

CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION FORM

FROM: Chuck Cerasoli, Interim Fire Chief

THROUGH: Gary Suiter, City Manager

DATE: June 16, 2020

ITEM: Fire Department Update

_____	DIRECTION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	INFORMATION
_____	ORDINANCE
_____	MOTION
_____	RESOLUTION
_____	PROCLAMATION

I. REQUEST/ISSUE & BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

City Council has requested brief updates from each department that highlight what is going well, what is not going so well, what challenges the department is facing, and what the future holds.

The Fire Department has a lot to be grateful for right now, but most importantly we have an incredible staff that is dedicated to serving the community, incredibly skilled at what they do, and willing to go the extra mile for the success of the department and the City of Steamboat Springs. With the passage of 2A last fall we were looking forward to hiring additional line firefighters this spring, as well as the prospects of a new Central Fire Station. The hiring of new firefighters has been postponed until the longer term fiscal outlook is clearer. The start of 2020 saw the introduction of the Deputy Fire Marshal and a position upgrade to a new Fire Lieutenant. These positions are a critical move forward for the department in regards to helping address administrative needs as the community and department continue grow. Over the years we have seen the firefighter pay plan come into range with other departments in Northern Colorado. This has increased our ability to attract and retain personnel. Firefighter wellness has been a primary focus and we have implemented

programs such as CSU Firefighter Testing, mental health counselling and the Peer support program, and increased cancer awareness and prevention measures. The department continues to excel at what we know best and that is our daily operations; emergency response, fire prevention, and public education.

The Coronavirus Pandemic has brought many challenges to the Fire Department along with the rest of the community. First and foremost were the immediate challenges SSFR faced were how to handle 911 calls for service that involved COVID-19 patients or suspected patients. Our top priority was to protect the health of our staff so they could continue to serve the community. We quickly adopted CDPHE response protocols and guidelines and focused on how we would handle all calls within our department not knowing where the virus may be. The department quickly purchased additional equipment and supplies needed to help navigate the pandemic as best we could. Administrative staff participated in the Emergency Operations Center offering assistance on surge planning, alternative care facilities, and assistance to ESF 8 in regards to EMS response.

We do anticipate a continuation of many previous challenges as the Pandemic transitions, primarily continuing to meet the demands of increasing call volume and along with it, growth within our department and the community. Adequate staffing for concurrent calls, and larger calls such as structure fires and wildland fires continue to stress our response system and current personnel. As the department grows the lack of any type of training facility is a challenge in an industry that relies on quality, consistent training to provide its service and keep up the many certifications we hold. The current fire stations continue to be a challenge for the department. The age of the buildings, lack of adequate working space, and design efficiencies all work against timely response and efficiency. We feel that continued attentiveness in the area of data collection will help the department move into the future with a better understanding of what the fire service truly excels at and where we can continue to find improvements. This data will be crucial as we work toward the National Accreditation process, which is truly a functional process that assists the department in defining what we do now, what level of service the community desires, defining our community risks, what our essential job tasks are, and the best approach to achieve those goals through continued strategic planning.

II. SUMMARY AND ALTERNATIVES:

Not Applicable

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Not Applicable

IV. FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impacts

V. LEGAL ISSUES:

Not Applicable

VI. CONFLICTS OR ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES:

Not Applicable

VII. CONSISTENCY WITH COUNCIL GOALS AND POLICIES:

Not Applicable

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1# Fire Department Update presentation