

**City of Cortland
Fire Department**



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TO: Mayor Tobin, Members of the Common Council
FROM: Chief Friedman *WCF*
DATE: February 10, 2021
RE: Agenda Items for February 16, 2021 Council Meeting

The following items are listed for the agenda:

1. Resolution authorizing the Fire Department to apply for a FEMA SAFER grant for the funding of four additional firefighters/code enforcement personnel to augment staffing. This grant is a Zero percent city match for three years with no commitment to maintain said staffing after the period of performance. Total grant application is \$1,166,387.52

Supporting Documentation:

This opportunity allows the department to potentially obtain additional critical staffing that will assist the fire and code departments in their mission. Highlights of the grant requirements are:

- Performance period of three years
- Full funding for positions including:
 - Annual Salary (with any percent increase or time step)
 - Benefits:
 - Retirement
 - Sellbacks
 - Health insurance
 - Uniform allowance
 - Payroll taxes
- 100% FEMA funding with no City fiscal match throughout performance period (3 years)
- No requirement to maintain positions after period of performance

Application will be for four positions. Two positions will be assigned to the code office for the performance period and two positions will be assigned to two shifts in the fire department.

Code Office positions:

- Assigned to straight days with primary functions in the Code office
 - Increase proactive complaint investigation
 - More timely complaint follow-up
 - Will result in increased revenue Administrative fees
 - More active management of Vacant Building program
 - More timely vacant inspections (monthly as in law vs. quarterly)
 - Increase in tracking down responsible parties to get building registered
 - Will result in increased vacant building fees
 - Other areas as assigned to permit current officers to focus on permits, new construction, occupancy permits etc.....
 - Additional firefighting staff to cover alarms during day.
 - Will be crucial toward our ISO Building Code Effectiveness reevaluation which should be coming up soon
 - Currently rated as a 4 for residential and 3 for all types of construction
 - Staffing and volume of work means our rating will drop SIGNIFICANTLY when reevaluated if we do not change things. I think it likely we could drop to as low as a 6 if we were evaluated today.
 - This would result in an increase in insurance premiums to City residents.

Fire Department positions:

- Personnel will be assigned to balance out all four shifts with 8 firefighters (7 on duty at all times).
 - Allows for more flexibility with deployment of personnel
 - Increases the personnel available for a structural fire response which is directly related to increased safety of personnel.
 - Improved coverage of multiple simultaneous calls
 - Allow for the continuation of manning the armory
 - This results in significantly decreased response times specifically in Ward 1, Ward 2, portions of Ward 6 and Ward 3.
 - Assists in maintaining ISO rating of 2, which was achieved in 2017

We are experiencing a decrease in volunteer personnel. Specifically interior structural firefighters. This has been an ongoing issue which causes concern for our efficiency and ultimate safety. The acquisition of these personnel will provide desperately needed firefighters for fire suppression activities.

As we review and determine the best long range plan for Code Enforcement, this opportunity addresses a known need. Additional assistance, in some manner, has been identified, requested and acknowledged. The entire plan for the future is unclear but we are continuing to fall behind in many current operations in the code office and potentially not taking advantage of opportunities for additional revenue. More importantly the desire of the council is to have a vibrant community and have proactive Code Enforcement, not reactive.

At the end of the performance period, if the council elects to not maintain these positions, anticipated retirements at that time will permit the ability to resume to current staffing levels. We also may have the opportunity to again apply to maintain personnel through this grant at that point.

City of Cortland Fire Department

SAFER Grant Calculations

	2022	2023	2024
	Entry	1 Year	2 Year
Salary	\$ 41,689	\$ 44,222	\$ 63,249
Holiday (144hrs)	\$ 2,886	\$ 3,062	\$ 4,378
Vacation Sellback (80 hrs)	\$ 1,603	\$ 1,701	\$ 2,432
Uniform Allowance	\$ 800	\$ 600	\$ 600
Health Insurance (City Portion)	\$ 21,633	\$ 22,715	\$ 23,851
Payroll Taxes (8%)	\$ 3,694	\$ 3,919	\$ 5,605
Retirement (Tier 6) (26%)	\$ 12,006	\$ 12,736	\$ 18,215
Total Each	\$ 84,312	\$ 88,955	\$ 118,330
4 Firefighters	\$ 337,247.04	\$ 355,818.88	\$ 473,321.60
Local Share	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Federal Share	\$ 337,247.04	\$ 355,818.88	\$ 473,321.60
Grand Total ----->			\$ 1,166,387.52

Assumptions

Retroactive pay increase in 2021 of 2% above 2020
 Pay increase in 2022 and subsequent years of 2%
 Health Insurance rise of 5% per year from 2021 on (2021- \$25,126)
 All employees will opt for family insurance coverage
 Period of Performance will start Jan 1, 2022 (after 180 recruitment period)
 All Holiday and Vacations Sold Back