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Title: ***Adopt a Side Letter of Agreement between the City and the International Association of Fire Fighters, Local 753 - Unit 5, Non-Management Fire regarding the accelerant detection canine assignment

Sponsors: Personnel Services Department

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Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
2/26/2015	1	City Council	approved	Pass

REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

February 26, 2015

FROM: JEFF CARDELL, Director
Personnel Services Department

BY: KEN PHILLIPS, Labor Relations Manager
Personnel Services Department

SUBJECT

***Adopt a Side Letter of Agreement between the City and the International Association of Fire Fighters, Local 753 - Unit 5, Non-Management Fire regarding the accelerant detection canine assignment

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approve the attached Side Letter of Agreement on Firefighter compensation for the care and feeding of a canine trained in accelerant detection for City employees in Unit 5, represented by the International Association of Fire Fighters, Local 753 ("Fire Basic").

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Through the City's participation in the Fresno County Fire Investigative Strike Team ("FIST"), the Fire Department has accepted an accelerant detection canine. The care and feeding of the canine will be

provided by a firefighter specially assigned to the Fire Investigations Unit, which includes housing the dog at home after work and otherwise providing for the care and feeding of the dog. The Fair Labor Standards Act (“FLSA”) requires that employee time spent in such care be compensated. The compensation provided for such care has been negotiated with Fire Basic. The attached side letter was accordingly agreed to with Fire Basic representatives for this special assignment.

BACKGROUND

FIST is a regionalized non-profit organization made up of fire investigators who provide consultation and resources to its members. The members include fire investigation units from the Fresno, Clovis, Coalinga, Kingsburg, Sanger and Selma Fire Departments, in addition to the Fresno County Fire Protection District.

Part of the services FIST provides includes the use of an ignitable liquid detection canine. The dog’s job is to sniff out fire scenes to find ignitable liquids when they are used to ignite a fire. A trained dog’s nose is more reliable than manmade equipment and can find the ignitable liquids more readily. The canine provided by FIST is one of four dogs with such training in California, and one of approximately 350 trained canines within US and Canada.

Funding of the canine program is provided by a State Farm Arson Dog program and donations to FIST. The funding provides the trained canine, five weeks of specialized training course for the dog and the handler and annual recertification for the career of the canine. All of the dog’s veterinary needs are also provided by FIST, along with a specialized transport vehicle, food, and other miscellaneous care products.

Prior to August 2014, the FIST canine handler was a retired fire investigator who volunteered time and services. When the canine was retired, a City of Fresno Firefighter volunteered and was assigned to manage the new canine, Tessa. The City Firefighter went through the training program and has been providing the care for Tessa. Between August 29, 2014 and January 23, 2015, Tessa and the City Firefighter have been involved in 20 fire investigations, 19 of which were in the City of Fresno.

Personnel and IAFF Local 753 met and conferred and agreed to terms outlined in the attached side letter of agreement. The terms provide for payment of one-half hour (30 minutes) of time for the care and feeding of Tessa outside of normal work hours per day, which the parties agree is a reasonable amount of time. The parties also agree that any time over thirty minutes a day shall be normal owner-related activities for the enjoyment of the individual and the canine. The agreement is that payment for such canine care will be at the rate of \$20 per hour.

The side letter has been approved by the City Attorney’s Office as to form. Council is asked to approve the side letter.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

Not applicable.

LOCAL PREFERENCE

Not applicable.

FISCAL IMPACT

Time for the care and feeding of the canine is to be paid as overtime. It is estimated that this special assignment will result in increased salary and benefit expenses of \$6,700 per year that are to be absorbed within the current Department budget allocation.

Attachment: Canine Assignment Side Letter of Agreement with Fire Basic