015. On the firefighter side this will require negotiation with the union to forgo the 2.3% COLA adjustment anticipated for 2016. (This figure totals \$92,560 and would

need to be incorporated back into the budget if an agreement cannot be reached).

- All remaining components outlined in the CBA remain unchanged. Any additional concessions negotiated between now and the end of 2015 could be utilized for one or more additional firefighter positions.
- A significant expenditure reduction plan is currently being implemented for the remainder of the 2015 budget year. Additional savings for the remainder of 2015 will be rolled into 2016 carryover. Total amount of savings and how those savings are utilized will need to be determined closer to the end of 2015.
- Other components of this proposal include implementation of a QRV response at all 4 stations, shifting of a number of job duties previously assigned to other positions, emphasis on community outreach and prevention functions by all personnel, etc.

My plan is to meet with those employees directly affected as soon possible. A nearly 5 ½ month advance notice will help lessen the trauma on those employees and provide them some level of planning over the coming months. Notice of Layoff letters are being prepared and will be distributed over the next couple days. At least one fire department has agreed to move our displaced firefighters to the top of their hiring process and have requested copies of that letter as a part of their application process.

I expect nearly all of our displaced firefighters will secure firefighter positions with other agencies in the coming months. Some of those will be employees that are higher on the seniority list which could positively affect those that initially receive layoff notices. We will of course do everything we can to assist all of our folks where possible.

It is important to recognize that the draft budget represents a snapshot of where we are at currently. It could change in the weeks and months ahead as we get closer to the end of the current budget year. It will be directly affected by:

- Expenditure reductions and cost saving measures implemented through the end of this year.
- Any additional concessions negotiated over the next few months.
- Any additional revenues identified over the next few months.