

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

Agenda Date: March 21, 2011
Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: Shared Fire Chief services with the City of Piedmont

REPORT BY: Beth Pollard, City Manager

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That Council authorize the execution of an agreement with the City of Piedmont for shared Fire Chief services.

BACKGROUND

On March 7, 2011, the City Council had an introductory discussion about sharing a Fire Chief with the City of Piedmont on a trial basis. This proposal arises out direction from the City Council in September 2010 upon the announcement of the retirement of Albany's Fire Chief Marc McGinn. It reflects the rising trend towards sharing fire and emergency medical service (EMS) management, as well as direct services, among agencies. This trend is driven by the increasing technology, regulation, regionalization and related costs involved in fire/EMS services.

DISCUSSION

The proposal is for one full-time chief to be the chief administrator of the two fire departments, on a trial basis. The current Piedmont Chief, Ed Tubbs, would serve in this role. Chief Tubbs would spend approximately one-half of each work week in the two cities. He would be responsible for administration and oversight of the departments, personnel management and supervision, and similar related activities.

The arrangement is different than two part-time assignments, as he will consider the needs of the both agencies as he manages the two departments, think strategically about efficiencies in operations, purchasing, training, etc. as well as innovations to advance service delivery, and represent both Albany and Piedmont at county and regional meetings.

The proposal is to enter into a contract for a trial period of 12 months, with a review after 9 months, and a 60 day termination clause for either party to withdraw if there is dissatisfaction that cannot be rectified.

In discussing the idea of a shared chief on March 7, the Council Members and public comment noted the importance of this arrangement not compromising response times for Albany's fire/EMS personnel.

Chief Tubbs will be present at the March 21 City Council meeting and will be available to answer any questions.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

N/A

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Under the agreement, Piedmont is the employing agency and each city pays one-half of the total compensation for the position, as is the typical standard for these agreements. The Piedmont Chief would receive a 10% salary increase for the expanded responsibilities and time commitment to serve both cities.

The total annual cost, reflecting current benefit rates, for a shared chief is \$266,751, or \$133,376 per city. The estimated cost savings to Albany for the position itself is approximately \$85,000 for the next 12 months.

The exact cost savings in compensation is somewhat speculative, as it would depend on the compensation package needed to attract and hire a new Chief. For cost comparison purposes, staff is using the current budget for the Fire Chief position. In addition to compensation, there will be other savings to Albany in sharing training, travel, membership dues, and other related expenses, in addition to savings in overhead such as workers compensation. There is the potential for further cost savings as the two departments work together on joint purchasing or other expense reductions.

Attachments

1. Resolution No. 2011-16
2. Agreement between the cities of Albany and Piedmont