


## City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** FEBRUARY 8, 2012

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** RASHAD M. YOUNG, CITY MANAGER 

**SUBJECT:** CONSIDERATION OF A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE SAFER (STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE FIRE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE) GRANT PROGRAM, THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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**ISSUE:** Consideration of a grant application to the SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) grant program, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council:

- (1) Approve the submission of the grant application (due February 24, 2012); and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary documents that may be required.

**BACKGROUND:** On January 20, 2012, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, opened the grant application period for the 2011 SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) grant program. SAFER grants provide financial assistance to help fire departments increase the number of frontline firefighters. (Note that EMS and other employees are excluded). The goal of SAFER is to enhance the abilities of fire departments to comply with staffing response and operational standards established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

The SAFER grants program provides funding to local fire departments to increase staffing and deployment capabilities in order to respond to emergencies wherever they occur. For the Alexandria Fire Department, enhanced staffing will facilitate a reduction in response time and ensure that an appropriate number of personnel will be present at an emergency incident scene. Additionally, augmenting current staffing levels will guarantee that all front-line apparatus have a minimum of four trained personnel to meet OSHA standards, a standard that is already met by surrounding jurisdictions. Ultimately, SAFER funding for additional fire fighting personnel will ensure faster response, safer and more efficient incident scenes, and optimal community protection against fire and fire-related hazards.

**DISCUSSION:** Fire Department leaders have, over the past three years, discussed and presented to Council a report prepared by J. Gordon Routley, an expert in the field of fire incident analysis. Mr. Routley formulated a detailed review and analysis of the Fire Department's response to the August 25, 2007, fire at 6101 Edsall Road (Alexandria Knolls West). This analysis listed a number of serious issues that adversely affected the Department's ability to handle this fire safely and effectively. Included in the Routley Report was a recommendation that the Fire Department increase the minimum staffing of numbers of firefighters assigned to engine and truck companies from three to four per vehicle.

The 2011 SAFER grant funding requested from the Department of Homeland Security will fully fund the cost of hiring nine Firefighter-Rescuers, who would be hired in FY 2013. Cost sharing by local jurisdictions is not mandated and there are no annual salary limits.

This 2011 SAFER Grant is the continuation of the Department's multi-year plan to address firefighter staffing and other recommendations in the Routley Report. If these grant monies are awarded, it will assure four person minimum staffing on half of our engines for leave relief. Alexandria would also be following the precedent set by Arlington and Fairfax Counties that took a multi-year approach to increasing their firefighter staffing and successfully used SAFER grant funds to offset local costs.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** SAFER funding will be used to pay for 100% of the actual salary and benefit costs of nine newly hired Firefighter-Rescuers without a local cost-share requirement. If awarded to the Fire Department, the 2011 SAFER Grant funding will total \$1,341,147.97 for the first and second years of the grant period of performance to cover the salaries and benefits of nine Firefighter-Rescuer positions. The City would be responsible for \$319,962 of costs for radios, gear, uniforms and training costs in the first year which would not be covered by the grant. There are no annual salary limits or a retention commitment requiring the Department to maintain these positions once FEMA funding ceases.

Once these positions are ready to serve in the field, they would offset some of the current overtime levels in the Department caused by rehires. Currently, the Department must use overtime to cover anyone who is scheduled to work but is on annual leave, sick leave, or is on light duty or disability leave due to injury. The positions in this grant would be assigned as relief positions and would reduce three overtime callbacks each day.

**STAFF:**

Adam K. Thiel, Fire Chief  
Kendel Taylor, Assistant Director of OMB  
Denise Pouget, Assistant Fire Chief, Fire Department  
James Lynch, Fiscal Officer, Fire Department  
Matthew Bosse, Fiscal Officer, Fire Department  
Mayuri Middough, Fiscal Officer, Fire Department

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2-14-12

**Jackie Henderson**

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**From:** David Denardo <d.denardo@afdlocal2141.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 02, 2012 7:24 PM  
**To:** William Euille; Frank Fannon; Kerry Donley; Alicia Hughes; Del Pepper; Paul Smedberg; Rose Boyd; Jackie Henderson; Rob Krupicka; Linda Owens; Elizabeth Jones  
**Subject:** COA Contact Us: Four-Person Minimum Staffing  
**Attachments:** ATT00001.txt

**COA Contact Us: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members**

**Time:** [Thu Feb 02, 2012 19:24:18] **Message ID:** [36817]

**Issue Type:** Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members

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**Subject:** Four-Person Minimum Staffing

Dear Honorable City Council Members,

On behalf of the more than 250

members of Alexandria Firefighters, Inc. Local 2141, I would like to take

this opportunity to thank you for your support of four-person minimum

staffing on fire companies. As you are aware, the City approved a

Staffing For Adequate Fire & Emergency Response grant (SAFER) to

maintain minimum four-person staffing on four of Alexandria's eight

**Comments:** engine companies.

A commemoration was held recently at Station 201 to

recognize this significant event. This represents the first increase in

firefighters "on the street" since the 1960s, and would not have

been possible without your support. This is the first step toward

bringing all of Alexandria's fire companies up to the nationally

recognized four-person standard to better serve those who visit and live

in our city.

However, we are all aware that this is only the first

step. Recently the Fire Department submitted another SAFER grant to

Council for consideration. We cannot express enough the importance of this

grant. It is the beginning of a process to bring all of our fire

companies up to this nationally recognized standard and we look forward

to your continued support of this important goal.

Regards,

David

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