



Agenda Item Summary

File ID: 21-0940

DEPT-5

Meeting Date: 7/13/2021

PLACEMENT: Departmental

TITLE:

REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL FIRE RESCUE DISPATCH POSITIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Fire Rescue has other responsibilities than fire and emergency response, one of the divisions under the purview of the Fire Rescue Chief is Communications, which is primarily the function of dispatching emergency response vehicles and taking emergency-911 and non-911 related calls. Due to an increase in the call-load and overtime, a request for five (5) additional positions is being made for the current fiscal year (FY21). This request is a health, safety, and welfare issue for those individuals that need fire and/or emergency medical services.

DEPARTMENT: Administration

PREPARED BY: **Name:** Taryn G. Kryzda
Title: County Administrator

REQUESTED BY: Martin County Fire Chief Chad Cianciulli

PRESET:

PROCEDURES: None

BACKGROUND/RELATED STRATEGIC GOAL:

Within the Fire Rescue Department, is the Communications Division, or Dispatch. There are currently fifteen (15) positions assigned to that division with one of the positions being a supervisor. The last time an additional position was included in the budget was in the FY2012-2013 (FY13) budget. At that time, a planning position in Emergency Management was reclassified to a Senior Telecommunicator position due to an increase in the call-load and overtime. Prior to FY13, a position was added in FY06, when the total positions for the communications division went from thirteen (13) to fourteen (14).

The communications, or dispatch operations, are physically located at the Public Safety Complex. Dispatchers for the Sheriff and Fire Rescue are completely different in the type of calls that they receive, therefore, their certification, protocols, and training differ. Each dispatch operation is a 24-hour daily operation, 7 days a week and includes calls for all of the County, including municipalities. In 1999 Congress passed the Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act (911 Act). The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau developed protocols and requirements for all 911 services, which include registration, licensing, and reporting.

The FCC required each 911 licensed agency to have a 911 public safety answering point (PSAP), an established 911 call center, that receives cellular, landline, or text to 911 communications. Florida State Statute 365.179 established the requirement for the Sheriff to collaborate with each first responder agency to facilitate the development and execution of written interlocal agreements between all primary first responder agencies within each county. Martin County's Sheriff has always been the recognized PSAP for the County and, therefore, receives a large portion of the E-911 fees that are part of each communication device.

Over the past few years, the number of emergency (911) and non-911 (there are four call lines that come into dispatch that are not from 911) calls have been steadily increasing. In just the last year, there was an increase of 4.6%, or almost 3,000 additional calls received into dispatch. Last year, the Fire Rescue Telecommunicators received 65,420 calls, 37% were 911 calls and the remaining were deemed non-911. Regardless of the type of call, depending upon the 'emergency' or situation, the length of the call will vary. Those calls that are very complex and/or of an emergency nature, require the telecommunicator to be attentive and remain with the call until they feel they are able to disengage. The telecommunicators have very detailed instructions that they follow based upon the type of call and the need of the person calling. Having adequate staffing during each twelve-hour shift is paramount to this emergency service for anyone that has a need for 911 services.

Upon review of the operation, it became apparent to the Fire Chief and others, that there was a significant need for additional positions to alleviate overtime and provide adequate coverage for each twelve-hour shift. Adding five (5) additional positions will allow for the ability to provide minimum staffing levels without impeding the response time for the calls to be answered and will prevent some staff from working longer shifts which can cause unhealthy fatigue.

The County is in the process of creating a revised Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with the City of Stuart to address fire rescue response and coverage, to ensure both parties are compensated should one entity respond to calls within the other entity's defined response jurisdiction. It is anticipated that the structure of the ILA will provide adequate revenues to cover the cost of the additional positions.

ISSUES:

None

LEGAL SUFFICIENCY REVIEW:

This item does not require any legal sufficiency review.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

RECOMMENDATION

Move that the Board approve the addition of five dispatch (combination of Telecommunicator and Senior Telecommunicator) positions for the FY21 budget.

ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Direct staff accordingly.

FISCAL IMPACT:

RECOMMENDATION

With the implementation of a revised ILA, there is potential for additional revenues to be received that will cover the expense for the additional positions. The five additional positions are estimated to add \$322,062 to the FY22 tentative budget. Given the FY21 fiscal year has less than three months remaining, the anticipated cost for the additional positions will be roughly \$75,000 which includes salaries and benefits.

Funding Source	County Funds	Non-County Funds
General Fund		\$322,062

ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

None

DOCUMENT(S) REQUIRING ACTION:

- ☐ Budget Transfer / Amendment ☐ Chair Letter ☐ Contract / Agreement
☐ Grant / Application ☐ Notice ☐ Ordinance ☐ Resolution
☐ Other:

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