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FIRE CHIEF

June 30, 2020

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
FILE NO. 20-019R

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM:  Ralph M. Terrazas, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: REVISED PROMOTIONAL EXAMINATION TIMELINES

FINAL ACTION:	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved w/Corrections	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn
	<input type="checkbox"/> Denied	<input type="checkbox"/> Received & Filed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

SUMMARY

During Fiscal Year (FY) 15/16, the Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) experienced a record high attrition rate. As a result, numerous staffing shortages were created along with a significant increase in overtime. Currently, the Department has developed a strategy to anticipate and address attrition through adequately timed promotional examinations in the future. The LAFD's A Safer City 2.0 Strategic Plan includes Goal 5: Increase opportunities for personal growth and professional development. In fulfilling this goal, the LAFD will also equip and prepare members for promotional opportunities made available by the approaching FY 22/23 and 23/24 record high attrition rates.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board:
Approve the report.

DISCUSSION

In FY 15/16, the LAFD faced record-high Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP) exits which resulted in significant staffing shortages. The impact of the staffing issue was further exacerbated by record-high promotions and increased overtime. Subsequently, the Department conducted promotional examinations more frequently which produced examination timelines with concurrent expiration dates. The unintended outcome for the LAFD and the Personnel Department includes the challenge to prepare for, and conduct multiple promotional examination processes in rapid succession.

By purposefully realigning the promotional examination timelines, the LAFD will have the ability to coordinate the examination processes and implement a testing cycle based upon the DROP retirement timeline. This will provide predictability and increase opportunities for LAFD members to develop towards the responsibilities of their new sought after positions through the LAFD Training Institute Academies, Preparation Programs and Mentorship opportunities.

The chart below indicates how coordinating the dates of the promotional lists will allow the new Established Dates to begin closest to the period with the highest rate of attrition, which would be FY 23/24.

Current Promotional List FY 18/20			FY 20/22		FY 22/24		FY 24/26	
Positions	Current List Established	Expiration Date	Projected Established Date	Expiration Date	Projected Established Date	Expiration Date	Projected Established Date	Expiration Date
Engineer	07/2017	07/2019	07/2019	07/2021	07/2021	07/2023	07/2023	07/2025
Apparatus Operator	12/2017	12/2019	*07/2020	07/2022	07/2022	07/2024	07/2024	07/2026
Captain I	12/2018	12/2020	*05/2021	05/2023	05/2023	05/2025	05/2025	05/2027
Captain II	11/2018	11/2020	*07/2021	07/2023	07/2023	07/2025	07/2025	07/2027
Battalion Chief	09/2018	09/2020	*11/2020	11/2022	11/2022	11/2024	11/2024	11/2026
Assistant Chief	06/2018	06/2020	06/2020	06/2022	06/2022	06/2024	06/2024	06/2026

Note: *Denotes the Established Date adjustments to prepare for the projected attrition of FY 23/24.

In FY 14/15 and FY 15/16, the promotional lists incorporated both fiscal years causing record-high promotional lists. In anticipation for the high attrition in FY 22/23 and FY 23/24, the LAFD will coordinate promotional examinations by adjusting the testing cycle which will balance the promotional rate and allow for more refined planning methods to guide and assist newly promoted rated members, frontline supervisors and leaders.

The chart to the right indicates that the attrition rates after the record-high years will drop tremendously allowing for stabilization. The remaining promotional examination timelines (e.g. Inspector I, Inspector II, etc.) will remain unaffected. Promotional examinations for specialty positions (e.g. Helicopter Pilot, Fireboat Mate) will be scheduled based on LAFD needs. This alignment of promotional examination dates have been developed and discussed in collaboration with the Personnel Services Section and the LAFD Command Staff.

FISCAL YEAR	DROP ATTRITION
14/15	123
15/16	180
16/17	77
17/18	69
18/19	91
19/20	93
20/21	79
21/22	68
22/23	135
23/24	184

CONCLUSION

It is understood that Fiscal Years 22/23 and 23/24 will have record-high attrition rates for all ranks, especially in frontline supervisor and leadership positions. The LAFD has anticipated this issue and developed a succession plan in alignment with the projected retirements through the utilization of DROP metrics. These efforts will ensure balanced promotional lists and successful advancement of newly appointed members.

Board report prepared by Steve Hissong, Assistant Chief, Training Division.