

TO: City Council  
FROM: James L. App, City Manager  
Douglas R. Hamp, Chief of Emergency Services  
SUBJECT: Fire and Life Safety Services  
DATE: February 16, 1999

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NEEDS: For the City Council to consider the future of fire and life safety services.

- FACTS:
1. In the late 1980's, the City's Fire Department was staffed by volunteers, a paid Fire Chief and one (1) on-duty career firefighter.
  2. During the 1980's, calls for service averaged 534 per year (30% - fire suppression, 40% - medical aid, and 30% - other).
  3. Calls for service nearly quadrupled since the 1980's to the present average of 2,000 per year (10% - fire suppression; 60% - medical aid [2/3 requiring advanced life-paramedic support]; and 30% - miscellaneous, including hazardous conditions, vehicle accidents, rescues, lost persons, water emergencies, person in distress, animal emergencies, false alarms, etc.).
  4. The paid staff force was increased in the mid-1990's to the current total of 7 paid firefighters (two of which are on duty daily), 2 Battalion Chiefs, 1 Chief and 1 secretary, while maintaining 40-50 volunteers.
  5. Advanced life support/paramedic service has been/is provided under contract by a private provider.
  6. The change in type of call and call volume has required significant change in staff training, orientation, commitment and interest.
  7. Major facilities and equipment are obsolete and require replacement to serve the increased call load.
  8. The Department's operating budget has increased from \$427,000 in FY 1989/90 to \$1,025,600 in FY 1998/99.
  9. Average response times periodically exceed the expected 6-minute arrival time to 8 minutes or more due to multiple/simultaneous calls, types of calls, and/or volunteer availability.
  10. Total service call demand is likely to increase with population growth at approximately 96 annual calls per 1,000 population.

**ANALYSIS &  
CONCLUSION:**

Having clearly defined goals is essential to ensure continued delivery of emergency services. Clear and comprehensive analysis of our future emergency services needs, goals and service delivery options is needed. Better services will result once it is determined (1) what services will be demanded in the future, and (2) by what means, under what circumstances and at what cost, those services can be provided.

Such an analysis would benefit from an understanding of what other communities have experienced. Independent analysts possessing such experience/expertise are available and could be retained to guide the emergency services study at a cost of \$20,000 - \$40,000.

**POLICY  
REFERENCE:**

None.

**FISCAL  
IMPACT:**

\$20,000 - \$40,000 from unappropriated General Fund resources.

**OPTIONS:**

- A) Direct staff to identify an experienced governmental services analyst who can conduct an independent analysis of future fire/life safety service demands and delivery options.
- B) Direct an internal analysis of future fire/life safety service demands and delivery options.
- C) Amend, modify, or reject the above options.