



## Human Resources

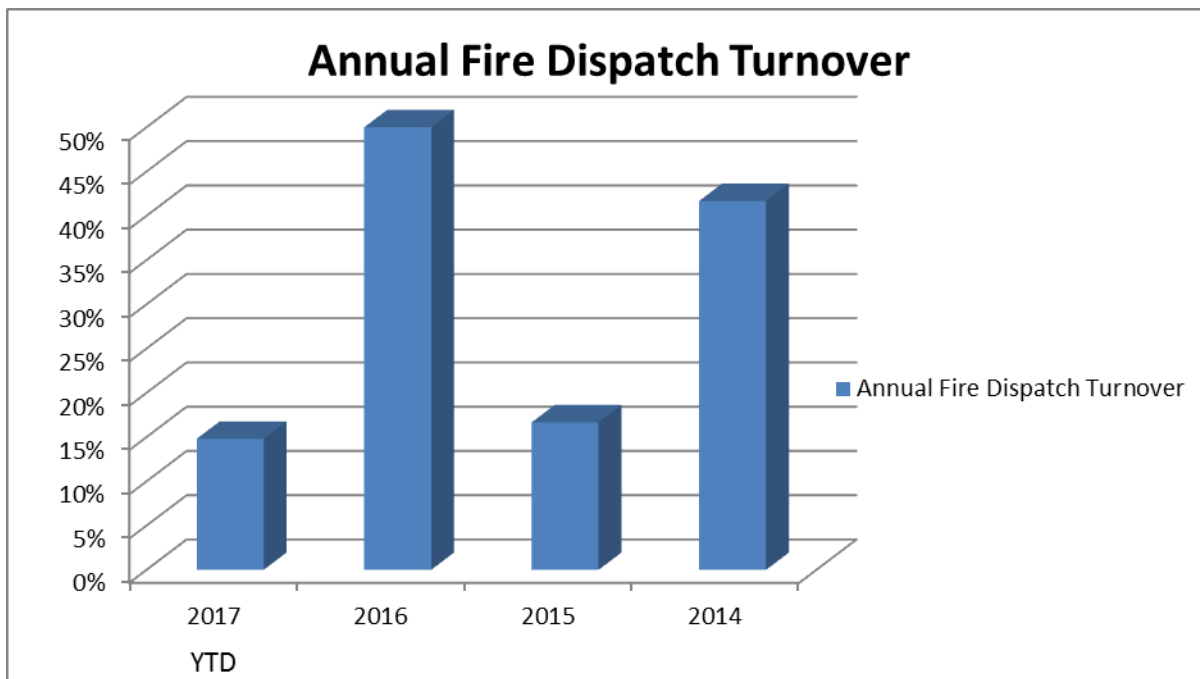
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Date: 3-9-17  
To: Mark Relph, Acting City Manager  
From: Erich WonSavage, HR Director  
Re: Options and Alternatives related to LFR Communications

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### History:

Dispatchers have one of the more stressful jobs in the city. Below is LFR's turnover history since 2014.



Year	YTD Turnover	TOTAL FTE's	Annual Fire Dispatch Turnover
2017	2	13.5	15%
2016	6	12	50%
2015	2	12	17%
2014	5	12	42%

### Options/Alternatives:

**Pipeline:** Based on the fire department's dispatch center's turnover, which over the past four years has fluctuated from as low as 2 to as high as 6 employees, a recommended pipeline for the purposes of finding and developing talent in anticipation of vacancies would reasonably target two FTE's in the pipeline at any point.

Unlike the police officer pipeline that does not add additional costs to the city's budget, due to the



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department's vacancy levels, adding a pipeline to the dispatch center would add cost to the city's overall budget. This is because the dispatch center must meet minimum staffing levels, and unlike the police department, must backfill any vacancy that occurs. When a dispatch vacancy is backfilled, the unknown cost is overtime. This is because it is unknown as to whether an employee from the substitute pool will be available, and therefore paid regular straight wages, or whether a regular full-time employee will be called in and therefore paid overtime. The difference in wages is the half-time or 50% of a dispatcher's rate of pay. Understanding this means that the potential cost of the pipeline can be offset by reducing those instances where overtime is paid to backfill a vacancy.

Adding two pipeline dispatchers would result in an increased cost that would vary depending on:

- If the hires were hired at bottom or top of the hiring range (\$40,400-\$50,500).
- Portions of the year when the pipeline dispatchers were surplus staffing versus time when they filled a vacancy.
- Cost of the pipeline dispatchers would be offset by filling in areas where overtime would otherwise be used to reach minimum staffing.

### Potential Cost:

Hiring cost for two dispatchers for 12 months including benefits: \$124,948 - \$148,614.

Time of year filling vacancies: 5 months value = \$52,062 - \$61,923

Based on 3 years average annual overtime for Fire Comm. Center: 3 months overtime coverage value = \$18,522

Leave Time: 1 month, no value

Training: 13 weeks or 3 months, no value

Low Potential Annual Cost	High Potential Annual Cost
\$124,948 cost of two dispatchers	\$148,614 cost of two dispatchers
-\$52,062 avg. time filling vacancy	-\$61,923 avg. time filling vacancy
-\$18,522 avg. time covering potential overtime	-\$18,522 avg. time covering potential overtime
<b>Potential Cost: \$55,364</b>	<b>Potential Cost: \$68,169</b>

### Provide Pay Increases to Match SMFR Base Pay:

In this below scenario, all Littleton LFR dispatcher's base pay is aged to 12/31/2017 because the city provides annual reviews and therefore an employee's pay increases for 2017 upon the employee's anniversary date. SMFR rescue on the other hand provides market adjustments to their pay plan for their dispatchers on 1/1/2017. To create a 2017 to 2017 apple to apple base pay comparison, this scenario uses



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as a starting point where both SMFR and Littleton employees have received their 2017 pay increases.

SMFR targets base pay for its dispatchers at the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile. Additionally, the SMFR dispatchers are on a step system based on achieving certain certifications, and adjusted annually on January 1 of each year. The City's compensation plan is based on merit, using Denver-Boulder market for the position. Based on the targeted base pay rates set by SMFR, the average increase to bring LFR dispatchers to the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile for NON-vacant positions is approximately: \$2,908 each.

Adjusting the LFR's dispatchers' base pay to the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile would represent a nominal cost of approximately \$20,050. Although LPD dispatchers have the same job description and while dispatching for different purposes, ultimately have the similar duties. Currently, both departments share the same space and use the same job description. Raising the base pay of LFR dispatchers would likely create a pay-equity issue as Littleton's civilian employees are on a different compensation philosophy, not at the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile nationally. Changing the compensation philosophy for one group and not another group would likely create a job dissatisfier for many Littleton employees. At minimum the city would have to apply the same compensation practice to its LPD dispatchers. The approximate cost to bring LPD dispatchers' base pay to the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile (while not negatively impacting those who would be paid less) would cost \$54,202. If the city were to increase the base pay for both LPD and LFR dispatchers and factor for ancillary taxes/benefits, the total cost would come to approximately \$86,800.

**A Note on Overtime:** Because SMFR uses section (7)K under FLSA to staff its dispatchers on a 24-hour shift similar to Fire Fighters, the schedule inherently generates 242 hours of overtime that the City's staffing schedule does not. If such scheduled overtime was applied to the City's dispatch center, it would represent approximately \$110,000. This does *not* include other overtime that would be generated due to vacation, sick, worker's compensation absence, or other reasons employees take leave throughout the year. The additional overtime based on this scheduling method, would add an average of \$11,000 in additional wages per dispatch employee.

### Recommendations:

**Pipeline:** Overstaffing the LFR Communication center versus paying overtime may result in a positive morale boost to employees who would work less overtime and have more free time to enjoy. Although, based on a 5 year average of overtime for the center, the estimated cost of hiring additional staff would cost more than paying overtime. If paying for dispatch services based on a per call basis to SMFR generates a savings to the city, it would not be recommended to add additional costs to providing the service.

Potential Cost Range for a Pipeline of 2 FTE

<b>Potential Cost: \$55,364</b>	<b>Potential Cost: \$68,169</b>
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**Increase Dispatcher Pay:** The city and SMFR's staffing and pay plans are different. There are pros and cons to both methods. Paying at the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile would mean increasing costs to the city by a minimum



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of \$86,800. This would be a deviation from the city's pay plan for dispatchers as a subset of employees. Employees compare themselves and their treatment internally within organizations, and seeing the city willing to pay some of its civilian employees at the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile and others on a merit based system creates the potential for morale issues unnecessarily. If paying for dispatch services from SMFR based on a per call basis generates a savings to the city, it would not be recommended to add additional costs to providing the service.