File #: 20-1243, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to increase appropriations in the General Fund Group in the Fire Department by $490,409, offset by a transfer of Measure A revenue from the Capital Fund Projects Fund Group in the Public Works Department, to fund a Fire Engineer Academy. (Citywide)

City Council approval is requested to approve the reallocation of Measure A funds, appropriated for Fire Station 1 Apparatus Door Replacement in the Public Works Department, to the Long Beach Fire Department (LBFD) to fund a Fire Engineer Academy in June 2021.

In Fiscal Year 2020 (FY 20), Measure A funds in the amount of $495,000 were allocated for improvements to Fire Station 1, which included the design, purchase, and installation of new apparatus bay doors.   After a subsequent analysis, it was determined that the existing doors are functioning adequately and blend in well aesthetically with the recently completed Measure A-funded façade improvements to Fire Station 1.   Therefore, the LBFD has determined that these funds would be better utilized to support the one-time costs of a Fire Engineer Academy.

For the past seven years, the LBFD has had difficulty promoting Firefighters to Fire Engineer, the position that is responsible for operating fire engines, fire trucks, and other large fire department apparatus. Due to the technical requirements of the position, the examination process is very rigorous and, historically, has resulted in a relatively small number of qualified candidates on the Civil Service eligible list, with an average passing rate of only 33 percent. This has resulted in consistently high vacancy rates in the Fire Engineer ranks. Due to the LBFD's constant staffing requirements, these vacancies have led to a large volume of overtime shifts, which puts a significant strain on the workforce.

In FY 19, the LBFD designed and implemented the first Fire Engineer Academy, in an attempt to better prepare candidates for the more complex and rigorous performance components of the Fire Engineer examination. All candidates in the testing process for Fire Engineer were given the opportunity to participate in the five-week academy and were provided information and hands-on instruction by Fire Captains and Fire Engineers. This investment proved to be worthwhile, as 75 percent of the candidates succeeded in the testing process and were placed on the Civil Service eligible list for Fire Engineer, a significant improvement over the past five examinations prior to the academy.

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Sarah H. Green on November 19, 2020 and by Budget Management Officer Rhutu Amin Gharib on November 23, 2020.

City Council action is requested on December 15, 2020, to allow for sufficient time to plan for the Fire Engineer Academy, which the LBFD plans to conduct in June 2021.

The cost to conduct a Fire Engineer Academy is approximately $500,000, which covers personnel costs for the instructors and candidates, as well as equipment and materials required for the academy. The remaining balance of the original $495,000 for the Fire Station 1 Apparatus Door project is $490,409 and is currently budgeted in Capital Projects Fund Group in the Public Works Department, offset by previously allocated Measure A funds.

An appropriation increase in the amount of $490,409 is requested in the General Fund Group in the Fire Department, offset by a transfer from the Capital Projects Fund Group in the Public Works Department to support these one-time costs. The remaining $9,591 will be absorbed within existing appropriation in the General Fund Group in the Fire Department. This recommendation has moderate staffing impact beyond the normal budgeted scope of duties and is consistent with existing City Council priorities. There is no local job impact associated with this recommendation.

Approve recommendation.

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XAVIER ESPINO
FIRE CHIEF

ERIC LOPEZ
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

APPROVED:

THOMAS B. MODICA
CITY MANAGER