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**INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM**

**Date:** 01/09/2023  
**To:** City Council and Mayor  
**Cc:** Steve Parker, City Manager  
**From:** Kristy Lehnert, Director of Human Resources  
**RE:** Implementation of Step Plan for both Fire and Police Departments and Market Adjustment for Dispatch

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The City of Seguin continues to be faced with the challenge of recruiting and retaining public safety personnel which includes both sworn Fire and Police positions.

With the approval from City Council and Mayor we as an organization have taken tremendous strides in keeping the compensation and benefits top notch for all of our employees. However, when reviewing what other cities are currently providing for both sworn Fire and Police positions, and for our organization to remain competitive in a very competitive market, a Step Plan is recommended to be implemented for these two areas.

A Step Plan basically provides a road map of the projected career growth for an individual who is in a sworn position (Firefighter rank and above; Police Officer rank and above). It begins with showing the entry level pay for a position and the maximum or topped out salary for a position.

A Step Plan is not like our current merit system, which is pay for performance, however it is a guaranteed pay increase for an individual based upon their years of service in a position.

With implementing a Step Plan, we as an organization would also then be able to offer a Lateral Entry program for these two areas. A Lateral Entry program would provide our organization the flexibility to hire experienced sworn Fire and Police personnel into our organization at a fair marketable rate.

This pay structure is the norm for many of our surrounding Fire and Police Departments. For instance, New Braunfels, San Marcos, San Antonio, and Austin already operate with a Step Pay Plan and a Lateral Entry program.

One other area in Public Safety that is also competitive with the recruitment and retainment of qualified personnel is Dispatch. Dispatch positions are our first line of communication when a citizen needs any assistance. Currently, to be comparable to other agencies we are requesting a market adjustment for this area.

## **COST OF MOVING FROM MERIT BASED TO STEP BASED PAY PLAN AND MARKET ADJUSTMENT FOR DISPATCH**

The estimated cost of this program for both Fire and Police is a combined 220,000.00 from the General Fund. This will be funded this year by salary savings that comes from vacant positions within the Fire and Police Department.

### **BENEFITS**

#### **1. STEP PLAN**

- Will provide a market recognized pay structure.
- Will provide our organization to utilize a market wide incentive like lateral entry.
- Will provide current employees a clear plan for their career longevity.
- Will remove the opportunity for discrimination or bias, whether conscious or unconscious.
- Will provide our organization to be a competitive player in a very competitive market.
- Will provide a maximum annual salary and limited number of steps per position.
- Retaining current talent in our current organization for public safety personnel

#### **2. LATERAL ENTRY PROGRAM – FIRE and POLICE / DISPATCH – MARKET ADJUSTMENT**

- Will provide our organization a tool to use to recruit experienced personnel.
- Will provide our organization to continue to employ a skilled workforce.
- Will provide our organization as a top place for employment in a competitive market.
- Will provide our organization with candidates who may be the best in their profession which will foster competitiveness and on-going skills development.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Implement new Step Plan for sworn Fire and Police personnel.
2. Implement Lateral Entry program for sworn Fire and Police personnel.
3. Annual evaluations for these employees will be completed, however the evaluation will no longer be pay for performance in these two areas but will still be completed and utilized for promotional opportunities and disciplinary actions if needed.
4. Implement market adjustment for Dispatch.

Staff requests your approval of the above recommendations. As we continue to grow and add more public safety personnel it is imperative that we continue to monitor and adjust based upon the market and the demand for personnel in these positions.

I would be glad to answer any questions you may have regarding these recommendations.