

Staff Report

Subject: Request to approve Firefighter pay increase by \$3.00 an hour.

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Department: Human Resources and Risk Management

Meeting Date: March 7, 2023.

Item Description: Request to approve Firefighter pay increase by \$3.00 an hour.

Summary Recommendation:

Staff is requesting approval to increase Firefighter pay by \$3.00 an hour to remain competitive with local municipalities and increase recruiting

Executive Summary/Background

The past three years have been trying times for all our first responders. Our Fire Department has done its best to keep staffing levels up, but we can no longer ignore the pay issue. The city of Rincon's fire department starts their staff at \$16.29/hour. After their first year, they receive a dollar increase in pay. This proposed pay increase will help keep us on par with Rincon, Pooler, Chatham County, Bryan County, etc. It will also help us be more attractive to future recruits in this extremely tough employment market. Our last two recruit schools have had low numbers. We are hoping this increase also helps with our retention of current experienced and dedicated firefighters.

Alternatives for Commission to Consider

1. Approve the pay increase for Firefighters.
2. Disapprove the pay increase for Firefighters and provide guidance to staff.

Recommended Alternative: Staff recommends Alternative 1.

Other Alternatives: None.

Department Review: County Manager, Fire Chief, Finance, and Human Resources.

Funding Source: No immediate impact on the current budget as these increases can be paid with the insurance tax premium, which was higher than what we originally budgeted—approximately \$250K if Fire was fully staffed for the remaining four months of the budget year. There may need to be a budget amendment presented by Finance later.