



September 30, 2014

TO: Jim Westmoreland, City Manager

FROM: Wesley Reid, Interim Assistant City Manager

SUBJECT: Four- person ladder staffing

At the September 11th work session, Council expressed the desire to accelerate the plans for four-person ladder staffing at the Greensboro Fire Department. After deliberation and consultation between the City Manager's Office, Fire Department, and Budget Staff, below are recommendations to advance the plan per council discussion.

- Move forward with funding for **Station 11** and **Station 5** which would be a total of 6 firefighters effective January 1, 2015. For the 14/15 budget this will be an impact of \$177,500. This amount is inclusive of required equipments costs. We strategically looked at whether these costs could be absorbed within the existing Fire Department budget. However, it is too soon (only 4 months into the current fiscal year) to forecast the remaining year department financial trends. It is recommended that City Council use appropriated fund balance to help fund these new staff additions to the Fire Department for FY 14-15. Use of appropriated fund balance is preferred since these staff additions were not part of Council's original adopted budget for FY 14-15 and represents a new recurring expense to the City budget. Therefore an ordinance to amend the budget and use appropriated fund balance will be placed on the October 7, 2014 Council agenda for their support and approval. An annualized amount of \$275,000 will become part of the fiscal 15-16 budget.
- During the upcoming budget season we will review the service enhancement of adding staffing for **Station 10** and **Station 52** which would be a total of 6 firefighters. This would mean an additional annualized amount of \$315,000 (inclusive of equipment) will have to be considered as part of the fiscal 15-16 budget process.
- By moving in this direction, ladder company personnel will be in place this fiscal year as expressed by Council, but this also allows for (a) the CPSE study to be finalized to see if there are greater efficiencies within the department; (b) application to be submitted for the SAFER grant this fall to help offset the future ladder company staff funding; (c) Greensboro Fire will continue to explore revenue enhancements and fees to help offset these costs without further stressing the general fund budget; and (d) allows for the service enhancement to be vetted as part of the upcoming budget process since we are not sure of other city or public safety specific requests or priorities at this time.

- The focus of these four (4) stations is because they are the high volume stations and Greensboro Fire has documentation that these are the priority stations at this time.
- The remaining four-person ladder station additions of Station 14, Station 20, Station 43, and Station 21 will be reviewed as part of future budgets.

I believe the plan as outlined makes significant progress in a measured way towards an important need that should be prioritized. While GFD desires to achieve four-person ladder staffing on all ladder companies as soon as possible, there are fiscal constraints in the current economic situation. However this does allow the City Council to make forward progress towards this industry standard. This recommendation would immediately strengthen two ladder companies that directly serve our central business (downtown) district and also serve as regional special operations teams. It also sets a solid, clear course for strengthening two additional high volume ladder companies L10 and L52 that respond into the “fire crescent” area of our city slated to be effective July 1, 2015.

The full budgetary impact on the FY 15/16 budget for all four stations would be approximately \$590,000. During the upcoming budget process, measures we will be needed to explore revenue enhancements and /or associated reductions to provide ongoing funding for these ladder staffing additions.

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