



Legislation Text

File #: 17-0998, **Version:** 1

TO: Honorable Mayor & Members of the North Port Commission

FROM: Peter Lear, City Manager

TITLE: Sponsorship of Recruits for Fire and Police

Recommended Action

Authorize the City Manager to sign Sponsorship Agreements for Fire and Police Recruits.

Background Information

Both North Port Police and Fire Rescue have encountered difficulty in recruiting qualified applicants for vacant positions within their respective organizations. To attract and retain candidates for Police Officer and Firefighter/Paramedic vacancies, the departments are requesting to sponsor recruit candidates to attend academies for Police, Fire and Paramedic certifications.

Fire: For the past two years, City Commission has approved funding within the budget of Fire Rescue to sponsor and pay for the education of existing employees to attend Paramedic school. The present agreements call for the employee to remain employed with North Port Fire Rescue for a period of three years. Should they fail to pass the required State Certification or leave employment, they are required to reimburse the City the cost of their education based on a graduated three-year depreciation. The proposed agreements expand that program to allow us to recruit an individual and pay them a minimum salary while they complete the required education for employment. Paramedics who are not certified firefighters would be required to complete Fire School which will take from four to six months, while those who are certified Firefighter/EMT's would attend Paramedic School that would require twelve months to complete. It is Fire Rescue's intent to try to seek candidates for Recruit employment who are already in school, thus lessening the economic impact.

Police: Over the past several years, because of several factors such as changes in the retirement systems, the rebound of the economy and increased scrutiny of police actions, it has become increasingly difficult for police agencies to attract and retain qualified police applicants. In Southwest Florida, all law enforcement agencies are vying for the same few applicants. The North Port Police Department wishes to use Fiscal Year 2016/2017 budgeted salary funding, from the seven (7) vacant positions, to hire and "sponsor" qualified applicants to attend the July 2017 Sarasota Criminal Justice Academy for Law Enforcement Officers class at the Southwest Florida Public Service Academy in Ft. Myers. Qualified applicants, as a condition of employment, would sign a contract/agreement with the City of North Port to remain employed as a North Port Police Officer for a minimum of two (2) years, post academy graduation, and pursuant to Florida State Statute 943.16, that "Cadet" or Probationary Police Officer would reimburse the City of North Port as detailed in the proposed "Reimbursement for Tuition" agreement paragraph (2).

Both departments believe this recruitment effort will help them engage and commit employees to their organizations before they graduate and enter the employment pool, as they normally would post education.

Strategic Plan

N/A

Financial Impact

Funding is available for this program in the Personnel Budgets of Fire and Police due to vacancies in their organizations. Recruit salaries will be 15% below the entry starting salary of FireMedic or Police Officer.

Fire: The tuition for fire school or paramedic school averages between \$5,000 and \$7,000 depending upon the institution they attend. While attending the academy these North Port FireMedics will earn \$32,849.10 per year or \$1,263.43 per pay period.

Police: The tuition, lab fees, uniforms and associated course materials for each "trainee" is approximately \$4000.00. While attending the 20-week academy course, these North Port Police "Cadets" will earn \$35,282.64 per year or \$1,357.02 per pay period.

Procurement

N/A

Attachments:

1. Tuition Reimbursement Acknowledgement Police
2. Tuition Reimbursement Acknowledgement Fire

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