

REINSTATEMENT OF THE FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU



ALAMEDA CITY COUNCIL
APRIL 18, 2017

BACKGROUND

2009 Reductions in Staffing

During 2009, reduction in staffing resulted in:

- Closure of Fire Station 5
 - reduced the number of personnel available for responses and inspections
- Reduction of the Fire Prevention Bureau

Staffing level prior to reductions:

- 7 positions (4 sworn, 3 non-sworn)
 - 1 Division Chief (Fire Marshal)
 - 1 Fire Captain (Asst. Fire Marshal/Plan Examiner)
 - 2 Firefighters / Apparatus Operators (Inspectors)
 - 2 Fire Code Compliance Officers
 - 1 Administrative Technician

Staffing level after reductions:

- 2 non-sworn positions
 - 1 Code Compliance Officer
 - 1 Administrative Technician

BACKGROUND

Redistribution of Workload

- Fire Code Compliance Officer
 - The 1 remaining Fire Code Compliance Officer is responsible for all initial plan checks and permits, fire code complaints, and state mandated inspections.
 - Assists suppression staff with difficult inspections when needed
 - Work stops if this employee is off-work for any reason
- Suppression Staff
 - Suppression staff was assigned responsibility for commercial inspections in addition to their regularly assigned residential inspections

BACKGROUND

Workload Impacts

- Growing number of plan checks, permits, and inspections for new/existing construction
- Steady flow of fire code complaints
- Calls for service have increased 22% from 2009 to 2016
- Firefighter training requirements have increased with the addition of programs that provide a higher level of service to the community.
 - Current: Inflatable Rescue Boats (2011), Tiller Trucks (2012), Fireboat (2014), Open Water Rescue Swimmers (2015)
 - Upcoming: Emergency Water Supply (Water Tenders), Rescue Task Force, and Trench Rescue

RESULTS OF REDUCTION IN STAFFING

Impacts

- Inability to complete the full scope of fire prevention work
- Increased potential liability to the City due to a decreased inspection rate
- Reduction in inspection revenue
- Decrease in service to residents, contractors, and businesses needing construction or permit inspections or complaint follow up
- Decrease in ability to provide Fire Prevention Safety Education to the public
- Increased hazards to firefighters due to build-up of unsafe conditions in uninspected structures

ANALYSIS

Staffing Level

- Staff explored the option of using sworn staff or non-sworn staff to fill the requested positions
- Staffing models of 11 Bay Area agencies were analyzed and a majority use sworn staff to complete inspections
 - Fire Captain / Asst. Fire Marshal
 - 6 agencies fill positions with sworn staff
 - 2 agencies use either sworn or non-sworn staff
 - 3 agencies do not have an equivalent position
 - Fire Inspection Staff
 - 9 agencies fill positions with sworn staff
 - 2 agencies use non-sworn staff
- Benefits of sworn staffing
 - Fire suppression experience provides better identification of potential hazards that would affect building occupants and firefighters
 - Available surge capacity for staffing disasters or large scale emergencies

ANALYSIS

Estimated Costs of Staffing Options

Sworn Staffing Estimates

Position	Annual Cost (salary/benefits)
Assistant Fire Marshal/Fire Captain	\$294,200
Fire Inspector Firefighter/Apparatus Operator	\$245,000 - \$263,000

Non-Sworn Staffing Estimates

Position	Annual Cost (salary/benefits)
Assistant Fire Marshal	\$194,000
Fire Inspector	\$155,000

RECOMMENDATION

Reinstatement of Fire Prevention

- Increase Staffing of Fire Prevention to:
 - 1 supervisor at the Captain rank
 - 2 inspectors at the Firefighter or Apparatus Operator rank
- At this time it is not recommended adding back the Division Chief or Code Compliance Officer that were previously in the Fire Prevention Bureau
- Staffing level would increase from 2 non-sworn employees to 5 employees (3 sworn, 2 non-sworn)

FISCAL IMPACT

Estimated Expenses and Revenue

- Total cost of reinstating the Fire Prevention Bureau is \$987,890
 - Staffing - \$799,206 annually
 - Supplies - \$33,450 (one time start up cost)
 - Vehicles - \$155,234 (one time start up cost)
- Expenses
 - Cost for FY 2016-17 is estimated at \$188,684 and will be covered by existing budget
 - Cost for FY 2017-18 is estimated at between \$763,916 and \$799,206
 - Cost for FY 2018-19 is estimated at between \$810,196 and \$847,860
- Revenue
 - Annual Inspection revenue is expected to increase by approximately \$355,000
 - Annual GEMT funds will offset additional costs and are estimated at \$275,000
 - The remainder will be covered by the General Fund