

SLFD FIRE ACADEMY AND THE TIMELY RECRUITMENT OF FIREFIGHTERS

At the November 1, 2017 City Council Work Session, the topic of employee recognition, retention, succession planning and recruitment was placed by Council Member Africa Luna-Carrasco.

During the presentation by Human Resources Director Olivia Jenkins, Mayor Gerardo Sanchez spoke to the point of six Firefighters being recruited by the City of Yuma and spoke on the impact of emergency services by these persons leaving and the difficulty of timely recruitment and replacement of these personnel. I explained the recruitment process for Firefighter-EMTs/Firefighter-Paramedics and its negative impacts upon service delivery.

Mayor Sanchez tasked Me to research the possibilities of the City of San Luis and the Fire Department providing the training to become a Firefighter I & II and EMT to increase the candidate pool and hopefully reduce recruitment and hiring times.

Here are the findings of our research into fiscal impacts of Firefighter I & II and Firefighter-EMT training options.

Option #1 STATUS QUO

Continued reliance on Firefighter-EMT/Firefighter-Paramedic candidates being trained by other than SLFD (AWC Fire Academy or another Fire Department).

Estimated Cost for Option #1: No costs incurred by San Luis or SLFD.

Option #2:

Direct contract with AWC to provide the Fire Academy training and certifications.

30 Credits (15 credits per semester)

\$ 82.00 per credit

\$ 82.00 x 15 = \$ 1,230 per semester, two semesters

- **(\$2,460 per student)**

Lab fees to cover PPE, SCBA, etc.

- **(\$600 per student)**

\$3,060 per student

Estimated Cost for Option #2: \$36,720

Option #3:

AWC provides program certification, college credit and coordinates certification process.

Negotiated cost per student.

Fees to cover credits would remain; projected to be much less than \$ 2,460.

Lab fees for use of AWC PPE would be less (\$600).

SLFD provides instructors.

- **525 hours lead Instructor**
 - **\$25.00/hour = \$13,125**
 - **173 hours for skills instruction**
 - **4 additional Instructors**
 - **\$25.00/hour x 4 = \$17,300**
- SLFD provides access to SCBAs
- **No cost**

Estimated Cost for Option #3: \$30,425

Option #4:

SLFD assumes all responsibility and control for Fire Academy.

Assumed: 7 hour days

12 weeks: Fire Academy

3 weeks: EMT Academy

525 hours

Academy size of 12 (projected)

SLFD submits accreditation application to ACFSE

- **No cost**
- **No Hazardous-Materials Instructors on staff at SLFD.**
- **No EMT Instructors on staff at SLFD**
- **Requires outside Instructors or Certification by ACFSE and AzDHS-BEMSTS.**

SLFD provides instructors.

- **525 hours lead Instructor**
 - **\$25.00/hour = \$13,125**
- **173 hours for skills instruction**
- **4 additional Instructors**
 - **\$25.00/hour x 4 = \$17,300**

SLFD purchased/provides PPE and uniforms

- **Estimated at \$10,000 per student**
- **\$120,000 (12 students)**

SLFD provides access to SCBAs

- **No cost**

SLFD Fire & EMT Academy

Lead Instructor: 12,125

Skills Instructor: 17,300

PPE: 120,000

Estimated Cost for Option #4: \$149,425

EVALUATION

- All four options provide Firefighter-EMTs for hiring consideration at SLFD.
- The least costly, to the City of San Luis and SLFD, is to continue to rely on AWC or other training agency to provide candidates for hire by SLFD.

CONCLUSION

- Existing Firefighter-EMT training programs provide a sufficient pool of qualified applicants/candidates for Firefighter-EMTs.
- None of these training options addresses the issue of our ability to recruit Firefighter-Paramedics.
- None of these training options addresses the time constraints to recruit Firefighter-EMTs/Firefighter-Paramedics, specifically, none of these training options address our primary need and identified short fall; an insufficient pool of Firefighter-Paramedics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Actions resulting in fiscal impacts; requiring no budget authority:

- Institute a process of continuous advertisement, recruitment and acceptance of applications for Firefighter-EMT (Minimal fiscal impact)
- Consider annual candidate physical ability testing (CPAT) in April or May every year. This testing and timing will set the stage for written testing, interviews, medical screening and background checks as soon as possible; upon official adoption of annual budget and personnel authorization (Minimal fiscal impact)

Actions resulting in fiscal impacts; requiring budget authority:

- Continue to fund periodic Paramedic training programs for existing EMTs. (Nominal fiscal impact)
- Establish an education/training contract for SLFD sponsored CEP students. This establish would establish a reasonable expectation of continued employment with SLFD for three years upon completion of the training program AND successful certification as a CEP. The calculated fiscal impacts of the training program would be identified in the contract and is to be repaid by the employee in full upon resignation prior to execution of the terms of the contract. (No fiscal impact)
- Establish a program for the retention of existing Firefighter-Paramedics. Similar to the education/training contract, this program would stabilize our existing work force of Firefighter-Paramedics and establish a reasonable expectation of continued employment with SLFD; two years is the proposed term of the contract, paid to the employee in one lump sum and to be repaid in full, upon resignation. (Nominal fiscal impacts)

- Establish sign-on/recruitment contracts for Firefighter-Paramedics. Similar to the previous contracts, this contract would establish a reasonable expectation of continued employment with SLFD; paid to the employee in two installments. The first payment upon hire and the second payment upon successful completion of probation. The recruitment incentive would be repaid, in full, should the employee resign prior to completion of their second year of employment with SLFD. (Minimal fiscal impact)
- Retention contracts would continue or initiated as needed, to stabilize numbers of Firefighter-Paramedics at SLFD and minimize the exit by Firefighter-Paramedics seeking other employment.
- Recruitment contracts and incentives would be initiated, when numbers of SLFD Firefighter-CEPs are not sufficient to sustain service delivery needs.