

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE November 6, 2020

TO Honorable Members of the Public Safety Committee

SUBJECT **Paramedic Staffing Plan**

Recently, members of the City Council have expressed concerns regarding Fire-Rescue's backlog of firefighters waiting to attend Paramedic school. This concern is valid; fully trained paramedics are the driving force behind DFR's ability to provide effective and efficient Emergency Medical Services to the citizens of Dallas. This backlog was created years ago when paramedic school was temporarily suspended in an effort to reduce budget. Instead of attending paramedic school immediately following fire academy, members would be assigned to the field as Firefighter/EMTs and would receive paramedic training at a later date.

After much consideration, the decision has been made to now send recruits directly from the fire academy to paramedic school. This change will ultimately reduce the overtime budget, as these members will not occupy positions that would require backfill once they leave for paramedic school. Additionally, having recruits start their permanent assignments as fully trained paramedics makes for a more resourceful workforce with overall increased morale.

These changes were based in part on feedback from members, the EMS Council, and the three recognized fire department associations. Furthermore, these changes are necessary to reduce the overall workload and to continue downgrading paramedics to non-rotational status on a consistent basis.

After 40 members began paramedic school October 19, there remains a backlog of 204 firefighters assigned to the field who will be sent to paramedic school during strategically planned periods to minimize overtime caused by their absence from station assignments. An additional 40 will go in May of 2021, after which the total backlog will be 164 firefighters. We are also looking into several alternate plans, including one that would both expedite the process and achieve considerable cost savings. These plans are very preliminary at this time, and if viable, will be presented later.

As we move forward, the department is reviewing multiple options to address the issue. While we will take every measure to reduce the impact to our members, service to our citizens remains the primary objective.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jon Fortune".

Jon Fortune
Assistant City Manager

DATE November 6, 2020

SUBJECT **Paramedic Staffing Plan**

c: T.C Broadnax, City Manager
Chris Caso, City Attorney
Mark Swann, City Auditor
Billerae Johnson, City Secretary
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge
Kimberly Bizer Tolbert, Chief of Staff to the City Manager

Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager
Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager
Dr. Eric A. Johnson, Chief of Economic Development and Neighborhood Services
M. Elizabeth Reich, Chief Financial Officer
M. Elizabeth (Liz) Cedillo-Pereira, Chief of Equity and Inclusion
Directors and Assistant Directors