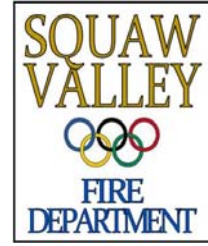




SQUAW VALLEY PUBLIC SERVICE DISTRICT



PARAMEDIC INCENTIVE PROGRAM

DATE: February 27, 2018

TO: District Board Members

FROM: Allen Riley, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: Paramedic Incentive Program – Incentive for Part-Time Firefighters to Complete Paramedic School

BACKGROUND: In 2005, the Fire Department started an ALS (Advanced Life Support) program with a license from Sierra Sacramento Valley Emergency Medical Services (SSV-EMS). Now that we are an ALS agency, we must provide paramedics, special equipment, and narcotics of service at all times.

The Fire Department offered to pay full-time firefighters for their paramedic training, at the inception of the ALS program. The staffing dynamics of the Squaw Valley Fire Department, and the fire service as a whole, have changed significantly since 2005. The housing problem and a shortage of paramedics in the fire service have made it difficult to recruit and retain good quality paramedics. This proposed program could help SVFD recruit and hold on to good quality employees.

DISCUSSION: The program financially supports a firefighter to attend a paramedic program. A typical paramedic program is about one year and costs around \$9,000 to \$12,000. The Paramedic Incentive Program provides 25% of the cost of the program up front and pay an additional 25% at the end of the first year. As incentive to retain the paramedic, an additional 25% is provided at the end of each of the next two years, essentially paying for the entire program over a three-year period. Spacing the payments out over the three years gives us a better chance of retaining the paramedic and essentially getting some return on the Program's investment.

There are different paramedic programs available in both California and Nevada. These programs are based on an intensive classroom portion followed by hands on training in the field. The classroom portions are in the field of paramedicine

and are at about 520 hours of classroom time. The hand on training are in the hospital setting and riding in an ambulance with an EMT-P Preceptor for a minimum of 480 hours.

Recruitment and retention has been a problem for a long time here at SVFD as well as in the fire service in general. We are currently running short one paramedic on C-Shift with our neighboring districts actively recruiting from our ranks. SVFD is a small department, with a small staff, which does not lend itself to a lot of upward mobility for the younger staff members. SVFD runs a limited amount of calls, 637 last year, non-transport ALS. It is the nature of the fire service to want to use your training, if they are not getting here, they may look elsewhere. The cost of living in or near our community has made it difficult to recruit from outside the area. When we have recruited from outside the area, we have a hard time holding on to them. Some may not be suited to our winter environment, some take the first job they can get and immediately start looking for bigger and busier departments.

- ALTERNATIVES:**
1. Implement the Paramedic Incentive Program for part-time firefighters.
 2. Look to other recruitment and retention programs.

FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACTS: The fiscal impact for implementing such a program would vary from year to year and depend on the number of employees, the number who qualify to use the program, and their desire to go to a paramedic program. We currently have one part-time firefighter in paramedic school and two that are planning on enrolling this next summer. The program could potentially cost around \$9,000 this year, and potentially up to \$21,000 per year as more firefighters take advantage of the program.

There is a wide variety in the costs of the programs and often include accessory fees that are unknown at the beginning of the program:

Reno Emergency Medical Services Agency and Truckee Meadows
Community College:

\$9,000

Both programs are in Reno, NV. There are additional fees for books, uniforms, and field internship.

Northern California Technical Institute:

\$9,700

Based in Sacramento, also has additional fees for books, uniforms, and field internship.

California State University Sacramento:

\$14,600

There are no additional fees; this price is all-inclusive.

The programs all follow a set national standard curriculum and when completed the student comes away with a National Paramedic Accreditation. The student then must complete paperwork and testing for Sierra-Sacramento Valley EMS (SSV-EMS), our regional Emergency Medical Service Authority. Once they are approved by SSV, then they are eligible to work as a paramedic at Squaw Valley Fire Department.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the Board give direction to implement the Paramedic Incentive Program on a pilot basis for an indefinite period of time. Staff commits to periodically evaluating the Program to ensure results align with the Program's goals and objectives and is cost effective.

ATTACHMENTS: None.

DATE PREPARED: February 20, 2018