



MEMO

Fire Department

To: Finance & Personnel
From: Fire Chief Jacob Carrel
Date: March 3rd, 2025
Re: Creation of 'Firefighter/EMT' Job Title to Fill Existing Vacant Positions

Background information:

The Fire Department is facing an urgent staffing challenge with four vacant positions, including one unfilled since September despite extensive recruitment efforts. We have two promising candidates graduating from paramedic school in May, but our current hiring requirements prevent us from bringing them on board. To be clear, this proposal seeks only to create a new job title to fill existing vacancies and does not request any positions beyond those already approved by the council.

To address this shortage, I am proposing that we create a new "Firefighter/EMT" position that would allow us to hire qualified candidates who are still completing paramedic training. This approach has become a common practice among fire departments facing similar recruitment challenges. The new hires would receive 80% of the Firefighter/Paramedic salary while we cover their paramedic education expenses, with provisions for repayment if they don't complete the program or leave the department within three years after certification.

This proposed solution has the full support of the local firefighters union. By implementing this change, we can immediately begin to fill our vacancies with promising candidates, address our critical staffing needs, and maintain our high standards of emergency service for our community.

Strategic Plan:

People Management: Targeted Recruiting Plan

The Firefighter/EMT job title expands our recruitment pipeline by engaging paramedic students earlier in their careers, creating both immediate staffing solutions and a sustainable talent development pathway that aligns with our high standards.

Create a Community of Choice: Maintain a safe and healthy community

This staffing approach ensures continuous, high-quality emergency response coverage while broadening our applicant pool. It enables us to maintain optimal staffing levels, meet response time standards, and select the most qualified candidates to serve our community effectively.

Budget:

We are looking to fill vacant positions already funded and approved by Common Council.

Staff Recommended Action:

No action necessary tonight. If there is desire to move forward, I will work with Human Resources to bring this back in two weeks to seek approval and permission to fill.