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April 23, 2024

Honorable Bob Blumenfield
Chair, Budget, Finance and Innovation Committee
200 N. Main Street, Room 415
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Councilmember Blumenfield:

Los Angeles Fire Department Proposed Budget FY24-25

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2024-25 Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) Proposed Budget. With the understanding that the upcoming fiscal year presents challenges to fund all necessary requests, the Department is appreciative to Mayor Bass for an \$814 million operating budget and additional non-departmental resources that supports our endeavor to provide public safety and emergency services throughout the City of Los Angeles. The Mayor's Proposed Budget provides resources to continue mission critical functions.

A. As requested, we have outlined five important objectives that the FY 24-25 budget will help us achieve:

Deliver exceptional public safety and emergency service to address workload needs.

- Completion of one Firefighter class from FY 23-24 and three new Firefighter classes comprising 220 prospective sworn members will allow the Department to fill vacant positions due to attrition and service to combat retirements expected over the next year. Without the continued pipeline of new Firefighters, the Department would be forced to close a significant number of resources on a regular basis thereby degrading the level and quality of service we are able to provide to the public.
- Emergency Appointment Paramedics (EAP) and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) II will bring immediate workload relief to the most understaffed resources. The addition of much needed Paramedics will offset the increasing attrition in the Firefighter/Paramedic ranks until such time that the Department can fill these positions through its normal channels. These positions will provide new classifications responsible for staffing rescue ambulances and providing basic and advanced emergency medical services.

AN EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Foster personal growth, professional development and organizational succession

- Targeted recruitment staffing allows the Department to maintain staffing levels, support of youth development programs, and recruit new firefighter candidates. Additionally, recruitment staff ensure a continuous pipeline of incoming recruits while incorporating a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens in the recruitment process.

Commit to an organizational culture that embraces diversity, equity and inclusion

- Continued funding for Equity and Inclusion Phase I staffing will allow the Department to effectively mediate conflict, carry out its strategic diversity and inclusion plan, and perform functions that foster a positive and inclusive work environment. The positions will provide trained and specialized subject matter experts dedicated to infusing, monitoring, training, and educating our members in the areas of DEI.

Promote a safe, healthy and progressive work environment that effectively manages personal and organizational risk

- Turnout Gear that provide lifesaving personal protective equipment (PPE) to our members by preventing exposure to carcinogens, chemicals and fireground particulates.

B. Reconsideration of Additional Critical Resources and Funding.

The Department is requesting reconsideration of the following items to maintain emergency medical services and public safety. These requests would add 150 positions that amount to \$31,364,757 in additional funding:

1. The following positions and resources were requested to supplement the current levels of emergency response capabilities in light of elevated demand for emergency services – \$18,446,964

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| • Add additional hours of coverage for the 5 existing Advanced Provider Response Units (APRU) to allow 12 hours a day | \$870,575 |
| • 2 Fast Response Vehicles (FRV) | \$1,783,574 |
| • 5 new APRUs 12 hours a day | \$2,198,456 |
| • 2 new APRUs 24 hours a day | \$2,123,579 |
| • 8 new Paramedic Rescue Ambulances 24 hours a day | \$7,440,710 |
| • 10 new EMT Rescue Ambulances 12 hours a day | \$3,830,070 |
| • 1 Assistant Medical Director | \$200,000 |

2. Overtime Variable Staffing Account - \$5,880,000

Add back \$5.8 million for approximately 63,000 Variable Staffing hours which provide much needed flexibility to staff various emergency response resources.

3. Supply & Maintenance Fleet Positions - \$1,000,298

Add back positions for Supply and Maintenance Division which are critical to provide maintenance to the Department's fleet and reduce out of service time. Thirteen positions had been added in FY 2023-24 to address critical needs. A total of 21 positions assigned to this section are now proposed to be deleted. Consideration is requested to add back the following 11 authorities:

• 6 Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanics, Class Code 3743	\$570,266
• 1 Sheet Metal Worker, Class Code 3775*	\$96,897
• 1 Senior Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanic, Class Code 3745	\$137,298
• 2 Storekeeper II, Class Code 1835-2	\$104,630
• 1 Welder, Class Code 3796	\$91,207

*The deletion of the Sheet Metal Worker and Welder completely eliminate these classifications in the department.

The positions outlined above are directly tied to maintaining the fleet of fire engines, fire trucks, rescue ambulances, and other emergency response vehicles. Due to years of deferred maintenance, deferred vehicle replacement, and increased call volume, the LAFD emergency vehicle fleet is in a state of constant repair. Currently, the department has a critical backlog of vehicles in need of repair.

4. Civilian Overtime funding for Supply and Maintenance Division staff, Advanced Providers, and fire protection engineers who support affordable and supportive housing expedited plan check - \$1,000,000

5. Technology Equipment, Software Licenses and Technology Positions - \$5,037,495

The Fire Department relies on various technology which supports emergency response and optimizes the use of our emergency response units. Add funding for essential technology equipment, software and licenses as follows:

- a. Voice Radio System Upgrade \$3.8M: The final phase of the Voice Radio System Upgrade (Motorola radio upgrade project) is planned for completion in FY 24-25. A total of \$3.8 million is the amount needed to complete the

- project. Failure to obtain funding would compromise the Department's emergency radio system and firefighter safety.
- b. GIS Esri Licenses \$254,000. Failure to obtain funding will eliminate the LAFD's ability to create emergency evacuation and fire maps. Additionally, the ability to locate and dispatch the closest unit to an emergency will be compromised.
 - c. Network Staffing System (NSS) \$388,000: This funding is used to maintain the Department's legacy fire station staffing software until replaced. Failure to obtain the funding for NSS will cause the Department to be unable to hire and pay sworn employees.
 - d. Technology Positions \$470,495: Add back positions in the Information and Technology Support Bureau which are necessary to provide technical support, including responding to the Help Desk requests. Staff install, configure and maintain all desktop, mobile, cloud-based and remote computers that are used to document patient care. A total of 16 systems relate positions are proposed to be deleted. Consideration is requested to add back the following authorities:

- 2 Systems Analyst, Class Code 1596 - \$208,000
- 2 Senior Systems Analyst I, Class Code 1597-1- \$262,495

C. Restructuring or Repurposing Existing Positions

The Department has very limited options for restructuring or repurposing civilian and sworn positions. However, we will continue to evaluate alternative solutions to minimize the impact on our service delivery model.

The recommendations to reconsider the additional resources and funding outlined above are required to maintain emergency medical services and public safety. The Department has not increased its staffing levels in over 14 years and is operating with 68 fewer sworn personnel than in 2010, yet it has experienced a 55% increase in incident responses. In 2023, the LAFD responded to a record number of >500,000 incidents. Without additional field staffing and critical civilian support positions, the Department will be required to re-prioritize the types of services provided.

I look forward to discussing the above items with the members of the Budget and Finance Committee and the City Council and appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



KRISTIN M. CROWLEY
Fire Chief