Saginaw Fire Department

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DOUG SPEARS
FIRE CHIEF

TO: City Manager Gabe Reaume

FROM: Fire Chief Doug Spears

DATE: July 31, 2019

RE: Emergency Manager Position

This is a continuation of our original request from last year (2018) to add the position of Emergency Management Coordinator or EMC to our department. The information below is what was included in last year's request.

Emergency Management responsibilities are assigned to the fire department as they are in the vast majority of communities throughout the country. Our department struggles with managing those responsibilities at the level necessary and as Emergency Management continues to evolve into a more prominent role in local, state and federal emergency services, those struggles will only increase. Emergency Management duties are time intensive and require a person with specific skills and training to proficiently fulfill the role of EMC and perform those duties.

As the Chief of the fire department I am also the EMC. Although those two roles mesh seamlessly for some activities and duties, other times they are two distinctly different roles and it takes two separate individuals working independently to fulfill the roles and responsibilities proficiently, particularly during a disaster or larger scale incident.

I have attached a job description for an EMC position that outlines the role and responsibilities but I want to expand on that for easier understanding. Emergency Management is not about command and control, that is the role of the Fire Chief and/or the Police Chief. Emergency Management is coordination and collaboration, which is the realm of the EMC.

To further explain, EMC's perform the managerial function of creating framework in which communities reduce vulnerability to hazards and cope with disasters and those functions are primarily divided into four categories; mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

- Mitigation involves the identification and reduction of potential exposure from a hazard or event much like fire prevention does specifically for fire hazards. There are numerous federal grant opportunities to reduce threats or hazards that our communities are exposed to. Being aware of all opportunities, becoming eligible and

maintaining eligibility, applying, and managing the grant and the project simply requires a dedicated position. Fire Chief's and their admin staff simply do not have the time necessary to both adequately manage a fire department and effectively perform the duties of an EMC.

- Preparedness involves assurance of readiness to respond to a disaster or a significant incident. No matter how good mitigation activities are, not all risk can be reduced or eliminated, Mother Nature reminds us of that. Effective preparedness does however assist in limiting the extent of damage.

- Response involves the implementation of our Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Disasters and large scale events are all coordinated and managed through an EOC using an EOP as the playbook. The EMC is the EOC manager. During a disaster or large scale event the EMC is the go-to liaison for communication and coordination with county, state and federal officials for the request and tracking of resources and documentation management. There is a much defined procedure for requesting disaster event resources and the detailed documentation process that must be adhered to from the onset to prevent delays in getting assistance and seeking financial support or reimbursement for the event.

- Recovery involves putting our community back to the condition it was before the event or disaster. In most cases this is the most time consuming phase. The EMC coordinates most all facets of recovery and more importantly all the documentation necessary for financial assistance/reimbursement. As mentioned above, the documentation must be detailed and accurate from the onset of an incident.

Bottom line, a Fire Chief cannot be expected to effectively perform the role of the EMC during a disaster or large scale event while charged with the overall response to the incident. Likewise the vital planning and preparedness activities of the EMC can also not be performed effectively by a Fire Chief without an assigned staff member who has the necessary time, training, skills and knowledge to fulfill Emergency Management duties.

To attract and retain a top quality individual capable of fulfilling the extensive duties as an EMC my recommendation is to establish a starting salary amount in the $60,000 range. Applying total position cost for a $60,000 annual salary creates an annual recurring budget impact of approximately $95,000. To effectively perform the duties of EMC a dedicated vehicle for this position will be required. Estimated cost for an adequately equipped vehicle is $42,000. The vehicle and the addition of public safety portable radio creates an initial one time budgetary impact for this position of approximately $50,000.

In my original request it was noted that there is potential interest from the City of Lake Worth to partner in the position of EMC as a shared resource. This would permit cost sharing for the position, both the initial one time and recurring costs. The role and responsibilities of this position within each jurisdiction mirror each other and are without jurisdictional conflict permitting it to be a shared resource. Our closely adjacent proximity to one another and the very effective working relationship between our fire departments also lend in making this position ideal for shared resource consideration.