Brevard Fire Department
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MEMORANDUM

Date: April 1, 2024

To: Wilson Hooper, City Manager

From: Robert A. Cooper, Fire Chief

Reference: Personnel Request Justification FY25

Brevard Fire Department (BFD) is requesting funding for three additional full-time paid firefighters for FY24. We would like to have six full-time firefighters working a Modified LA 24-hour schedule, which provides two full-time firefighters per shift on a rotating basis. This would be in addition to the current part-time scheduled staff, as well as the full-time Chief.

We are currently in our second full year of running medical first response calls in our district. We responded to just over 2,500 calls in CY24, which is approximately one half of the total call volume for Transylvania County EMS (TCEMS). We currently have four full time staff and TCEMS has 26.

Having multiple paid firefighters working at the same time will provide multiple advantages, including, but not limited to the following:

- ✓ Safety and Accountability – Safety and accountability are the primary reasons for additional full time staff, both at the station and on calls. Historically, when full time staff are introduced to a part time department, the number of off duty staff responding to calls typically decreases over time. It is much easier for off duty staff to think that the full time/on duty staff can handle the call, so they do not respond unless it is a significant call, such as a fire, wreck, etc. Having at least two paid firefighters initially responding to a fire scene helps us get closer to meeting the OSHA two-in two-out rule. This is especially true from midnight to 8 AM when there is currently only one paid firefighter on duty.
- ✓ Decreased response time – Having personnel available to respond from the station decreases response time by a minimum five minutes. For off duty staff to respond from work or home to the station to respond an apparatus often takes well over five minutes. Although we rely heavily on automatic mutual aid, none of our mutual aid partners are in close proximity to our district, and have extended response times. Having multiple personnel on duty allows them to respond multiple apparatus at the initial dispatch, while off duty staff respond from work/home to the scene. This allows crews to start working faster at the scene, reducing potential loss.
- ✓ Overlapping Calls – Our overlapping calls increased from 376 in 2022 to 850 in 2023. Having multiple staff on duty allows us to respond to multiple calls as the same time.

- ✓ Availability of personnel during the day – Most full-time working members of our district are self-employed, work in the service industry, or work outside of the district. To respond to calls during the day, a self-employed member must leave work, which means they are no longer making money. Members who work in the service industry are typically not able to leave work during the day to respond to calls. It is very reassuring for the BFD Officers to know that we have multiple on duty firefighters available to immediately respond to calls.
- ✓ Major in-house projects – Our paid staff have saved us tens of thousands of dollars by completing some projects in-house including painting, flooring, carpentry, prop building, etc.
- ✓ Conducting business pre-plans – Pre-plans are a key factor in the rating system.
- ✓ Car seat installation and/or inspection – As the only car seat inspection station in the Count we typically receive multiple visits each week.

In addition, we have seen other advantages of having multiple full-time staff, including the following:

- ✓ Closer to meeting OSHA two-in two-out rule
- ✓ Ability to provide a driver and/or assisting EMT for EMS transports, but still keep response personnel available to respond to other calls
- ✓ Ability to perform certain duties/activities that require more than one person
- ✓ Maintain station coverage with one firefighter, while the others are on calls, performing pre-plans, conducting hydrant maintenance, or other activities
- ✓ Maintain coverage during Sick and/or Vacation leave
- ✓ Maintain coverage for outside training

It is becoming increasingly more difficult to find part time firefighters who are able to commit that much time to responding to calls and to participate in training. The full time staff have been a huge relief of this burden.

Please let me know if you need any additional information.