

2018-2019 BUDGET QUESTION

Response to Request for Information

DEPARTMENT: Fire

REQUEST NO.: 13

REQUESTED BY: Alter

DATE REQUESTED: 4/26/18

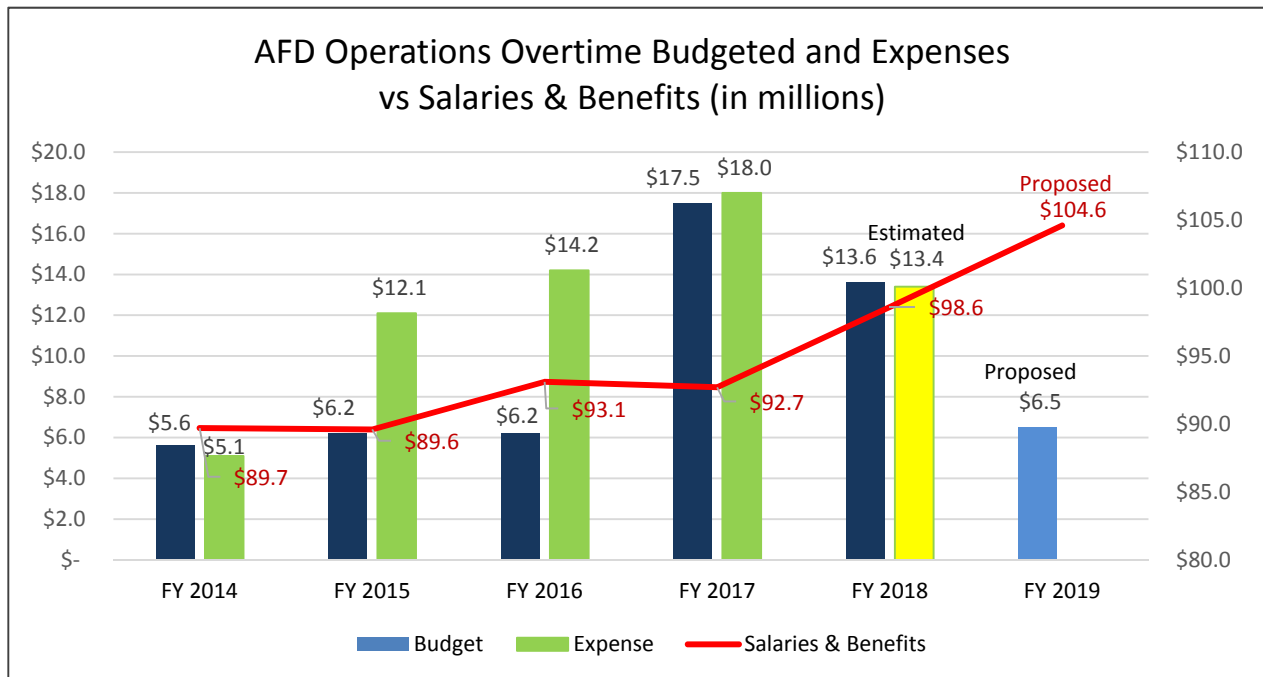
DATE POSTED: 5/10/18

REQUEST: Please provide specifics on the overtime spend for the Austin Fire Department for FY 2018 and include details on how this overtime spend was covered. Please indicate the delta between the prior year overtime spend and how a lower overtime spend in 2018 will impact the general fund for FY 2019.

RESPONSE:

The chart below shows Operations overtime budgeted and expended from FY 2014 through FY 2017. In FY 2018, overtime expenses are estimated through the end of the year. The FY 2019 overtime budget is proposed based on the estimated expenses.

September 2017 through the end of FY 2018, AFD will graduate as many as 161 firefighters from five cadet academies. Consequently, firefighter vacancies have fallen from 179 on October 1, 2017 to 118 at the end of March 2018, and we anticipate that vacancies will fall to 76 by the end of September 2018. The reduction in vacancies has had a major impact on the amount of overtime used in Operations. Moving 22 uniformed personnel from Staff assignments to Operations assignments and making vacation leave non-productive in the Collective Bargaining Agreement also contributed to our ability to cover overtime and stay within budget this year.



The reduction in firefighter vacancies will continue into FY 2019 where we anticipate dropping to 70 vacancies by the end of the year, even with the addition of 16 new positions to staff the opening of the Onion Creek fire station. Seventy vacancies is approaching a level that AFD has not seen since FY 2014, just after the implementation of the Department of Justice consent decree.

The chart shows a reduction in overtime from \$13.4 million in FY 2018 to a proposed budget of \$6.5 million in FY 2019, which impacts the General Fund by \$6.9 million. However, when AFD's reliance on overtime decreases, the funding required for regular salaries and benefits increases. At this time, we estimate the required salary and benefits for Operations personnel to increase from \$98.6 million in FY 2018 to a proposed amount of \$104.6 million in FY 2019 for a net increase of approximately \$6 million (\$1.8 million for Onion Creek and \$4.2 million for salary and benefits).