



Staff Report

File #: 24-57
Version: 1

Date: 2/12/2024
Item #: 3.3e.

TO: Mayor and City Council
THROUGH: Keith Stahley, City Manager
FROM: Krishna Namburi, Deputy City Manager/Enterprise Services Director
Michele Bennett, HR Operations Assistant Director
Mike Niblock, Fire Chief

SUBJECT:

Fire Marshal classification and compensation.

Ward(s): All Wards
Councilor(s): All Councilors
Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods
Result Area(s): Good Governance.

SUMMARY:

The Fire Department has need for a supervisory classification to serve as the acting Fire Marshal on behalf of the City of Salem. This role had been previously assigned to the Assistant Fire Chief of Operations classification and position (now vacant) and previously as a Division Chief classification part of Fire Management. The department is already experiencing several management vacancies in various sections and for operational needs, desires a daily supervisor to oversee the Deputy Fire Marshals in the Fire Prevention section which would then report to a Deputy Fire Chief. The Fire Marshal classification is anticipated to be similar in scope to oversee a crew, performing similar work functions, and provide the level of guidance as the IAFF represented Battalion Chief classification, which also reports to a Deputy Fire Chief. This recommendation is for a new classification and compensation rate only. A vacant position will be reclassified to the new Fire Marshal classification if approved.

ISSUE:

Shall City Council approve the use of a represented Fire Marshal job classification and compensated at \$73.88 per hour effective February 12, 2024?

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the use of a represented Fire Marshal job classification and compensated at \$73.88 per hour effective February 12, 2024.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

The Fire Department had previously assigned the supervisory role of the Fire Marshal under the scope of the Assistant Fire Chief of Operations classification and position, which is now vacant. The department does not intend to fill that role as it functioned previously due to the large span of supervision over Emergency Operations, EMS, Fire Prevention, and Training. By having another frontline supervisory classification as the Fire Marshal, like the rank of Battalion Chief that is both supervisory and reports to a Deputy Fire Chief, will be better for the workflow and operations of the section and for the department. This will allow for the Fire Marshal to administer all operations of the Fire Prevention section, including performing the daily supervision and assignment of work to the Deputy Fire Marshals and Sr. Deputy Fire Marshal (6 FTE total), as well as be responsible for the enforcement of all fire and safety codes and regulations, perform inspections and issue of permits/plans, and provide the necessary training and evaluation to staff and the department.

Review of other comparator cities and fire agencies found similar Fire Marshal duties being assigned to either a similar Battalion Chief/Fire Marshal rank classification (represented) or a Division Chief/Assistant Chief classification (management).

External and internal compensation levels were also analyzed to ensure appropriate compensation for the Fire Marshal classification. It is recommended to set the compensation level to be six percent above the current top step of Battalion Chief as pay is equal to the average market wage for Fire Marshal by comparator agencies. The Battalion Chief's hourly rate of pay at top step, \$52.71, is for a 56-hour work week (2,912 annual hours), which is then converted and equivalent to a 40-hour work week of \$73.88 per hour for the Fire Prevention section. This rate follows the guidance of the City's Compensation Philosophy, and specifically for the Fire Department to maintain an accepted compression level of six percent spread between the supervisor classifications, and 13% between the Sr. Deputy Fire Marshal and Fire Marshal classifications.

The department has reviewed the classification and compensation concept with the IAFF union previously. If approved by the City Council, Fire and Human Resources will work with the union on a memorandum of agreement to formalize the use of the Fire Marshal classification as represented by IAFF and compensation level. Then, a vacant position will be reclassified to the new Fire Marshal classification for recruitment.

BACKGROUND:

Allison Pavelek
Sr. Human Resources Analyst

Attachments:

1. None.