

2017-2018 BUDGET QUESTION
Response to Request for Information

DEPARTMENT: Financial Services – Budget Office

REQUEST NO.: 47

REQUESTED BY: Flannigan

DATE REQUESTED: 5/18/17

DATE POSTED: 6/2/17

REQUEST: How many times and in what amounts has the Austin Fire Department needed mid-year adjustments for overtime? Were those amounts then included in the proceeding year's budget?

RESPONSE:

Over the previous two fiscal years and in FY 2017, the Austin Fire Department (AFD) has exceeded overall operating appropriations due primarily to an increase in firefighter vacancies and the backfilling of those positions with sworn overtime. In FY 2015, the department exceeded their total appropriation by \$2.4 million and by an additional \$3.6 million in FY 2016. In FY 2017, AFD projected they would exceed their appropriation again by \$3.5 million unless an amendment to the operating budget was approved by Council to increase appropriations (budget amendment was approved on May 18, 2017).

In fiscal years 2015 and 2016, staff reported the overage in the financial forecast and quarterly financial reports but no mid-year budget amendment was brought to Council. The FY 2017 AFD budget included an additional \$3.0 million for overtime based on projections and analysis of the FY 2016 year-end estimate. Unfortunately, this funding increase was insufficient in covering the true fiscal impact of the increase in sworn retirements and backfilling on all apparatus due to the high number of vacancies.