

**CITY COUNCIL  
COMMUNICATION:**

**ITEM \_\_\_\_\_**

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER  
CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA**

**98-333**

**SYNOPSIS —**

**AGENDA:**  
AUGUST 17, 1998

**SUBJECT:**  
FIRE DEPARTMENT  
ADMINISTRATIVE  
RESTRUCTURING/  
REDUCTION OF  
TAKE HOME  
VEHICLES

**TYPE:**  
RESOLUTION  
ORDINANCE  
**RECEIVE/FILE**

**SUBMITTED BY:**  
RON WAKEHAM  
FIRE CHIEF

Since the initiation of my tenure as Fire Chief, I have been analyzing the administrative structure of the Fire Department for any feasible improvement in productivity which would also result in a cost savings while increasing service.

Aligning the Fire Department with the findings of the Strategic Plan 2000 and the TriData Corporation study, I am proposing the following changes:

1. **Reduce** the number of Division Chiefs from three to two with the third position reverting to a Deputy Fire Marshal to expand and enhance the public education aspect of the Fire Prevention Bureau. The remaining two Division Chiefs would be retitled Assistant Chiefs to correspond with existing payroll classifications.

2. **Replace** the existing Fire Prevention Inspector vacancy in the Bureau with a full-time computer specialist (Senior Technical Support Specialist). Michael Armstrong, Information Technology (IT) Director, concurs with our decision and will oversee the selection.

3. **Replace** the Captain position presently assigned to the Training Section with a District Chief to solidify the goals of the suppression training section and to separate it from the present HazMat Section.

4. **Reduce** the number of take home vehicles from eight to two. Those remaining would be the Fire Chief's (or person acting) and the HazMat van, which is funded by Polk County.

**The total number of persons assigned to the Fire Department is not changed by this reorganization.**

**FISCAL IMPACT –**

These figures are estimated for years 1, 2, and 3 after restructuring, and reflect **a savings** each year as follows:

1st year (\$10,695)  
2nd year (\$10,544)  
3rd year (\$ 9,094)

## **RECOMMENDATION –**

**Receive and file.**

## **BACKGROUND –**

Shortly after his arrival on October 1, 1996, former Fire Chief James Hunt separated the Department into three divisions: Operations, Administration, and Services, promoting three individuals to the rank of Division Chief. Prior to this time little assistance was available to the Chief at the management level. He also increased the size of training and placed coordination of their efforts under the HazMat Coordinator.

In November, 1997, the Fire Department was reviewed by the consulting firm of TriData Corporation of Arlington, Virginia. Although some changes recommended by TriData have been implemented, a number of personnel issues could not be put in place prior to Chief Hunt' s untimely departure, and therefore will be addressed now.

1. Public Education (3-4, TriData; P.41, Strategic Plan 2000). A very real need has been recognized for a comprehensive fire and injury prevention program for school children.

Reclassifying one Division Chief as a second Deputy Fire Marshal would allow coordination of and dedication to this program without the need to hire more personnel. The prior responsibilities of the Services Division Chief will be absorbed by the two remaining Assistant Chiefs and the computer specialist.

2. Computer Support Position (2-8, TriData). The TriData Corporation attested to that fact that the Department needs a department-wide information technology plan. With the support of the IT Director, aligned with TriData' s recommendation, we are proposing to fill a presently vacant

inspector position with a Senior Technical Support Specialist to help refine and coordinate our IT plan.

3. Training (4-11, TriData). The training element of the Fire Department presently falls under the HazMat Coordinator. Four individuals assigned to training are responsible for new recruit, general in-service, engineer, water rescue, high angle rescue, officer and fire ground support training. Confined space rescue training is another newly developing program. The position of HazMat Coordinator is overloaded. Training needs a full-time coordinator (District Chief level) for oversight of all general training, coordination of the specialty areas, with responsibility for research and development.

4. Reduction of Take Home Vehicles. Reduce the number of take home vehicles from eight to two. Those two being the Fire Chief's vehicle and the HazMat van, the latter being fully reimbursed by Polk County and expected to be available at all times. Vehicles previously taken home will remain available for use by those individuals to whom they are assigned and will be parked at the closest available fire station within the city limits.

The proposal set before you not only stands alone from a fiscal standpoint, but shows a cost savings in at least the first three years. The reorganization proposes an increase in productivity and an enhancement in the services of fire prevention, training, and education offered the citizens of Des Moines. This restructuring requires no additional staffing, but instead is accomplished within the existing authorized number of personnel allocated the Fire Department as shown below.

	97/98 Authorized	Proposed
Fire Chief	1	1
Division Chiefs	3	<b>2</b>
EMS Coordinator	1	1
EMS Assistant	1	1
HazMat Coordinator	1	1
Deputy Fire Marshal	1	<b>2</b>
Senior Fire	3	3

Inspector		
Fire Inspector	6	<b>5</b>
Shop Superintendent	1	1
Shop Mechanics	4	4
District Chiefs	6	<b>7</b>
Captain	28	<b>27</b>
Lieutenant	23	23
Senior Medic	18	18
Medic	18	18
Engineer	51	51
Firefighter	116	116
Budget Analyst	1	1
Executive Secretary	1	1
Senior Clerk Typist	1	1
Word Processor	1	1
Senior Tech. Support Spec.	0	<b>1</b>
	286	286

Presently, the Fire Department is six personnel short of authorized staffing and has been informed of four additional intended retirements by October 1, 1998.

Attachment