



Recommendation for Action

File #: 21-3700, **Agenda Item #:** 42.

12/9/2021

Posting Language

Approve a resolution authorizing the extension of line of duty illness leave of absence for Austin Fire Department Firefighter Andrew Thomas.

Lead Department

Austin Fire Department.

Fiscal Note

There is no fiscal impact. This position's salary and benefits are included in the FY2021-22 Austin Fire Department Operating Budget. Overtime backfill cost caused by this vacancy is covered in overtime budget projections.

For More Information:

Rob Vires, Chief of Staff, Austin Fire Department (512) 974-0132.

Additional Backup Information:

The Austin Fire Department is requesting that the City Council extend Austin Firefighter Andrew Thomas' line of duty injury leave for up to one year, at full pay, for an illness related to his line of duty. Texas Local Government Code section 143.073 provides that a municipality shall provide to a firefighter or police officer a leave of absence for an illness or injury related to the person's line of duty. The leave must be at full pay for a period commensurate with the nature of the line of duty illness or injury. If necessitated by the illness or injury, the leave must continue for at least one year.

At the end of the year, the municipality's governing body may extend the line of duty illness or injury leave at full or reduced pay. If the governing body chooses not to extend the leave, or if the person's salary is reduced below 60 percent of the regular monthly salary, the person may be entitled to retire on pension until able to return to full duty.

In late August, 2020, 15-year Austin Firefighter Andrew Thomas began feeling symptoms of what was later diagnosed to be a serious and potentially life-threatening illness. This illness was determined to be related to Firefighter Thomas' line-of-duty and he began a leave of absence, at full pay, on September 14, 2020. On May 5, 2021, after initially successful treatment, Firefighter Thomas returned to full duty. However, in August 2021, the illness returned, and Firefighter Thomas resumed his leave of absence beginning on August 16, 2021. He has been undergoing additional treatment since then. He intends to return to full duty as soon as he is able to do so. Firefighter Thomas' one year of line of duty leave will be depleted to 20 hours going into his December 23, 2021 shift. Council approval of this item would extend Firefighter Thomas' leave of absence, at full pay, to December 23, 2022, if necessitated by his illness.

Strategic Outcome(s):

Safety, Health and Environment, Government that Works for All.