



## Agenda Item Summary

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**File #:** 26-00221

**Agenda Date:** [Publish Date]

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**Agenda Item Name:**

**Request to add (2) 1.00 Full Time Equivalent Battalion Chief positions for the Fire Rescue Department**

**Presenter:**

Suzanne Swain, HR Director, (352) 337-6152; Harold Theus, Chief of Fire Rescue

**Description:**

Fire Rescue Department is requesting to add two (2) Battalion Chief FTEs to the department. These two positions will be assigned to the 24-hour division, along with the current 40-hour Battalion Chief once that position is transferred.

The department currently deploys three (3) Battalion Chiefs per 24-hour period. This addition will increase that number to four (4). The department will maintain a minimum staffing level of three (3) Battalion Chiefs each day.

**Recommended Action:**

Approve the request to add (2) 1.00 FTEs Battalion Chief positions for the Fire Rescue Department.

**Prior Board Motions:**

None

**Fiscal Note:**

The additional Battalion Chief positions will be funded primarily by a reduction in “additional hours” worked by adding one Battalion Chief per shift but remaining at a minimum three Chief staffing requirement per shift. This better aligns with the primary goal outlined when shifting to a “Kelly Day” model of a stronger work-life balance. This should result in a minimal budgetary impact.

**Strategic Guide:**

Public Safety

**Background:**

In October 2024, the Department added a three-week Kelly Day to the Battalion Chief rank. The intention of the Kelly Day is to improve the employee’s work–life balance. Traditionally, when Kelly Days are implemented, additional FTEs are added to fill these vacancies. At the time the Kelly Day was implemented, the department had just expanded to a third Battalion (April 2024), promoting four new Battalion Chiefs—three for the expansion and one to fill a retirement. Therefore, the department was uncomfortable increasing staffing levels to the point where employees were not required to work their Kelly Day. While the department still faces challenges, it is now better positioned to add those

positions.

This request is also consistent with the 2024 Master Plan recommendation that an EMS Supervisor be assigned on each shift. The complexity of EMS delivery continues to increase across the state. Equipment, medications, protocols, regulatory expectations, and liability have all expanded significantly. Establishing a fourth Battalion Chief will significantly strengthen our ability to oversee and lead the EMS program, which remains one of the department's primary operational responsibilities.

Additional advantages include:

- Reducing the span of control for Battalion Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs
- Distributing workload more effectively across Battalions
- More focused Battalion responsibilities
  - An entire Battalion assigned to Training
  - An entire Battalion assigned to EMS
  - Two Battalions assigned to Fire and Special Operations.