



Memo

To: Julie Karins, City Manager

Via: Dan Cotterman, Deputy City Manager

From: Paul Luizzi, Fire Chief

Date: November 19, 2021

Re: Overtime Budget Analysis

Issue:

In this analysis we reviewed the use of overtime for FY20 in preparation for our City Council work session. The primary focus of the work session is to study the possibility of finding ways to reduce our constant staffing overtime by 25%. A 25% reduction in the fire department overtime budget would be \$498,750.

Background:

The fire department overtime accounted for 12% (\$1,995,000) of the operations budget in FY20. There are two main causes of overtime: Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and constant staffing. FLSA is overtime that is paid to firefighters assigned to shift (1.5/hour) for any hours worked over 106 in a pay period. FLSA is essentially considered as base wages and is located in salaries. Constant staffing overtime is used to cover openings that are vacant due to illness, vacancy, injury, training, special events, or vacation.

The average shift employee will work 2,912 hours a year, based on the calendar and shift schedule, some will work 2,904 and others 2,928. This equates to an average of 56 hours per week. All hours above that are calculated at time and a half. One shift per year will have 18 "long checks" (120 hours) and the other two will have 17 "long checks." This results in 252 hours of FLSA overtime for one shift and 238 hours each of the other two shifts.

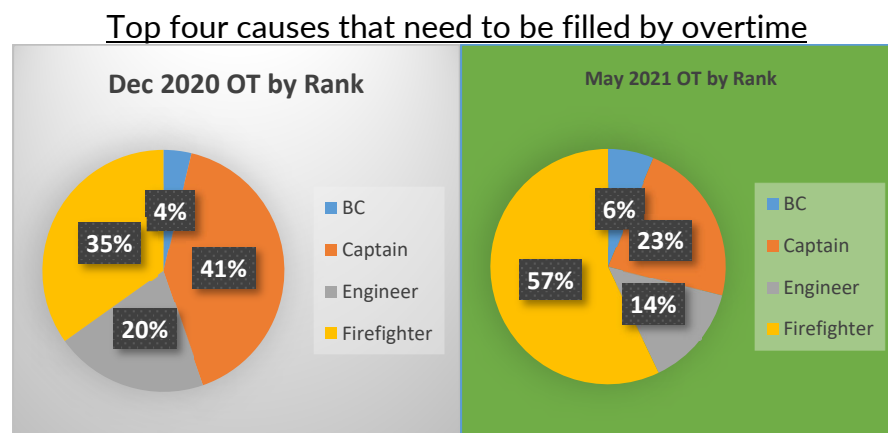
The Goodyear Fire Department works diligently to ensure a safe staffing level for each shift. As part of that staffing plan our two primary objectives are to provide for the safety of our customers and for our firefighters. In order to achieve those objectives, the Goodyear Fire Department follows the NFPA 1710 and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) recommendation of four firefighters on each response vehicle, which includes one captain, one engineer and two firefighters. This staffing model also allows us to comply with OSHA 29 CFR 1910.134, which requires two people inside an immediately dangerous life hazard environment and two people outside ready to rescue them. The Goodyear Fire Department, as part of the automatic aid consortium, is also required by our agreement to meet these service levels. The easiest way to explain our use of resources and work distribution is that we follow the NASCAR pit crew philosophy. This philosophy allows for everyone to have a function and specific job within the crew. This functionality is seamless and provides for the safety of the public and our firefighters.

On a daily basis we are staffing 27 positions, not including the shift battalion chief. This equates out to 236,520 hours that need to be covered each year. There are many different variables that are involved in staffing and the most consistent staffing issues that the Battalion Chiefs deal with are use of sick time, vacation leave time, training (Haz-Mat, Paramedic, and Command Training) and injury leave. Vacancies also play a major factor in our staffing considerations. In FY20 we had three vacancies that we dealt with for most of the year. In FY21 we dealt with six vacancies for most of the year. We will also provide off-duty staffing for special events depending on the size of the crowd. We could have upwards of six personnel on overtime when staffing large scale events like the 4th of July or high-profile spring training games such as the Chicago Cubs or Arizona Diamondbacks.

Our department policy (105.012) allows for four people on vacation leave per day and with averaged use of sick time and injuries we have roughly six people off every day, which increased to eight in FY21. When there is a vacancy, that is less than four hours, we do not fill the position and allow the emergency vehicle to operate with three persons for that timeframe. Typically, this is used by the

employee to attend a child's doctor appointment, event at a school, physical therapy for an industrial injury or care for personal matter.

To help offset daily vacancies, we have used the concept of shift rovers for over 15 years. Shift rovers are firefighters that are assigned to one of three operational shifts and are not permanently assigned/bid to a vehicle, and they fill vacancies when other firefighters are on leave. Typically, we have four rovers per shift, one captain, one engineer and two firefighters. The rovers cover 54,408 hours or 23% of open shifts during FY20. This has shown to have a positive effect on overtime. We recently implemented Captain rovers in January of 2021. The positive effect from that addition was evidenced by a change in the overtime by rank. In the previous year captains were taking/causing 41% of the available overtime, and once we implemented the captain rovers the overtime for that rank dropped to 23%. Essentially, we are shifting the overtime costs to the lesser rank.



Sick and Vacation Time

Like all city employees, firefighters earn sick and vacation time. The department has a policy that only allows for four persons off per day on vacation. There is no policy that prohibits use of sick time. Sick time accounted for 8,482 (22%) hours and vacation time accounted for 9,390 (24%) hours of leave that need to be covered.

Injuries

Injuries are something that the fire service has dealt with for many years. Over the last few years our injuries have varied from two being out injured to as many as 13 being off the truck. Injuries are tracked on a weekly basis by our health and safety officer and our goal is to return the firefighter back to their operational status as quickly as possible. From this experience we do know that when we have more than nine people off on injury, we start to feel an impact when staffing positions each day. Through our labor management process, we have constructed an overtime management matrix that identifies staffing shortages, starting with nine people off the truck due to injury or illness, and identifies steps to be taken to help reduce the overtime burden. These steps range from shutting down the wildland program to sending chiefs back into the field from their regular day jobs.

In the event that we exceed 14 people off the trucks, we then transfer into our Catastrophic Staffing Policy, which has more draconian measures identified, which includes browning out stations for periods of time. During the analysis period FY20 we averaged 3.8 people off the truck on injury for a majority of the year. In FY21 we had over nine people off injured from August until January. Injuries are unpredictable and caused 2,274 (6%) hours of leave during FY20.

Training and Wildland

Over the course of a fiscal year the training division can provide over 20,000 hours of training for the department, or about 180 hours per employee. A majority of our training can be pushed to on shift training or on-line training, which does not require any overtime for our employees to attend. However, there are either state or national mandates that require us to bring the employee in on overtime so that they can complete their training. An example would be for paramedic and EMT refresher training. They are required by state and national requirements to attend 60 or 20 hours of refresher training every two years respectively. To meet this requirement, we have to conduct the training off duty to make sure they are present for the required hours. There are also instances when we have to bring instructors off duty to teach the programs. When the employees are on shift the day of the training we can pay them straight time, however, the person covering the vacancy is paid overtime for that coverage. Training and wildland overtime

accounted for 9,229 (24%) of hours that need to be filled. Wildland is unique because we receive reimbursement from the state wildland contract (\$186,290 FY20). We will also receive the cost of the employee plus the difference between the employee and their replacement on overtime. We would also receive reimbursement for any department vehicle that we deploy with the team.

Causes of Overtime	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20
City or FD Business	3,257 (hrs)	5,148	7,069	5,360
Special Events	953	826	852	649
Sick & Vacation	14,265	21,853	14,186	18,189
Injury leave	2,413	7,319	2,228	2,275
Training	3,921	1,933	5,631	7,702
Wildland deployment	1,654	641	3,128	3,741
Total Overtime Hours	26,465	37,721	33,096	37,926

Possible Ways to Reduce Overtime:

One of the concepts that we have explored a few times over the last 12 years is Kelly Days. Kelly Days are also used to reduce the average hours worked per week to below 56 hours. These days are unpaid and are calculated in the annual hours worked. Using the Glendale model of eight Kelly Days per year, the annual hours worked will be reduced by 192 hours. This will result in the average annual hours worked of 2,720 hours, and currently our firefighters work 2,912 hours on average. The result will be an average work week of 52 hours and would slightly reduce FLSA overtime. In order to achieve the average annual hour calculations, the employees must be put on an equalized paycheck system. This system can result in higher hourly rates and requires could require as many as nine rovers to

cover for the people that are on Kelly Days in addition to getting it programmed correctly into the payroll system.

Additional ways to reduce overtime expenditures

1. Hire additional firefighters to serve as rovers to fill in for vacancies that are created from sick, vacation, injury or training. In order to address the 25% reduction in overtime we would anticipate adding 12 FTE to the rover pool.
2. Increase hours that we do not fill a vacancy from 4 to 8 hours.
 - a. This does create response issues. With the current dispatch system any time during a shift when the roster reflects less than four personnel assigned to a response vehicle, the system will automatically assign another vehicle to that call. This becomes a very ineffective use of our limited resources in the system. This would be a 2.4% reduction in overtime costs.
3. No longer cover the city special events
 - a. Hire a contractor to cover city events, this would have a 1.6% reduction in overtime costs.
 - b. Typically, a private organization will minimally cover those events and when it gets busy they will call the fire department to help cover the calls, which ultimately defeats the purpose.
 - c. We have little control over the standards and expectations of private companies. Having Goodyear firefighters manage these events ensures us that we have well equipped and well-trained personnel that fully understand the dynamics of our relationship with our residents. This “ownership” helps maintain confidence in our city and likely minimizes negative interactions.
4. All off duty training, which causes overtime, will not be approved.
 - a. Only required training will be approved (such as refreshers and other certifications required for your firefighter job).

- b. As a cost saving option, compensatory time is available for those interested, in lieu of overtime for refreshers. If compensatory time is accepted, that will have an overtime impact when those members eventually use the time off or ask for it to be paid out.
- 5. Reduce the number of people allowed off on vacation each day from four to three.
 - a. This could have a negative effect forcing those people that cannot get a vacation day to use sick time to take time off. This happened in 2013 and once we increased the number of people allowed off on vacation from two to three our sick time issue resolved itself.
 - b. The MOU identifies the process for determining the appropriate amount of personnel off per day. Any change to this system will have to go back through negotiations.
- 6. No more wildland team deployments.
 - a. We would still allow for single resource deployments like our PIO, which directly benefits our succession planning. Some of the experience that personnel get while on deployment is experience that they cannot receive elsewhere. We anticipate that this will have a 7.5% reduction in overtime costs
 - b. Shutting down the wildland team deployments has very little impact as we are reimbursed for the cost, and would effectively be negligible for managing the overtime.
- 7. Overstaffing of positions
 - a. The current practice for the city is to not allow overstaffing of positions until the incumbent employee has left their employment
 - b. This practice would allow for us to replace a known retirement 6-8 months prior to the incumbents exit.
 - c. Over the next 4 years we have 12 people in the DROP.
 - d. There are many variables involved in this concept

- i. Availability of firefighter academies
- ii. Replacing the employee in a different fiscal year
- iii. Who will be leaving their employment
 - 1. If a captain or engineer retires then we would replace with a firefighter, however there would be a promotion that would occur internally to fill for the vacated position.

In essence, there are many different factors to play into the use of overtime for the fire department. As part of our staffing plan we have two primary objectives: to provide for the safety of our firefighters and for our citizens. We constantly review the budget with our administrative group as well as our labor management partners. Fundamentally we do not feel there is an issue with the spending of our overtime from year-to-year and we do not recommend a reduction in fire department overtime. We feel that overstaffing provides the most value to reduce overtime costs when an employee is retiring. It is estimated that we could save over 4100 hours of staffing.