

**RESOLUTION NO. 20230413-038**

**WHEREAS**, the Austin Fire Department (AFD) is a vital component of Austin's safety and must plan for emergency response service expansion in a rapidly growing city; and

**WHEREAS**, AFD's policies and procedures define an aerial apparatus as an apparatus that has a 100-foot aerial and a complement of ladders and tools to do the function of truck work; and

**WHEREAS**, an aerial apparatus is typically staffed with four firefighters including a Captain, who is the highest tactical level command officer on scene and supervises and is responsible for the effectiveness and safety of all engine companies within their pre-assigned division at emergency scenes; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1710 Standard ("Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments") outlines industry performance objectives, including the need for the initial full alarm response to arrive on-scene:

- within eight minutes of the total for low and medium hazards; and
- within ten minutes and ten seconds for high hazards and high rises; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2022, the current AFD aerial apparatus fleet does not comply with national response standards, as it responded to high-priority calls within 11 minutes 47 seconds, 90 percent of the time; and

**WHEREAS**, the second aerial apparatus required for structure fire response time is longer, according to the Austin Fire Association; and

**WHEREAS**, response times are directly linked to demand for fire safety services and the availability of department resources, equipment, and staffing; and

**WHEREAS**, the following facts demonstrate that growth in the City is outpacing the need for aerial fire trucks:

- AFD currently staffs the same number of aerial ladders it had in 1995 despite population growth from 510,937 to 1,013,293 in 2023;
- AFD's fleet of staffed fire engines (fire engines are not aerial fire trucks) has grown considerably, from 31 in 1996 to 47 currently;
- there are currently 230 high-rises, including those under construction, in the City, compared to 75 high-rise buildings in 2000; and
- the number of large residential structures (mid-rises) in the City grew to 850 in 2022; and

**WHEREAS**, when compared to other major Texas cities, Austin has the lowest fire engine to aerial ratio; and

**WHEREAS**, the City is in critical need of an additional aerial fire truck to better protect its residents from potential fire hazards, such as wildfires, and major building fire events; and

**WHEREAS**, this increased staffing and span of control would contribute positively to the City's wildfire preparedness efforts and bolster our ability to combat and mitigate the devastating impacts of future wildfires; and

**WHEREAS**, according to recent reports from AFD, the current estimated time to receive an aerial fire truck after purchase is up to two years; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2020, because the need to staff an additional aerial apparatus was justified, an aerial apparatus was purchased and funds were allocated to staff this aerial apparatus, but funding for staffing was subsequently removed from the budget and the aerial apparatus has since remained unstaffed and remains available to be staffed; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**

The City Manager is directed to identify funding for one-time costs and recurring staffing costs that would be necessary to place the existing aerial apparatus in service by the beginning of Fiscal Year 2023-24.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to explore appropriate procurement procedures, as soon as practicable, for the purchase of one additional aerial apparatus for AFD, if or when funding is identified. The procurement shall include all necessary operational requirements and specifications for the new aerial apparatus and for the existing aerial apparatus that will be put into service.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to identify funding for one-time costs and recurring staffing costs that would be necessary to place the aerial apparatus into service as soon as practicable where it would provide the most impact once the additional aerial apparatus is purchased and received by AFD.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to study the adequacy of the existing AFD reserve apparatus fleet, determine the needed number and type of apparatus required to ensure adequate capacity under normal and extreme service demands, and provide recommendations to Council on needed adjustments to the AFD reserve apparatus fleet.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager shall identify funding priorities for AFD in addition to aerial apparatus needs, and provide recommendations on topics including, but not limited to:

- strategies and technology that improve AFD response times equitably across the City;
- addressing any gaps in services or staffing shortages for AFD that may be identified;
- investing in immediate needs separate from additional aerial purchases; and
- investing in repairs and remodels at Fire and joint Fire/EMS stations;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to brief the Public Safety Committee on the progress of the procurement, as well as AFD's reserve apparatus fleet and additional recommendations, no later than July 13, 2023.

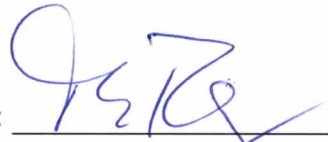


**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to brief the Council on the progress of the procurement, as well as AFD's reserve apparatus fleet and additional recommendations, no later than October 13, 2023.

**ADOPTED:** April 13, 2023

**ATTEST:**

  
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Myrna Rios  
City Clerk