



## Recommendation for Action

**File #:** 22-2932, **Agenda Item #:** 133.

9/1/2022

### **Posting Language**

Approve execution of a one-year meet and confer agreement with the Austin EMS Association relating to wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment for certain employees of the Emergency Medical Services Department.

### **Lead Department**

Management Services.

### **Fiscal Note**

Funding is available in the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 General Fund Operating Budget.

### **Prior Council Action :**

August 23, 2018 - Council approved execution of a four-year meet and confer agreement between the City and the Austin-Travis County EMS Employees Association relating to wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment for certain employees of the Emergency Medical Services Department.

### **For More Information :**

Sarah Griffin, Acting Labor Relations Officer, (512) 974-4986.

### **Additional Backup Information:**

#### **ECONOMIC INFORMATION:**

One-year contract FY 2022-2023 - all money goes to base wages and an increase to on-call pay.

- **Entry Level Pay** - adjustments to stay competitive in the market and assist with recruitment efforts:
  - EMT entry level base pay will increase from \$19.56/hour to \$22/hour (12.5%)
  - Clinical Specialist entry level base pay will increase from \$27/hour to \$30.03/hour (11.2%)
- **Step Pay Adjustments** - Certain portions of the pay scale for all ranks will be adjusted to place additional dollars at the mid-level pay ranges for retention purposes. All current employees will receive an increase between 4% and 11.2%.
- **On-Call Pay** - increased from \$2 to \$5/hour starting in July to partially mitigate the effects of being on call for overtime assignments.

#### **BUDGET COST:**

One-year cost is approximately \$4.182 million.

#### **ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS:**

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The proposed agreement has significant changes from state civil service law regarding the hiring of paramedics into the Clinical Specialist rank. While state law limits hiring to only the entry level rank of EMT with eligibility for promotion after two years, this agreement allows for lateral hiring of paramedics directly into the Clinical Specialist rank. (The current contract allows for promotion after one year at the EMT rank.) The Department recognizes that certified paramedics are less attracted to a position in which their skills are not utilized, and as such believes this direct lateral hire provision will be a significant recruitment tool for the City to address staffing shortages in the Clinical Specialist rank.

Additionally, this agreement modifies state civil service law in relation to promotions to protect current EMTs who qualify for promotion by placing them at the top of the promotional list.

The drug testing concepts are modified in this agreement to focus on impairment at the workplace and more closely mirror the recent changes in Texas statutes in relation to THC, with random testing being eliminated and moving to reasonable suspicion standards.

This is a one-year contract due to the emerging rapid changes to the national landscape of the EMT/Paramedic profession. As has become apparent in the current contract cycle, there is a national shortage of paramedics. The City is hopeful that recruitment will be affected positively by these changes, while recognizing that a long-term strategy will be needed. This agreement creates a taskforce to make recommendations on the mandatory overtime usage and will continue to study comparable pay scenarios to best determine how to move forward.

All other major provisions of the current contract are retained.

**Strategic Outcome(s):**

Safety and Government that Works for All.