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FIRE DEPARTMENT

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Memorandum

To: Alderperson Konetzke, Chairperson
Human Resources Committee
Alderperson Jirschele, Chairperson
Safety and Licensing Committee

From: Len Vander Wyst, Fire Chief

Date: March 19, 2015

Re: Fire Department Proposed Reclassification of Position

Recently, one of the department's full-time fire inspectors retired from the Appleton Fire Department. Prior to filling this position, the management team met to discuss the current organizational structure for the Appleton Fire Department. As you might recall, the department has experienced a number of staffing reductions over the past ten years. (See Attachment A.) The department's review included examining the entire table of organization and identifying both existing challenges based on some of those reductions and opportunities for the future and succession planning. Based on this review, I am proposing to make some minor changes to our current table of organization (See Attachments B and C.) that will produce major positive impacts. The changes that are being proposed include:

- Creation of a 'Battalion Chief – Fire Prevention and Public Education' position without increasing the number of FTEs. This position will oversee the Fire Prevention and Public Education Divisions and directly supervise the Fire Prevention staff and Public Education Team. The creation of this position will provide a liaison between the news media and the fire department. This position will oversee the fire investigation program and will respond to major alarms to assist with emergency scene operations. The position will have the ability to fill in for the shift battalion chief to cover for absences. This position will provide consistency by working a Monday through Friday schedule and be available on a daily basis as well as having a flexible schedule 24/7/365 as a member of the management team.
- The oversight of the Public Education Division will fall under the newly created Battalion Chief-Fire Prevention and Public Education. This move will provide needed direction and final decision making authority for that division along with providing a lead Public Information Officer.

- Elimination of the one protected, fire inspector position from the table of organization. The department is confident that we will be able to distribute the inspection workload and other related tasks from this position within existing Fire Prevention staff and fire crews.
- As a result of the creation of the Battalion Chief – Fire Prevention and Public Education position, the Fire Protection Engineer will no longer have the supervisory responsibilities that he inherited due to cutbacks in the past and oversight of the Fire Prevention Division. Therefore, a number of target hazard occupancy and specialty fire inspections will be assigned to this position. In addition, this position will be responsible for the management of the aboveground and underground storage tank program.
- There are two nationally recognized measures of a fire department's performance: Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating and accreditation from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International. Both of these measures require significant research and assessment and are proven to measure community risks and accurately assess an organization's performance. They include an evaluation of the department's services to ensure that the community's needs are being met. The coordination and management of these assessments have been added to the deputy chief's job description. It would be expected that a self-assessment process would take place, and be followed by a recommendation to Council.

The proposed changes within the table of organization address a multitude of fire prevention and public education operational and workload issues while recognizing the challenging economic conditions that we expect to continue. When comparing the costs of the protected fire inspector position to a protected battalion chief position, the financial impact is approximately \$8,000 annually. However, this impact will be offset by unused salary dollars and a reduction in overtime this year.

While there may be some costs associated with this proposal, it is expected that the changes will only strengthen and enhance the department's long-range goals and succession planning with no changes to FTEs. I have discussed this reclassification with the Fire Prevention staff, union representatives, Human Resources Director, and Mayor and have support. I respectfully request that the Human Resources and Safety and Licensing Committees approve these changes. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any additional questions or concerns. Thanks!