





May 1, 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: Wala Blegay, Chair,
Health, Human Services and Public Safety (HHSPS) Committee

THRU: Joseph R. Hamlin 
Director of Budget and Policy Analysis

FROM: Malcolm Moody - 
Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst

RE: Volunteer Fire Commission
Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Review

Budget Overview

- The Volunteer Fire Commission's ("Commission") budget is included in the overall Fire/EMS Department's FY 2026 Proposed Budget.

General Fund - Division Summary *(continued)*

Category	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Budget	FY 2025 Estimate	FY 2026 Proposed	Change FY25-FY26	
					Amount (\$)	Percent (%)
Volunteer Services Command						
Compensation	\$937,486	\$608,800	\$650,200	\$628,300	\$19,500	3.2%
Fringe Benefits	4,554,639	5,541,400	5,787,200	5,575,600	34,200	0.6%
Operating	13,547,309	14,025,700	14,270,000	14,273,800	248,100	1.8%
Capital Outlay	61,225	—	—	—	—	
SubTotal	\$19,100,659	\$20,175,900	\$20,707,400	\$20,477,700	\$301,800	1.5%
Recoveries	—	—	—	—	—	
Total Volunteer Services Command	\$19,100,659	\$20,175,900	\$20,707,400	\$20,477,700	\$301,800	1.5%
Total	\$272,552,070	\$283,252,100	\$291,492,100	\$314,948,400	\$31,696,300	11.2%

- In FY 2026, the Commission's budget is proposed to increase by \$301,800, or 1.5%, above the approved FY 2025 budget level.

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- The increase in compensation costs due to annualization of FY 2025 and planned FY 2026 salary adjustments. With the addition of one (1) position, fringe benefits increase due to the change in the fringe benefit rate from 72.0% to 75.7%.
 - The FY 2026 proposed operating expenses are \$14,273,800, or 1.8%, more than the approved FY 2025 budget. The primary justification for the \$248,100 increase from the prior fiscal year is to support insurance premiums, contracts, other operating equipment, gas and oil, equipment lease, and equipment repairs.
 - The Department plans to devote an estimated \$100,000 annually to support advertising, event coordination, and onboarding to attract new recruits.
- The Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP):
 - In FY 2026, LOSAP will provide a \$450 per month stipend (and \$8 a month for service in excess of 25 years), which is awarded after 25 years of service at the age of 55. The Program also provides a burial benefit of \$10,000 after 25 years of service.
 - In FY 2025, the LOSAP cost is estimated at nearly \$5.0 million, and \$5.1 million is also included in the FY 2026 Proposed Budget.
 - The Commission's FY 2025 estimated LOSAP expenditures represent 86.4% of the Volunteer Services Command Division's total fringe benefit expenses and 4.1% of the Department's total fringe benefit expenses.
 - The Fire Commission and Office of the Fire Chief have formed a LOSAP Committee to discuss opportunities to incentivize the next generation of volunteers to provide service for 25+ years and correct any disparities among current volunteer members.
 - The Station Management Funds allocation information is provided in response to the Department's *FY 2026 First Round Budget Review Question No. 77 Attachment D*.
 - ***The most critical issues reported by the Volunteer Fire Commission are:***
 - Recruitment and retention of volunteers, equipment modernization and replacements, infrastructure needs, automation of the LOSAP database, and volunteer training/certification are the top priorities for the commission and the Department collectively.

Volunteer Qualifications					
Qualifications	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025 YTD
Fire Fighter	1,368	1,243	858	899	902
Emergency Medical Technician	1,530	224	194	250	250
Paramedic	20	16	14	16	16
Total	2,918	1,483	1,066	1,165	1,168
YTD as of: March 17, 2025					