



CITY OF DETROIT
FIRE DEPARTMENT
DETROIT PUBLIC SAFETY HEADQUARTERS

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To: Legislative Policy Division

**From: Charles Simms
Interim Executive Fire Commissioner
Detroit Fire Department**

Date: March 28, 2023

Re: Responses to LPD City Council Questions 2023

Please find below responses to your questions dated March 8, 2023, regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Proposed Budget for the Fire Department.

1. **Please briefly explain the department's new expense initiatives, new capital funding requests, operational reform and savings proposals, and new revenue initiatives/proposals to be implemented in FY2024. Please provide which appropriation/cost center the new initiative/request/proposal is impacting in FY2024.**
 - a. *New expense Initiatives include the following:*
 - i. *Dedicated Dispatch Nurse Line - Low priority medical calls that do not need a transport unit would be routed to an on-duty nurse. This would increase the availability of our ambulances to respond to high priority medical calls.*
 - ii. *2024 Detroit Fire Symposium – DFD Symposium consisting of several topics including but not limited to: recruitment and retention, training, leadership, increasing revenue, ISO, and policies and procedures.*
 - b. *New capital funding request includes the following:*
 - i. *Prep radios for DFD personnel*
 - ii. *Community AED's*
 - iii. *Firehouse upgrades*
 - c. *Operation reform and savings proposals include the following:*
 - i. *Crossover training to provide an enhanced service to the citizens of Detroit.*
 - ii. *EMS restructure to become lean and provide a higher level of service.*
 - d. *New revenue initiatives/proposals include the following:*
 - i. *Increase the number of 24-hour ambulances.*
 - ii. *New revised Fee Schedule*
 - iii. *Increase number of fire inspections and collect payment arrears*
2. **On page B24-2, Under Goals, Strategic Priorities and Related City Outcomes, goal #2- Please briefly describe how the department will improve medical responses by combining Fire and EMS Divisions. Please provide an update on the department's 3 Year Strategic Plan; what initiatives were implemented and what remains outstanding? Is there funding in FY 2024 budget for any outstanding initiatives?**
 - a. *By combining EMS and Fire Divisions, the employees will rotate between Fire and EMS units creating a lower utilization rate per ambulance while enhancing diversified skills and*



abilities. DFD will be able to initiate an enhanced level of care for the citizens due to higher level of medical licensure on responding fire apparatus.

b. *All initiatives from the 3-year plan have been implemented or completed. Yes, there is funding in FY2024 budget for outstanding and FY2024 projected initiatives.*

3. **According to the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) Report, as of December 31, 2022, the department had 114 vacancies (an amount similar to last year); however, as of February 10, 2023, the department had 68 vacancies. Please explain the how the department was successful in filling 46 vacant positions from December 31st to February 10th. Also, please explain the department's strategy to fill vacant positions.**

The Department hired 46 cadets on January 9, 2023. We have multiple classes starting March 20, April and July. The Department currently has an open application with over 600 applicants.

4. **Please discuss recruitment for Firefighters and EMS positions. How many classes do we have scheduled for FY 2023 and FY 2024? Please discuss your community outreach efforts to recruit Detroiters for these positions.**

Currently, DFD has a class in the academy, one starting March 20 and another class in April for the remaining of FY23. For FY24, DFD has two classes starting in July and two classes starting in January. Community outreach includes but not limited to churches, DPS, Charter Schools, local colleges, community events, social media, radio, posters, brochures, etc.

5. **The total number of positions in the FY 2024 Proposed Budget remains at 1,232; the same as the FY 2023 Budget. However, the proposed budget contains several shifts in positions for the Fire Fighter-Emergency Medical Services transition. What percentage of firefighters have now received EMT/Paramedic certification. How many firefighters is covered by the \$17.6 million budgeted for the transition in FY 2024 (per B24-3)?**

a. *Currently, 46% of the firefighters have either an EMT or a Paramedic license.*

b. *The 17.6 million covers the full anticipated personnel costs for continued merged role transition of Firefighter and EMS services. These costs will support increased wages from the merged roles and anticipated overtime costs. The FY24 budget recommendation includes 160 budgeted fire fighter FTE with merged role certification compared to 11 FTE in the FY23 adopted budget.*

6. **On page B24-9, please explain the year-over-year change from the current budget to the Proposed FY 2024 Budget for the following:**

a. **Appropriation 25240-Fire Ordinance Enforcement, cc 240240 Fire Marshal Administration increased by \$121,135 (6.2%).**

The 6.2% increase in Fire Marshal Administration is due to the Make Safe Property contract for \$75,000 and additional contractual obligations of initial setup cost and maintenance for emergency access to commercial and residential properties.



- b. **Appropriation 25241-Casino Customer Response Services, cc 241015 Casino-EMS increased by \$1,027,416 (78%).**

The 78% increase is due to the contractual increase for standby EMS Services at the Detroit casinos.

- c. **Appropriation 25242-Fire Fighting and Response, cc 240191 Fire Fighting Admin decreased by \$912,102 (-12.6%).**

The decrease in Appropriation 25242 is due to the position realignment of Battalion Fire Chief and Senior Chief positions.

- d. **Appropriation 25242-Fire Fighting and Response, cc 240195 Fire Fighting Operations increased by \$13.7 million (17.8%).**

The \$13.7M net increase is primarily due to a \$15.6M overtime increase and \$2.4M decrease for utilities expense consolidation.

- e. **Appropriation 25242-Fire Fighting and Response, cc 240205 Fireboat Marine Operations-why the increase in FY 2024 of \$148,191 followed by a decline in funding for FY 2025 through FY 2027.**

The FY24 increase is due to reflecting full, 12-month funding for positions that were budgeted as part-time in FY23. The small decline throughout the forecast period is based on anticipated citywide overtime savings as budgeted vacant positions are filled.

- f. **Appropriation 25242- Fire Fighting and Response, cc 240340 EMS Field Operations decreased by \$1,874,808 (-11.2%) and funding continue to decline in FY 2025 through FY 2027. Please explain.**

The decrease of \$1,874,808 was a reallocation of positions that were associated with the Appropriation 25242 cc 240195 position increase. With the merged titles, overtime is expected to decrease in FY 2025 through FY 2027.

- g. **Appropriation 29240-Fire Dept. Admin, cc 240010 Fire Fighting Operations increased by \$5 million (109%). Please explain.**

The \$5M increase in Appropriation 29240 is for DFD payouts of: Sick-Leave/Comp Time at \$3.2M, uniform stipends at \$1.3M, vacation sell-back hours at \$400K, VEBA at \$300K, EAP stipends at \$73k and death benefits at \$50K.

7. **On page B24-10, Please briefly describe the source and uses for the grants budgeted in FY 2024, Fund 2102-Fire Grants Fund.**

The Department will be using Fund 2102 for the following:

- i. *FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant – Health and Wellness and Training.*
- ii. *FEMA Port Security Grant – UAV's*



- iii. *FEMA Fire Preventions and Safety – Smoke/Carbon Monoxide detectors and literature.*
- iv. *DMC Foundation Grant – Save-a-Life initiative, 8th Grade CPR/smoke detectors.*
- v. *FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant SAFER – Staffing*
- vi. *State of Michigan Automobile Theft Prevention Authority (ATPA) - Decreasing auto fraud.*

8. One of the initiatives in the 3 Year Strategic Plan is to increase revenues. Did the department submit a new fee schedule for approval? Please provide an update on the EMS billings, and the Medicare/Medicaid reimbursements for the current fiscal year and FY 2024.

- a. *Matrix Consulting is the fee schedule vendor. Matrix is collecting data and stays in contact with the Department during this process.*
- b. *A third-party biller handles EMS billings and are up to date. Medicare/Medicaid reimbursements for the current fiscal year are \$20.4M through March 2023. We have yet to complete the projection for Medicare/Medicaid reimbursements for FY2024.*

9. On page B24-11, Fund 4533/appropriation 20507-240010 - \$980,000 is budgeted in FY 2024 for the Radio Replacement Plan Continuation capital project. Per the recently approved Capital Agenda, this is a multi-year capital plan; please describe the project, how many radio will be purchased in FY 2024. What is the replacement cycle for Fire Dept. radios? Are there any ambulances scheduled for purchase in the proposed budget?

Radios are DFDs primary tool of communication. DFD has 605 PREP radios that are over 6 years old. The \$980,000 Radio Replacement Plan Continuation Capital Project funding request will allow the DFD to replace 144 PREP radios in FY24. The replacement cycle for PREP radios is 5 years.

The proposed budget allows for the purchase of 12 ambulances.

Approved by:

Charles Simms
Interim Executive Fire Commissioner
Detroit Fire Department