

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Tim Malchow, EMS Chief
SUBJECT: Paramedic Tuition Program
DATE: December 19, 2023

BACKGROUND

The finance committee met on December 11th and discussed the paramedic tuition program. The finance committee approved the concept of the paramedic tuition program and has moved it to the City Council for review and approval.

It has been hard to recruit healthcare providers since the COVID-19 pandemic. Within the realm of healthcare and public safety, people are not becoming EMS providers or staying in the profession for the long term. Some of the reasons are lack of pay, lack of career progression, and stress of the career.

Companies have been trying many things to attract people to enter the profession. Many companies provide the training and pay the employees who are attending the training an hourly wage. Some companies are giving scholarships for paramedic training to people to have them get the training in hopes they will come back and work for them. Lastly, employers are offering incentives like hiring bonuses, student loan forgiveness, or a combination of both.

We have opportunities to help our own unscheduled part-time employees who are planning or currently working on becoming a paramedic. I feel we should offer them a hybrid option to the above in hopes they will accept and stay with our service after their training.

I would suggest we offer to pay them an hourly wage while working on the ambulance versus paying them the on-call pay and then their hourly wage when there is an ambulance call. Next, the city would reimburse tuition as listed in the table below:

While in school	25%
After NREMT-P Certification	25%
After 2,080 regular hours	25%
After 4,160 regular hours	25%

The reimbursement would be for classwork related to becoming a paramedic and or the classes related to the paramedic degree. Much of the classwork related to a paramedic degree includes biology, medical terminology, and composition classes. These classes contribute to a better-educated employee and patient care provider.

If the employee has received any grants or scholarships for their paramedic education, those amounts would not be available for reimbursement. The employee would not be allowed to use two or more sources for reimbursement in which the employee would receive more money than they paid for their education.

If an employee took classes previously related to the degree or coursework, those expenses are not eligible for reimbursement.

Employees would have to pass each class at least 75% to be reimbursed for the tuition.

Books would be covered at 100% at the time of purchase for the class. If the employee buys a physical book, it becomes the City's property after class completion.

For the employee to be eligible for the tuition program, they must agree to be enrolled in the classes for the paramedic program and or degree. Also, the employee would agree to work full-time for the City for two years after certification as a paramedic. If the employee terminates their employment before the end of the two-year period post paramedic certification, the employee will reimburse the City for the total amount of the tuition and books.

REQUESTED COUNCIL ACTION

Request a motion to approve the paramedic tuition program for employees and authorize the EMS Chief to select employees based on budget availability, application and interview process, and anticipated needs of the ambulance department.