

2017-2018 BUDGET QUESTION

Response to Request for Information

DEPARTMENT: Fire

REQUEST NO.: 40

REQUESTED BY: Alter

DATE REQUESTED: 5/13/17

DATE POSTED: 5/16/17

REQUEST: Regarding the \$3.5 million budget amendment for the Austin Fire Department, what are we actually spending the \$3.5 million on? Please provide responses to the following questions as well.

1. What is the total number of hours of overtime likely to be funded by this additional \$3.5 million?
2. How many hours and how much money per person on the force does \$3.5 million translate to?
3. How might we think of this budget amendment amount relative to the reserve fund?
4. How else might we think about the total number of overtime hours funded by the proposed \$3.5 million budget amendment?
5. How many total overtime hours have been used year-to-date connected to this request?
6. How many overtime hours year-to-date have been triggered by using leave time in the same pay period?
7. What percentage of firefighters have used leave and overtime in the same pay period?
8. What is the current amount of terminal pay for FY 2017?

RESPONSE: Below in blue are responses to each of the questions:

1. What is the total number of hours of overtime likely to be funded by this additional \$3.5 million? Approximately \$500,000 of the \$3.5 million is needed to supplement AFD's "terminal pay" budget due to the increased number of retirements. At the current average rate for overtime, \$40.93, \$3.0 million translates into 73,296 hours.
2. How many hours and how much money per person on the force does \$3.5 million translate to? There are 970 positions in Combat Operations and, with vacancies, 844 working firefighters. If all of the \$3.5 million in funding is spread across all Operations firefighters, each would work 101.3 hours at \$40.93 per hour, for a per person total of \$4,147.
3. How might we think of this budget amendment amount relative to the reserve fund? The combined effect of decreasing the funds within the Budget Stabilization Fund Reserve and increasing the General Fund requirements reduces the General Fund reserve levels from 12.6% to 12.2%.

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4. How else might we think about the total number of overtime hours funded by the proposed \$3.5 million budget amendment? 73,296 hours (\$3.0 million) is equal to 3,054 24-hour shifts. With 20 weeks left in the year, the funding covers 153 shifts per week. We are currently at 126 vacancies (shifts need to be filled) and as much as 20% of the 844-person workforce in Operations may be sick, on vacation, or in training during any given shift – another 168.8 shifts that need to be filled. The need for overtime is roughly 295 shifts per week. Therefore, the 153 shifts funded by this request would be 52% of the remaining 295 shifts this year.
5. How many total overtime hours have been used year-to-date connected to this request? Year-to-date, the number of overtime hours used is 276,812.
6. How many overtime hours year-to-date have been triggered by using leave time in the same pay period? Using the total number of “Overtime Premium Hours Impacted by Vacation” in the chart (located in Council Budget Question #38) as a basis for a full year estimate, FY 2017 might see as many as 59,424 overtime hours triggered by using vacation as productive leave time. A detailed response is also available at Council Budget Question No. 38, located here:
http://www.austintexas.gov/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=2054C9D2CA
7. What percentage of firefighters have used leave and overtime in the same pay period? AFD estimates that roughly 62% of firefighters took vacation and worked overtime in the same 19-day pay cycle since January 2017. A detailed response is also available at Council Budget Question No. 38, located here:
http://www.austintexas.gov/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=2054C9D2CA
8. What is the current amount of terminal pay for FY 2017? AFD has spent \$996,261 out of a budgeted \$1,254,992 (79.4%) through April 2017.

Attached on the following pages is the response to Council Budget Question No. 38 which is mentioned in Question Nos. 6 and 7 above.

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Response to Request for Information

DEPARTMENT: Fire

REQUEST NO.: 38

REQUESTED BY: Alter, Flannigan

DATE REQUESTED: 5/9/17

DATE POSTED: 5/15/17

REQUEST: Explain how Vacation as “productive” time impacts overtime.

1. What is the average total hours and overtime hours firefighters are working per week?
2. What is the average number of overtime hours worked by rank?
3. How many overtime hours year-to-date have been triggered by using leave time in the same pay period? What percentage of firefighters have used leave and overtime in the same pay period?

RESPONSE: “Regular” time is productive time when calculating pay and benefits. The labor agreements for Fire and Police include provisions that make Vacation leave “productive time” in the calculation of overtime premiums. That means a Firefighter who is on vacation for one 24-hour shift and works at regular pay for a second 24-hour shift, could easily be paid the overtime premium (time and a half) for part of the time worked on a third shift. On average, firefighters work 53 hours per week. Two shifts of productive time equals 48 hours, so only 5 hours of the third shift would be paid at the regular rate and the other 19 hours could be paid as overtime.

Because firefighters routinely work three 24-hour shifts one week and two shifts the next, they are tracked on a 19-day work cycle. The expectation is that they will work five shifts or 120 hours in 19 days. This differs from the City’s 14-day pay cycle so pay averaging and Kelly Days are implemented to reconcile the two cycles. This smooths out the hours so that firefighters get roughly the same amount of pay each pay period.

AFD does not have a database to pull actual numbers of hours for firefighter pay over long periods of time. In order to approximate “hours per week”, four months of individual pay data for the pay periods between January 1 and April 29, 2017, for 894 firefighters was downloaded and sorted manually. Then 100 firefighters were selected for closer examination making sure there was representation at all ranks.

Question #1. It is estimated that Firefighters work an average of 50 hours per week and 9 hours of that time is paid out with an Overtime Premium. A table describing firefighter pay codes and a calculation of that estimate can be found below.

Jan-Apr 2017 (9 pay periods) PAY CODES	Total Hours	Average Hours per Pay Period	Average Hours per Week	Average Hours per Week per Firefighter	Percent per Pay Period
Regular (Productive)	668,602	74,289	37,145	42	82.4%
Vacation (Productive)	48,713	5,412	2,706	3	6.0%
Other (Productive)	51,237	5,693	2,847	3	6.3%
Sick (Nonproductive)	41,318	4,591	2,296	3	5.1%
Military (Nonproductive)	2,039	227	114	0	0.3%
Other (Nonproductive)	216	24	12	0	0.0%
Pay Averaging	-881	-98	-49	0	-0.1%
Total Scheduled Hours	811,244	90,138	45,069	50	
Added Time (unscheduled hours worked that were not eligible for OT premium)	12,145	14,893	7,447	8	16.5%
Overtime Premium (unscheduled hours worked and paid OT premium)	134,033	16,242	8,121	9	18.0%
Total Unscheduled Hours	146,178	31,135	15,568	17	

Question #2. The estimated average overtime hours used by rank is shown below. Because this is a sample, please note that this average does not apply to everyone in the rank and does not apply to every pay period worked.

Rank	Division Chief	Battalion Chief	Captain	Lieutenant	Specialist	Firefighter	TOTAL
# Persons in Sample	1	12	17	27	19	24	100
# Persons with OT Premium Paid	1	11	13	26	16	23	90
# of Pay Periods Persons Paid OT Premium	3	46	57	99	65	97	367
# of OT Premium Hours	60	1,537	1,700	3,145	2,049	3,292	11,783
Average OT Hours per Person (not every Pay Period)	20.0	3.0	2.3	1.2	2.0	1.5	0.4
# of Times Vacation Impacts OT Premium	1	18	57	35	25	31	167
# OT Premium Hours Impacted by Vacation	16.50	399.75	221	782.75	442.50	614.25	2,476.75
% of OT Premium Hours Impacted by Vacation	27.5%	26.0%	13.0%	24.9%	21.6%	18.7%	21.0%

Question #3. Using the total number of “Overtime Premium Hours Impacted by Vacation” above as a basis for a full year estimate, FY 2017 might see as many as 59,424 overtime hours triggered by using vacation as productive leave time.

The percentage of the firefighters in the sample who used leave and overtime in the same pay period was 62%. In other words, 56 of the 90 firefighters used Vacation and Overtime in the same 19-day cycle during the four months in the sample.