



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

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MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** JANUARY 17, 2018

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

**DOCKET TITLE:**

Consideration of a Grant Application to the FY 2017 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFG) through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for Funding for Firefighter Training Classes.

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**ISSUE:** Consideration of a grant application to the FY 2017 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFG) through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for funding for firefighter training classes.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council:

- (1) Approve the submission of a grant application to the federal government for \$900,000 for paramedic training and firefighter training classes; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary documents that may be required.

**BACKGROUND:** FY 2017 AFG application period opened on December 26, 2017 and will close on February 2, 2018. The purpose of the AFG Program is to enhance the health and safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire and fire-related hazards by providing direct financial assistance to eligible fire departments for critically needed resources to equip and train emergency personnel to recognized standards, enhance operational efficiencies, foster interoperability, and support community resilience. Each year the AFG sets different priorities of how it will consider funding proposals. AFD has applied for this grant in the past and was awarded funds in the FY 2015 grant.

**DISCUSSION:** The AFG has several high priority categories that it will fund for career fire departments. The Alexandria Fire Department has identified two areas of high priority training

that is both beneficial/necessary for the department and likely to be awarded:

1. In 2015, the Alexandria Fire Department (AFD) began the implementation of a plan to move from single-role medics to a dual-role Firefighter/Medic capability. Dual-role providers have both Medic and Firefighter competencies, and will be able to staff any unit in the City. This staffing model is used by other surrounding Metropolitan region Fire Departments. Due to the intense competition for dual role qualified personnel reaching the full dual role status is taking longer than previously projected.

The dual-role cross-training process will continue incrementally over the next several years, and requires additional training for interested personnel to become dual-role providers. This year the AFD has announced that a National Registry Paramedic certification will be a high priority training. The department anticipates sending six to seven fire fighters to classes that would certify them as paramedics, thus starting their process to become dual-role providers. Cross training of both medic and firefighters allows for the maximization of current resources.

2. AFD continues to seek training for newer employees in the Technical Rescue area, along with train-the-trainer courses for more senior employees. With retirements over the last five to ten years, the department is seeking to train newer employees in more advanced firefighting and rescue capabilities. This grant has several technical rescue high priority trainings, including vehicle rescue, rescue technician, Hazmat technician, driver/operator, and confined space awareness.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The proposed grant application would request a total award of \$1 million, (\$900,000 of federal funds). \$500,000 would be to fund six to seven fire fighters to receive paramedic training. \$500,000 of federal funding would be to fund ten to fifteen fire fighters to take the Technical Rescue classes listed above, along with overtime backfill.

The grant requires a 10% local cash match, meaning that a total of \$100,000 would be required from the AFD budget. If awarded, funding for the paramedic training match would come from the City's annual Aid to Localities allocation from the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. The match funding for the technical rescue training would come from AFD's existing overtime budget since some of this training was planned and/or will supplement the department's existing training needs through the year.

**STAFF:**

Debra Collins, Deputy City Manager

Robert Dubé, Fire Chief