



Cathedral City

Legislation Text

File #: 2016-433, Version: 1

City Council

MEETING DATE: 10/26/2016

TITLE:
Police, Fire and Planning Staffing Update

FROM:
Charlie McClendon, City Manager

RECOMMENDATION:
Staff recommends the City Council approve a budget amendment to the FY16-17 budget of \$459,273 and authorize the addition of seven FTE positions to the staffing schedule.

BACKGROUND:
In January 2016 the City Council established their 2016 goals. Staff received direction from Council for the fire department to apply for a Federal Emergency Management Agency - Staffing for Adequate and Fire and Emergency Response Grant for six (6) firefighter / paramedics.

The grant was submitted in March 2016 and was not awarded.

Council also adopted goals statements asking for a review of staffing levels in both Police and Fire once year-end financial data was available. The year-end budget status report was presented to Council earlier today during the study session. The conclusion of the report was that the City is unable to add staffing at this time based on existing revenue sources being fully committed to covering existing and known future costs.

The City has recently permitted several medical cannabis businesses, from which the City will be collecting taxes based on current voter authorization to do so. Revenue from the medical cannabis businesses is not included in future revenue projections due to the limited history that the City has with actual collections. Because a number of businesses are now permitted, however, it is possible to estimate potential collections. Finance staff estimate that within three years the City could see new revenues from medical cannabis business in excess of \$3,000,000 per year.

DISCUSSION:

FIRE DEPARTMENT STAFFING:

The fire department has operated since 2012 with only six on-duty firefighters assigned to the fire companies (two personnel on each fire apparatus) protecting 53,000 residents. The two ambulances are each staffed with two firefighter / paramedics, however ambulances are unavailable forty percent of the time due to emergency transports to the hospitals.

The Fire Department strategic plan, adopted by Council earlier this year, sets a goal of adding three Firefighter/EMT positions in FY16-17 and one Battalion Chief to allow for a shift commander to be on duty during each shift.

This will allow the fire department to provide one additional on-duty firefighter on the busiest company located at the fire station at 32100 Desert Vista Rd. and provide one on-duty battalion chief.

The two current forty-hour battalion chiefs and one new battalion chief will be assigned to twenty-four hour shift work to provide 24/7/365 on-duty coverage. This will permit the fire department to deploy twelve on-duty firefighters to a major medical or structure fire within eight minutes.

The purpose of the proposed F.F. / EMT positions is to hire local firefighters reflective of the community we serve. The individual firefighter cost savings for a base salary F.F. / EMT as compared to a base salary F.F. / Paramedic is \$7,383. or 11.25% annually for each position.

The fire department currently employs more paramedics than the Riverside County Emergency Medical Services Agency requires. Although the level of paramedic training provides optimum patient care it is more expensive than an EMT position. The Cathedral City Professional Firefighters and Fire Management Associations recommend the City continue to hire firefighter / paramedics.

In order to provide enhanced life safety and fire protection staff recommends the City Council authorize a FY2016/17 mid-budget adjustment of four fire department positions, at the F.F. / EMT level.

POLICE STAFFING:

The Police Department strategic plan adopted earlier this year sets a target of hiring one additional Police Officer position during the FY16-17 year. In addition, an opportunity exists to join the regional auto theft task force. Auto theft is one of the few areas where Cathedral City continues to see increases in crime. Joining the task force will allow the City to take advantage of regional resources to battle auto theft. The cost of an officer assigned to the task force will be 70% reimbursed by Riverside County. Thus, the costs in the table below show only the required 30% local match. Adding these two Police Officer positions will increase the number of authorized Police Officers to 51 up from a low of 47 after the 2012 reduction in force.

PLANNING STAFFING:

The Planning Division bears the responsibility for most of the processing work required to regulate

the medical cannabis businesses in the manner required by the code. Staff is increasingly concerned that the amount of time required to process the applications and the annual renewals has the potential to cause service levels to drop and turn-around times to increase in Planning. Council direction has been clear that the City must be known as a business friendly city providing excellent service to developers. Therefore, it makes sense to allocate a modest amount of the medical cannabis revenues to providing the staff resources necessary to regulate the businesses without causing service levels elsewhere to deteriorate. It is recommended that an Assistant Planner position be added to handle these responsibilities.

The cost to add the recommended positions is outlined below:

Positions Recommended	FY 16-17 Half-year Cost	Estimated Full-year Cost
Fire Personnel (4 FTE)	\$255,453	\$510,906
Police Officer (1 FTE)	\$69,779	\$139,557
Police Officer RAID (1 FTE)	\$29,452	\$58,904
Assistant Planner (1 FTE)	\$54,589	\$109,179
TOTAL - 7 FTE	\$409,273	\$818,546

Additionally, it is recommended that a fund be established, initially at \$50,000 from medical cannabis revenues, to provide relocation assistance to businesses that may be displaced as properties are sold or otherwise change hands due to medical cannabis businesses entering the market. It is important to note that all medical cannabis businesses permitted to date have gone into otherwise vacant spaces. Staff will need to develop administrative rules and procedures to manage applications for assistance. According to the City Attorney the City may only have the authority to establish such a relocation assistance program under Charter government.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The full cost (salaries and benefits) to add the seven recommended positions for six months (1/1/2017 through 6/30/2017) is \$409,273 or a full year cost of approximately \$818,546. Estimated revenue from medical cannabis businesses will eventually be enough to cover these costs. If the revenues do not materialize quickly enough fund reserves will be required in the short term to cover these added expenses.

ATTACHMENTS:

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