

TO: Mayor Althoff and City Council

FROM: Jeffrey L. McCormick, Emergency Management Director and Mike Althoff, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: Set Fire Department Wage

DATE: January 16, 2020

BACKGROUND

Following the FEMA Declaration regarding the 2019 flood event, I submitted reimbursement for City expenses as allowed by FEMA. FEMA categorizes an event into one of seven categories, the Fire Department wage falls under the Emergency Protective Measures. The FEMA representative advised that the reimbursement for emergency response has changed to an overtime only category. This impacts our firefighters, as they are only paid an hourly rate when they respond to a call out. FEMA does allow for that provision, but they require documentation that shows the Council set firefighters as paid an hourly rate for call outs and that their response would not be overtime eligible.

The Fire Chief and I are requesting the City Council take a formal action to formalize what already is current practice for the City in what and how the pay for the Fire Department volunteer employees occurs. The wage currently is set at whichever is the greater of the prevailing Federal or State Minimum Wage. Fire Department volunteer employees are paid in one-hour intervals and once they responded and are logged in at the Fire Department, they would receive one hour of pay. After that hour has passed, they would be paid an additional hour, if still involved in the incident. They are paid for the full hour, regardless if only needed for 25 minutes. They are paid in this manner because they do not receive any compensation for being on call between incidents. They would not be eligible for overtime unless required by State or Federal law.

We are asking the Council to formalize current practice so that we have the required documentation for future FEMA events. With Council action approving the firefighter wage scale, we will keep a copy of this memorandum and the approved minutes in the Emergency Management and Fire Department files as supporting documentation for any future FEMA events.

The formal action we are requesting is setting the wage at whichever is the greater of the prevailing Federal or State Minimum Wage. Fire Department volunteer employees would be paid in one-hour intervals, once they responded and are logged in at the Fire Department. They would not be eligible for overtime unless required by State or Federal law.

REQUESTED COUNCIL ACTION

Motion and approval to formally set the pay policy of the Fire Department's volunteer employees.