

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT relative to the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) staffing imbalance and firefighter hiring and attrition.

Recommendations for Council action:

1. DIRECT the LAFD, in consultation with the firefighter unions, to report in regard to the feasibility of extending by one year the Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP) Program.
2. DIRECT the LAFD, with input from local hospital executives and local hospital associations, to report with recommendations for reducing firefighter wait time at hospitals after delivering patients in need of emergency medical care.

Fiscal Impact Statement: The Personnel Department and LAFD report that the LAFD staff and recruit costs for three Recruit Training Academy classes would be approximately \$16 million, and for five Recruit Training Academy classes would be approximately \$21.3 million. The cost of additional administrative staff support and expenses for the Personnel Department to process an adequate number of candidates to hire into these Academy classes would range from approximately \$1.14 million to \$1.37 million.

Community Impact Statement: None submitted.

(Personnel and Animal Welfare Committee waived consideration of this matter)

Summary:

On January 24, 2014, the Public Safety Committee considered a Motion (Bonin - O'Farrell) and January 22, 2014 Joint LAFD/Personnel Department report relative to the LAFD staffing imbalance and firefighter hiring and attrition. According to the Joint report, on October 16, 2013, a Motion was introduced (Bonin - O'Farrell) instructing the LAFD, City Administrative Officer, and Personnel Department to report on various issues regarding the imbalance between firefighter hiring and attrition within the Los Angeles Fire Department. Specifically, the Motion instructed the LAFD to report in regard to:

- a. How the LAFD ended up in this situation and what processes should have been in place to catch this staffing imbalance.
- b. Options for increasing the number of Drill Tower classes and/or pushing up the start date for the first class.
- c. Options for increasing the staffing levels on field resources such as Light Force companies to accommodate additional probationary firefighters.
- d. The staffing needs of the LAFD Recruit Training Section to open a possible second Drill Tower.
- e. The Personnel Department Public Safety Division staffing needs to assist with the processing of additional firefighter applicants.

The LAFD and Personnel Department addressed the issues raised in the Motion through the Joint

Report. First, in regard to the staffing imbalance, the report notes that as a result of the economic downturn beginning in late 2008, departments were required to implement budgetary reduction measures during Fiscal Year (FY) 2009-10. In response to Mayor and City Council Shared Responsibility and Sacrifice initiatives, the LAFD developed the Modified Coverage Plan (MCP) which reduced the Fire Department's budget by approximately \$40 million. The MCP, first implemented in August 2009, achieved budgetary savings by closing resources on a rotational basis citywide. This initiative reduced Constant Staffing Overtime by approximately \$40 million as the rotational resource closures created a pool of available sworn positions to fill the LAFD's daily staffing needs on a straight time basis rather than through overtime.

In FY 2011-12, a revised staffing plan was implemented to replace the rotational resource closures of the MCP with a more structural closure configuration. Referred to as the Deployment Plan, this initiative was a three-year staffing plan that reduced 318 sworn positions (106 daily) primarily through attrition. Currently, in the third year of implementation, the last 129 sworn positions in the Deployment Plan will leave the Department this FY through attrition. Based upon the LAFD's projected sworn staffing levels at completion of the Deployment Plan, it was determined that the need for new Firefighter hiring and the reopening of the Drill Tower would be required during FY 2013-14. Accordingly, two classes of 70 Firefighter recruits were funded in the current year budget. These Recruit Training Academy classes are scheduled to begin January 27 and June 16, 2014.

Additionally, several resource restorations and enhancements were enacted through the budget process and by Departmental action and were accomplished within existing sworn resources, without the benefit of new sworn hiring, and, as a result, have impacted the current sworn staffing levels. Specific details are provided in the Joint Report and are attached to the Council file. In summation, since FY 2012-13, the LAFD has been tasked with the need to fill an additional 130 sworn positions without having a single recruit class. The cumulative effect of these actions has been the requirement for the LAFD to utilize overtime and to deploy Limited Recall of sworn members, as needed, to fill vacancies and for High Brush Hazard pre-deployment.

The LAFD and Personnel Department also addressed the issues of options for increasing the number of Drill Tower classes and/or pushing up the start date for the first class and options for increasing the staffing levels on field resources such as Light Force companies to accommodate additional probationary firefighters and their responses are also detailed in the Joint Report. Finally, the Personnel Department addressed the issue of staffing needs to assist with the processing of additional firefighter applicants. Specifically, after firefighter hiring ceased in 2009, Personnel Department staff involved in the selection process were reassigned within the Department to meet other urgent needs. In 2010, full time and as-needed staffing levels in the Public Safety Recruitment, Selection, and Backgrounds Sections were reduced by approximately 33 percent due to the Early Retirement Incentive Program (ERIP), reassignments, layoffs, and budget reductions. Staffing has not been increased to its former level; however, hiring demands have increased. For these reasons, the Personnel Department requires additional resources to adequately meet LAFD's future Firefighter hiring needs. Processing a sufficient number of Firefighter candidates for the January and June 2014 Academy classes significantly reduced the Personnel Department's As-Needed budget, which impacted funding for Proctors and Interview Specialists for other exams, as well as Part-Time Background Investigators who were dedicated to Police Officer hiring. Authorizing additional administrative support is critical to adequately manage processing of the high number of Firefighter candidates needed to fill future Recruit Training Academy classes. The estimated costs for the required additional staff positions (8 full time positions, including analysts, clerical support and medical support, and up to 19 as-needed background investigators) and candidate processing expenses (fingerprinting and credit checks) range from approximately \$1.14 million for three

Academy classes to \$1.37 million for five classes.

After further consideration and having provided an opportunity for public comment, the Committee moved to recommend direct the LAFD, in consultation with the firefighter unions, to report in regard to the feasibility of extending by one year the DROP Program. Also, the Committee recommended directing the LAFD, with input from local hospital executives and local hospital associations, to report with recommendations for reducing firefighter wait time at hospitals after delivering patients in need of emergency medical care. This matter is now submitted to Council for its consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>VOTE</u>
ENGLANDER:	YES
BUSCAINO:	ABSENT
BONIN:	YES
O'FARRELL:	YES
MARTINEZ:	ABSENT

-NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS-