



July 13th, 2022

The current Fire and Police Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) ordinance has been in effect for approximately 15 years. There are two main benefits that have occurred during that time period and I believe that further continuance of the ordinance will continue to benefit the Fire Department and therefore the City.

Experienced Employee Retention – Due to the nature of the Fire Department, individual firefighters are hired with no or low levels of experience and then rise through the ranks of the department until their retirement. Although the position is replaced at that lower level of experience, the effect of losing members that have 20+ years of experience is difficult to replace. Most of these individuals are in leadership roles within the department (Engineers, Captains and Chief Officers). The ability to retain these individuals that would ordinarily go elsewhere helps with the stability of the department and increases our ability to provide quality customer service. Looking at a two-year period (going back approximately one year and moving forward one year) we are looking at bringing on approximately 35-40 new firefighters. Retaining experienced personnel will be crucial in preparing these firefighters to assume leadership positions in the future.

Hiring/Retirement “Smoothing” – Again, due to the nature of the Fire Department, we hire firefighters in periodic groups in order to correspond with our recruit training academy schedules. In the past, we have had very large classes that were hired over a short period of time which means they are all eligible to retire at the same time. The DROP has created a “smoothing” effect in the timing of retirements.

Some will participate in the DROP for the full 5 years, some for less years, and some will not participate at all. Instead of a class of 10 firefighters retiring at the same time, those 10 will spread out over a longer period of time due to DROP participation. This allows the fire department to better plan and prepare for replacement.

Respectfully Submitted,

Interim Fire Chief, Randy White