



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

Council Session

Item G10

#2010-58 - Approving FTE Title Changes for Fire Division Chiefs

Staff Contact: Troy Hughes

Council Agenda Memo

From: Troy Hughes, Fire Chief
Meeting: February 23, 2010
Subject: FTE Title Changes for Division Chiefs
Item #'s: G-10
Presenter(s): Troy Hughes, Fire Chief

Background

The Grand Island Fire Department is proposing to eliminate FTE titles Fire Operations Chief, Fire Training Division Chief, EMS Division Chief, and Fire Prevention Division Chief and consolidate them into one FTE title of Fire Division Chief.

The Fire Department is facing an ever increasing demand for service. With this increasing demand comes a call for greater efficiency in department operations. The proposed FTE title changes to the current fire division chief titles will allow the fire chief the flexibility to place individuals in positions that best fit their strengths and thus increase the department's operational efficiency.

The current division chief structure of the fire department includes an operations division chief, training division chief, ems division chief, and prevention division chief. This system was put in place during the 1960s, and is governed by civil service rules. The civil service commission looks at these positions as four separate entities. This structure does not allow rotation of positions or reassignment of positions for any reason. The only way one division chief can move between positions is to fill an opening due to retirement, resignation, or termination.

Even when there is an opening the fire chief cannot reassign an existing chief to a new position. The individual must go through the entire testing process. If they are successful in the testing process and are appointed to the new position, then the testing process must start over again to fill the newly vacated position. The advertisement and testing process take about four months time per position, so for one chief to move to a new position takes about an eight month process to complete. This system restrains the efficient assignment of staff and does not allow for the cross training of division chiefs that supports succession planning.

Chief Hughes has reviewed this proposal with City Administrator Pederson and HR Director Sutherland prior to bringing it forward for council action. Chief Hughes believes that consolidating these FTE titles will facilitate greater efficiency in staff assignments and support succession planning.

Discussion

This structure of upper management positions is not new to the city. The Police Department currently uses this structure very effectively. They have three captains that periodically rotate between administration, patrol, and investigations divisions. Even though each police captain is assigned a different division they are all classified in the salary ordinance as police captains. This combined FTE title has worked well within the Police Department and would also work well within the Fire Department.

The periodic rotation of division chief assignments improves the department's ability to continue operations when one of the division chief's positions becomes vacant for any reason. With periodic rotation, the duties of the open position can be fulfilled by another division chief who previously held that position. Another advantage is that newly assigned division chiefs have the benefit of a mentor to "show them the ropes" of the new position. In the current system, after recruitment and testing is complete, this replacement assumes the new position without the advantage of a mentor who has done the job. They are left to "figure it out" as the person with a wealth of institutional knowledge that previously served in the position has left employment and is no longer available to mentor them or available to ask questions of.

Existing division chief pay scales ranged from \$54,860-\$87,787. The new combined fire division chief scale would range from \$57,921-\$81,478. The new pay scale for this position was devised by HR Director Sutherland by averaging the salary comparables of all four positions. The long-range budget impact of changing the FTE titles is zero. The sum of the combined wages for the current pay scale is equal to the sum of the wages in the proposed pay scale. The primary difference is the distribution of wages in the proposed pay scale is spread equally among all four division chief positions, whereas the current pay scale varies by position.

Alternatives

It appears that the Council has the following alternatives concerning the issue at hand. The Council may:

1. Move to approve
2. Refer the issue to a committee
3. Postpone the issue to future date
4. Take no action on the issue

Recommendation

City Administration recommends that the Council approve the FTE Fire Division Chief title consolidation as proposed.

Sample Motion

Move to approve.

RESOLUTION 2010-58

WHEREAS, the City approves the FTE's for each department as part of the budget process, and

WHEREAS, an amendment is required to allow changes to be made to the FTE schedule, and

WHEREAS, the Fire Department has requested a reclassification of four positions which will result in the deletion of one FTE Fire Operations Chief, one FTE EMS Division Chief, one FTE Fire Prevention Division Chief, one FTE Fire Training Division Chief and the addition of four FTE Fire Division Chiefs,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA, that the Mayor is hereby authorized to execute the FTE Amendment.

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Adopted by the City Council of the City of Grand Island, Nebraska, on February 23, 2010.

Margaret Hornady, Mayor

Attest:

RaNae Edwards, City Clerk