

City of Garden Grove

INTER-DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

To: Scott Stiles From: Tom Schultz
Dept.: City Manager's Dept.: Fire
Subject: Accept the Fire Department Deployment Report regarding Paramedic staffing. (Action Item) Date: 8/9/2016

OBJECTIVE

For the City Council to accept the Fire Department Deployment Report; direct the fire chief to submit for three additional firefighter/paramedics for FY 2017-18, which will coincide with completion of fire station #6; and direct the finance director to provide updated FY 2017-18 numbers for the related paramedic staffing and required increase to the paramedic tax rate for City Council consideration as part of the FY 2017-18 budget.

BACKGROUND

Currently, the Department can only provide full paramedic unit services within six-minutes, 38% of the time. The Cities' benchmark for response time is six-minutes a majority of the time.

In June 1974, Garden Grove voters approved a property tax increase (override) to pay for emergency paramedic services in an amount not to exceed 10 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation. City Council Resolution No. 4547-74, authorizing the ballot measure, states the purpose for which the property tax was proposed; to provide for 1) an emergency care system with a response time of 5-minutes; 2) to pay salaries; and 3) to purchase and maintain vehicles, radio telemetry, and intensive care equipment including necessary supplies.

From 2012 - 2016, the tax was set at 7 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation, and projected to yield approximately \$8.8 million that is dedicated to providing the said emergency paramedic services.

DISCUSSION

The Garden Grove Fire Department is made up of 92 sworn, five full-time and one part-time civilian personnel. In 2014, the Department responded to over 11,200 calls for service, with a majority being emergency medical calls. In 2015, emergency calls increased to 14,627. Prior to 2015, medical calls have increased at a steady rate of 3%-7% per year. But in 2015, calls increased significantly by 14%. This increase in medical calls has directly affected the Department's ability to provide paramedic services within the six-minute time standard a majority of the time. The Department's current paramedic deployment plan has not been adjusted since 1985 and since then, the volume of calls has outpaced the ability to respond within the Cities' benchmark standards.

The City is currently served by three full paramedic units, and four paramedic assessment units. This deployment model can no longer meet the time standards as outlined in the original City Council Resolution.

In an effort to close the gap in paramedic response times, a phased approach is recommended over the next five years to improve response times, and to assure that every effort is made to achieve our minimum time benchmark for paramedic response times.

The first phase is to staff three additional paramedics on Engine 6. This will greatly improve the paramedic response times citywide and will be the first step in incrementally returning to the Cities' paramedic benchmark of six-minutes a majority of the time. Specifically, three firefighter/paramedics will be added to upgraded Engine 6, *paramedic assessment unit to a **full paramedic engine upon completion of the new fire station 6.

- ***Paramedic assessment unit** (1 paramedic): Stabilize the medical situation and wait for the arrival of a full paramedic unit to transport to the hospital.
- ****Full paramedic unit** (2 paramedics): Provide advance medical treatment and transport to the hospital.

This action would directly improve paramedic response times Citywide by 10% or 30 seconds.

The estimated initial cost of hiring the three new paramedics based on FY 2016-17 adopted budget costs is \$605,235. This initial cost will grow in subsequent years as labor costs grow including escalations in benefits and retirement costs. The current assessment rate will not cover this direct cost of the additional paramedics.

The Paramedic Override Assessment has been used in the City of Garden Grove since 1974. This assessment is based on the State Revenue and Taxation Code, which allows local agencies to levy an ad valorem assessment on taxable property to fund voter approved indebtedness, such as paramedic services. This assessment was approved by over 60% of the voters in 1974, and has been in use for the past 40 years. City Ordinance No. 2859 allows City Council to approve up to 10 cents per \$100 of property value to be assessed for the specific use of providing paramedic service to the community. This assessment can be used for the salaries, training and purchasing of equipment.

The City Council adopted the paramedic assessment override rate for FY 2016/17, which is unchanged from the prior year. Currently, the rate is set at 7 cents per \$100 of property value. This equates to approximately \$378 annual tax bill for a median value of a single-family residence in Garden Grove of \$540,000. This adopted rate does not cover all the Fire Department paramedic response requirements, and needs to be adjusted to accommodate the recommendations included in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The FY2016-17 adopted paramedic tax rate is set at 7 cents per \$100 of assessed property value, and estimated to yield approximately \$8.8 million. This equates to approximately \$378 annual tax bill for a single-family residence in Garden Grove with a median value of \$540,000. City Ordinance No. 2859 allows City Council to approve up to 10 cents per \$100 of property value to be assessed for the specific use of providing paramedic service to the community. The initial cost of hiring the proposed three new paramedics currently estimated at \$605,235 will grow over time with salary and benefit adjustments. Hence, some increase to the current paramedic tax rate will be required. Staff will provide updated and more representative FY2017-18 numbers for the paramedic staff costs and the required increase to the paramedic tax rate to the City Council by March 2017, as part of the FY2017-18 budget work up. The required data including the Assessors normalized tax roll, PERS contribution rates, and other pertinent remuneration information that informs prudent FY2017-18 analysis and projections will be available by February 2017.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council:

- Accept the submitted Fire Department Deployment report;

- Direct the Fire Chief to submit for three additional firefighter/paramedics for FY 2017/2018, which will coincide with the completion of Fire Station 6; and

- Direct the Finance Director to provide FY 2017-18 numbers for the additional paramedic staff costs and the required increase to the paramedic tax rate for City Council consideration as part of the FY 2017-18 budget.

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	Upload Date	Type	File Name
Fire Deployment Report	7/25/2016	Backup Material	FIRE_DEPLOYMENT_REPORT.pdf

REVIEWERS:

Department	Reviewer	Action	Comments
Fire	Schultz, Tom	Approved	
City Clerk	Bailor, Kathy	Rejected	Tom let me know what you think about the suggestions. Kathy
Fire	Medina-Whittaker, Lucia	Approved	
City Clerk	Bailor, Kathy	Approved	
City Attorney	Sandoval, Omar	Approved	
Deputy City Manager	Stipe, Maria	Approved	
City Manager	Stiles, Scott	Approved	