



Date: May 28, 2020

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager *T. Modica*

Subject: **Upcoming Police and Fire Academies**

At the May 19, 2020 Budget Study Session, the City Council requested additional information regarding the upcoming Police and Fire academies, including the potential delay in determining whether to conduct both academies. Over the last few days, the City Manager's Office has convened several meetings and requested staff to prepare an analysis of the operational and budget impacts of continuing with the Police and Fire academies in 2020. Based upon these discussions, I am recommending that the Fire and Police Departments proceed with the upcoming academies in late September and October, provided that the proper protocols are put in place to protect the health and safety of everyone involved. This recommendation seeks to balance the budgetary impact of proceeding with Police and Fire academies with the operational needs of the Fire and Police Departments, recognizing the significant work conducted thus far on academy recruitment efforts. Both Police Chief Luna and Fire Chief Espino support the new start date and size of the Police and Fire academies.

The Police and Fire academies in FY 20 were originally scheduled for July and August, respectively. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting projected budgetary deficits, staff have studied ways for the academies to be conducted safely, while simultaneously limiting the impact the academies may have on projected shortfalls. This includes maintaining the City's flexibility to reduce expenditures in future years, while reducing the possibility of having to eliminate filled sworn positions in the Police and Fire Departments.

Described below are the key considerations included in this recommendation:

Police Academy

- An academy size of no more than 40 recruits to maintain proper social distancing standards, and other COVID-19 health and safety protocols, and to acknowledge potential future budget reductions.
- Use of appropriate procedures to minimize COVID-19 exposure to recruits and staff.
- Immediate notification of selected candidates to maximize retention of quality candidates.
- Start-up in October to minimize costs and budget impact while still addressing current operational need. This delay helps generate savings of \$1.8 million in Measure A funds for FY 20. Conducting the academy in July would have required the City to identify an additional \$1.5 million in one-time funding for FY 21.

- The Police Department has represented that they can conduct an academy and still meet the budget target reductions required as part of the FY 21 Proposed Budget development process and, if adopted, a layoff situation can be avoided with current vacancy and attrition rates.

Fire Academy

- An academy size of no more than 24 to maintain proper social distancing standards, and other COVID-19 health and safety protocols, and to acknowledge potential future budget reductions.
- Use of appropriate procedures to minimize COVID-19 exposure to recruits and staff.
- Immediate notification of selected candidates to maximize retention of quality candidates.
- Start-up in late September to minimize costs and budget impact while still addressing current operational need.
- The Fire Department has represented that they can conduct an academy and still meet the budget target reductions required as part of the FY 21 Proposed Budget development process and, if adopted, a layoff situation can be avoided with the current vacancy and attrition rates.

The Budget Office, in coordination with the Police and Fire Departments, performed a high-level review of the financial information to validate the ability of both departments to meet the reduction targets, and to absorb the cost of the academy in FY 21. Based upon the information provided and this high-level review, the Budget Office concurs with the conclusions of the Police and Fire Departments. Depending upon the final FY 21 budget proposals, the fiscal conclusions may change, and adjustments may be needed to generate the savings necessary to balance the FY 21 budget. This will continue to be evaluated as part of the FY 21 budget development process.

With this direction, the Police Department will likely begin selecting participants this week and the Fire Department will follow soon thereafter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (562) 570-5091.

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