



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

Local 135, Wichita, Kansas

1330 East First Street # 106
Wichita, Kansas 67214
316-263-6651 / www.iaff135.com

July 30, 2010

Mayor Brewer & City Council
455 N. Main
Wichita, KS

Dear Mayor Brewer & City Council,

Enclosed is a letter dated July 20, 2010 addressed to City Manager Layton detailing concerns that IAFF Local 135 has with the 2011 Budget Proposal within the Wichita Fire Department. I did meet with Chief Blackwell on July 23 and City Manger Layton on July 29, to discuss the issues detailed in the letter but we were unable to come to any consensus on the Local's concerns.

In summary, the concerns of Local 135 are that the 2011 Budget Proposal is eliminating/reclassifying several positions that the Local considers "essential" to maintain firefighter safety and/or training, while maintaining and adding administrative positions considered not as "essential" to firefighter safety or service delivery. Most of the reclassified and/or eliminated positions are personnel that make emergency alarms and other calls for service.

I look forward to discussing these concerns with you and encourage you to contact me directly if any questions arise.

Sincerely,

Rocky Bumgarner
President
Local 135
316-650-1460

Enclosure



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July 20, 2010

City Manager Robert Layton
455 N. Main
Wichita, KS

Dear City Manager Layton,

On behalf of IAFF Local 135 I want to thank you and the Wichita City Council for their leadership during these challenging financial times. The Council has identified public safety as a "core" service and has made their budgetary recommendations based upon the direction from the citizens of Wichita to provide a fire service that maintains a level of service that the citizens of Wichita expect and deserve. However, Local 135 does have concerns regarding the current 2011 Wichita Fire Department Budget Proposal.

The 2011 Budget proposal regarding the Wichita Fire Department budget eliminates or reclassifies several positions that Local 135 considers essential to our service delivery to the citizens of Wichita. The Local understands that tough decisions have to be made and priorities have to be identified, but the current 2011 budget adds new administrative positions, maintains administrative positions added in 2010 and maintains other administrative positions that the Local believes are less essential to our service delivery. While these administrative positions have merit and importance, it is the Local's position they are not as essential to our service delivery as the positions proposed to be eliminated in the current 2011 Budget Proposal.

I want to make it clear that Local 135 is not requesting additional funding to the Wichita Fire Department, but believes that further analysis should be taken regarding the current 2011 Fire Department Proposal. Outlined below are our concerns with the 2011 Wichita Fire Department proposal.

CONCERNS

RECLASSIFICATION OF 5 CAPTAIN POSITIONS

The 2010 Budget has 71 Captain Positions and 66 Lieutenant Positions. The current proposal has the reclassification of 5 Captain Positions to Lieutenant Positions. This reclassification has little budgetary savings. As you are aware we have 22 stations staffed by 3 shifts with all 22 Stations requiring a Captain, which equals a total of 66 Captains. The 66 Lieutenant positions are required at 17 fire stations with 5 stations (Stations 13, 18, 20, 21, and 22) not having a Lieutenant due to only one unit responding

from these stations. The five Captain positions are utilized to staff stations when an assigned Station Captain is off duty. The five Captain positions are referred to as "roving" Captains as they do not have a specific station assignment.

The budgetary savings is minimal due to fact without these five "roving" Captain positions will be filled by "acting" Lieutenants. Per the Union contract Lieutenants that are "bumped up" to Captain are paid accordingly. On average a Captain makes approximately \$7,000 more per year than a Lieutenant, but a Lieutenant being paid for "acting time" makes 8% more than their base pay. The maximum salary savings would be \$35,000 per year for all five reclassifications. However, the budgetary saving is much less than \$35,000 per year due to "acting pay." A Captain only makes 2.5% more than an "acting" Lieutenant. This equates to a possible, if any, total budgetary savings of approximately \$10,000 to \$15,000 per year.

This minimal savings is not justifiable to the impact of the service delivery to the citizens. A Captain on the Fire Department is usually the most senior and experienced position that brings knowledge, skills, and abilities that are difficult to replace with an "acting" Lieutenant. While an "acting" Lieutenant has the same responsibilities and expectations as a permanent Captain position, the intangibles that a permanent Captain brings to subordinates that he/she is supervises is not replaceable. In summary, with rank comes authority and less Captains will be detrimental to the Wichita Fire Department.

Another concern regarding the reclassification is the negative impact upon employee morale. Understandably tough decisions have to be made, but the reclassification of these positions has a tremendous negative impact on employee morale. This negative impact is due to decrease in opportunities for lower ranked employees to move up in rank thus reaching personal career goals. Once again, the budgetary savings is minimal and weighed against other proposed budget recommendations, I strongly urge you to reconsider these reclassifications.

ELIMINATION OF MEDICAL COORDINATOR

This position was reclassified in 2010 from a Battalion Chief to its current classification and has been included in the budget for over 30 years. The budgetary savings for eliminating this position will be approximately \$65,000 to \$70,000 per year in salary savings. This is currently a civilian 40 hour position within the Training Division that is responsible for the majority, if not all, medical related issues within the Fire Department such as scheduling, supervising and teaching all medical training, ensuring that stations have the proper medical supplies, and coordinating medical related issues with outside agencies such as Sedgwick County EMS. The importance of position cannot be overstated in that approximately 70% to 75% of all alarms made by WFD personnel are medical related and proper training is paramount. Medical training is a dynamic field that is ever-changing and the WFD has added multiple additional skills over the last few years such as additional airway management techniques, the delivery of albuterol and aspirin. In addition to ensuring that personnel are proficient in medical skills this position maintains the recertification records so that WFD personnel can maintain their EMT certification, a requirement of continued employment. The elimination of this position may be due more to timing, as the current person holding this position planning on retiring in the near future and it is "easier" to eliminate a

position that is vacant rather than one that is occupied. This position's workload and value is obvious and the probability that the slack caused by the elimination of the position be "picked up" by current employees is not possible, especially with the other proposed personnel cuts within the Training Division. While the elimination of this position does have salary savings the importance of this position cannot be overstated and when weighed against other proposed budget positions, I strongly urge you to reconsider the elimination of this position.

ELIMINATION OF (1) FIRE MEDICAL OFFICER

Currently the WFD has 3 Fire Medical Officers (FMOs) with 1 assigned to each 24 hour shift. The FMO position was created approximately 2 years ago in an effort to improve our medical response capabilities, fire ground safety and most importantly establish an effective firefighter rehabilitation program at structure fires and other alarms that require the establishment of rehabilitation. The budgetary savings for eliminating this position will be approximately \$65,000 to \$70,000 per year in salary. This proposal to eliminate 1 FMO is likely the result of eliminating the Medical Coordinator addressed above. It is the Local's understanding that with the elimination of 1 FMO the other 2 remaining FMOs will be moved off of their assigned 24 hour shift and placed on a 40 hour work week to assist with training needs and no longer respond as they currently do, so in practice the elimination of 1 FMO is more like the elimination of all the FMOs, at least in their current job assignment.

These FMO positions respond in an emergency vehicle and primarily respond to critical medical alarms, vehicle accidents, and structure fires, making approximately 8-10 alarms per shift. The importance of an effective rehabilitation program at the fire ground has become a national effort to improve firefighter safety and without this position our rehabilitation program will still exist but the management of the program will likely have to be performed by other operations personnel that do not bring the experience and training that the FMOs provide. The leading cause of line-of-duty deaths in the United States is cardiac arrest, accounting for nearly 50% of all line-of-duty deaths per year. The FMO position is essential part of our rehabilitation program with its sole purpose to ensure firefighter safety in monitoring vital signs to detect any abnormalities that require further analysis. For example, in the Line-of-Duty Death of Captain Eck, rehabilitation records and testimony by rehabilitation personnel including the FMO provided the direct link to his symptoms beginning at the structure fire. Other benefits of the FMO positions is additional assistance and experience at critical medical alarms such as traumatic motor vehicle accidents and enhanced fire ground operations as the FMO is oftentimes utilized in initial operations as a secondary safety officer. While the elimination of this position does have salary savings the importance of this position cannot be overstated and when weighed against other proposed budget positions, I strongly urge you to reconsider the elimination of this position.

ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS

Local 135 realizes that it is easy to criticize budget proposals, especially budget proposals that are done under challenging fiscal restraints and include the elimination of positions. So in that spirit, listed below are a couple alternative budget proposals that include minor changes within the WFD budget that preserve the positions listed above. The total estimated savings for the current budget proposal for

eliminating/reclassifying the positions listed above is approximately \$140,000 to \$150,000 per year, so the Local will propose other personnel cuts that will total approximately \$140,000 to \$150,000 per year.

Alternative Proposal #1 (Estimated Total Savings \$160,000)

The 2011 Fire Department budget includes 20 budgeted chief officer positions and two other administrative positions that are paid at the Chief Officer level. During financially challenging times a necessary place to make eliminations/reclassifications are at the higher rate of pay positions.

- Eliminate 2 of the 3 Operations Division Chiefs. These positions were created approximately 2 years ago during management reorganization. The elimination of two of the Division Chief position equates to approximately \$160,000 in salary savings. The remaining Division Chief is moved to a 40 hour work week to assist the Deputy Chief of Operations with administrative duties. This proposed reorganization is not a new concept as this is similar to the Fire Department's management structure prior to the reorganization two years ago.

Alternative Proposal #2 (Estimated Total Savings \$180,000)

- Eliminate 3 of the budgeted Battalion Chief positions (salary savings \$180,000). The 2011 proposal includes 12 Battalion Chief positions and current operations has 9 Battalion Chiefs, 1 per battalion and shift. The additional 3 positions were originally for the possible creation of a 4th Battalion, which it is not being considered for 2011 due to budget concerns. These positions are likely considered budget savings measures and due to a challenging budget can be eliminated without any impact on operations.

Alternative Proposal #3 (Estimated Total Savings \$150,000)

Since the adopted 2010 budget the Administrative Support Services budget has increased by 23.6%.

The Administrative Support budget makes up approximately 9.6% of the 2011 Budget proposal and the increase from 2010 adopted budget to the 2011 proposal is an increase of approximately \$940,000.

During this same time period the Operations Division Budget has increased by 3.3%, which is mostly due to merit increases and the 1% given to exempt employees in 2010.

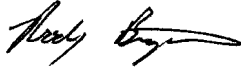
- Eliminate Storekeeper position (salary savings \$35,000 to \$40,000). This position is new in 2010 and has recently been filled. This position's job duty is to assist the training division and operations division with the management of existing inventory. Until this position was created the WFD had a system in place for current inventory management, it is unknown if this position will provide more efficiency than the previous system. This position is for existing inventory and the previous system of inventory management does work.
- Eliminate Division Supervisor (salary savings \$60,000). This position is the assistant to the Fire Chief and does assist with the management of clerical personnel and the Fire Chief's schedule. It has been in the budget for several years, however in the 2008 reorganization a Deputy Chief of Administrative Services was created and Deputy Chief is responsible for the supervision of clerical personnel. The position does have some merit but has less direct impact to our service delivery than other positions proposed to be eliminated or reclassified.

- Eliminate 2 of the new Clerk I positions (salary savings \$50,000). These positions were added in 2010 for clerical support in the Training Division. Prior to these positions being created the Training Division was able to manage their clerical work and did not have these clerical positions. While these positions have some merit, the Training Division has the capability to shift and streamline workloads to manage their clerical work without these positions.

In summary, the Local is concerned with the growing budget for administrative services while positions that make alarms, enhance firefighter safety and directly impact our level of training are decreased. The direction of the City Council is to maintain the level of service delivery to our citizens with "boots on the street" and it is the opinion of the Local that the eliminations or reclassifications of the above listed items in the 2011 Budget Proposal do not meet the standard of preserving "boots on the street."

Personally, I would welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss these concerns with you, Fire Chief Blackwell, or any other management staff that is necessary to properly address these concerns and potentially resolve the Local's concerns, before addressing these concerns with the City Council.

Sincerely,



Rocky Bumgarner
President
IAFF Local 135

cc: Ron Blackwell, Fire Chief