



FIRE DEPARTMENT**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Gregg Mandsager, City Administrator
Fran Donelson, Administrative Secretary

FROM: Jerry Ewers, Fire Chief

DATE: January 12, 2015

SUBJECT: Request authorization to submit SAFER Grant to DHS/AFG

INTRODUCTION:

Request to apply for a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant (AFG) program. The grant application opens on February 9, 2015 and closes on March 6, 2015. Requesting to hire four (4) firefighters through the grant request, which pays 100% of the salary and benefits for a two year period with zero match or cost share to the city. This grant request has an approximate \$ 575,000 value with no strings attached.

BACKGROUND:

The SAFER grant was created to provide funding directly to fire departments in order to help them increase the number of trained, "front-line" firefighters available in their communities. The goal of SAFER is to enhance the local fire departments' abilities to comply with staffing, response, and operational standards established by NFPA and OSHA (NFPA 1710 and OSHA 1910.134). Council previously approved the grant request submittal in FY 09 and FY 10, but the submitted competitive grant was denied in both years. The first priority goes to rehiring laid off firefighters, the second priority goes to retention of firefighters who face imminent layoff or filling positions vacated through attrition, and the third priority goes to hiring new firefighters. Projected announcements of awards will begin June 1, 2015 and all awards will be announced by September 30, 2015. The total available funding for SAFER grants is \$ 340,000,000 with a projected number of 300 awards this FY.

We are requesting to ask for hiring four (4) new firefighters which pays 100% of the salary and benefits for two years with no match and no cost to the city. After the grant period ends the city would need to decide to keep or to let go some or all of the newly hired four (4) firefighters. The total impact of additional staff will be tracked and monitored in-depth regards to operational efficiencies in order to assist in the decision after the grant period ends. Impact on overtime usage will be monitored closely along with current impacts to department programs and departmental revenues.

There is no requirement, or commitment, on our part in regards to just filling out the grant application. If awarded, the city has the opportunity to accept or decline the grant.

RECOMMENDATION/RATIONALE:

We are requesting that City Council authorize the Muscatine Fire Department to fill out the SAFER grant and request four (4) new firefighter positions at no cost to the city for a two year period. If awarded, the city has the right to accept the grant or turn down the grant. If awarded and accepted, the city has no obligations to keep the four (4) firefighters after the two year grant period ends. The two year grant period has an approximate \$ 575,000 value.