

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: 2/7/2011

Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: Wastewater Certification Premium Compensation

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approval of salary premium to be awarded to Public Works maintenance workers who achieve certification in the California Water Environment Association technical certification program.

BACKGROUND

For decades, sewer system maintenance by Public Works staff consisted primarily of reacting to trouble calls from the public. However, this changed when, beginning in the 1980's, the Water Quality Control Board and the EPA began to look at the effects of aging on the sewer systems operated by the seven agencies that drain to the East Bay Municipal Utility District treatment plant in Oakland because too much stormwater was getting into the sanitary systems.

The ill-effects of age are measured by conducting condition assessment inspections of the sewers, which requires a skill level not previously needed in Public Works employees. Condition assessment requirements were made mandatory by EPA and the Water Board in 2010 and Public Works underwent a sharp uptake of training and equipment acquisition to be able to conduct condition assessments.

DISCUSSION

The proposed premium, valued at \$4,920 per year to cover two employees, addresses a gap in employee knowledge, skills and abilities as there is no requirement for competency in sewer condition assessment and operating TV inspection equipment in the current job description for Public Works maintenance workers. The premium would add 5% to the base pay rate of employees who achieve certification in the California Water Environment Association technical certification program.

Given the level of City investment in training costs, along with the employee salaries expended while on training activities, it is important to retain those who achieve certification of technical competency to remain competitive in the labor market.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

Accurate condition assessment of the sewer system will yield the foundation of a rehabilitation plan to be filed with EPA and the Water Board next year. Implementation of the plan will ultimately reduce the amount of untreated or partially treated sewage that flows into the Bay when it rains, and result in much higher water quality within the environment.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact on the General Fund. The proposed premium is to be funded entirely by the Sewer Enterprise Fund.

ATTACHMENTS:

None