



City of Tempe
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Fire Department

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Cliff Jones, Fire Chief (858-7201)

THROUGH: Jeff Kulaga, Interim City Manager

DATE: November 2, 2007

SUBJECT: Issue Review Session - Staffing New Fire Company/Heavy Rescue

The Fire Department will be providing an overview of the staffing requirements for its planned new Fire Company/Heavy Rescue at the November 8, 2007 Issue Review Session.

Introduction:

At the September 11, 2007 Neighborhood Quality of Life, Public Safety and Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting, the Fire Department was asked to provide an overview and status of the plan to place a new fire company in service with a dual function crew that would also staff the Department's Heavy Rescue Truck. The presentation was made at the October 9, 2006 Neighborhood Quality of Life, Public Safety and Parks and Recreation Committee which resulted in direction to bring the presentation to Issue Review Session.

Background:

The Tempe Fire Department last added a fire company in 1994. The Fire Department responded to 18,680 emergencies in 2006 compared with 11,835 in 1994, representing a 58% increase in emergency responses.

The new fire company has been identified as critical in the September 2006 edition of the Departments Five Year Strategic Plan and Operational Guide, and was the highest priority item in the Department's 2007-2008 budget request.

The Commission on Fire Accreditation International, in its July 13, 2007 Report on the Tempe Fire Department said that "the Department should place the planned additional company in service prior to and during construction of the approved Fire Station 7, in order to increase the response reliability of the Department within its jurisdiction."

The intent of this recommendation is to strengthen the response reliability of our system of fire companies, specifically with focus on a heavy rescue company that addresses the needs of the downtown.

This new heavy rescue/fire company would be located in the central part of the City where the call load is heavier and where high-rise development and a rapidly expanding University lead to increased population density and consequently more requests for service. The intent would be to move a standard fire company to the new Fire Station #7 when it is constructed in the southeast quadrant of the City. The heavy rescue company is an added component to protecting a more dense and vertical environment.

This company would allow for staffing of the heavy rescue vehicle that was purchased as part of the Urban Area Security Initiative Rapid Response Team.

Operational Approach:

This new fire company would be staffed by six members at all times requiring a minimum of 21 new members when vacation and sick leave is accounted for.

This concept would call for one crew for two trucks, with the crew taking a standard fire/rescue pumper on most calls, and having the specialized training to respond effectively with the Department's heavy rescue truck in physical rescue (trapped firefighters or civilians) and/or large scale incidents.

This company would be staffed at all times by five crew members with a specialist sixth member of the team that would be managing areas of operation such as Hazardous Materials Response, Technical Rescue and WMD Response who would be on shift work and an active part of the team for major incidents.

Fiscal Impact:

As identified in the budget request, the staffing for this unit would require 21 personnel and the purchase of one fire/rescue pumper truck. Total cost is \$2,664,000, of which \$2,082,000 is recurring and \$582,000 is non-recurring (rescue/pumper and equipment).

Recommendation:

Realizing that this proposal has a significant financial impact, the Fire Department has been almost thirteen years without an increase in operational resources. This is an issue that remains critical to having a Fire Department that is fully prepared to address the challenges of a rapidly changing City. Staff is seeking direction on this matter.