



Disaster and Fire Safety Commission

CONSENT CALENDAR
September 28, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Disaster and Fire Safety Commission
 Submitted by: Jose Bedolla, Chairperson, Disaster and Fire Safety Commission
 Subject: Extending the Requirements for Telestaff Time Reporting

RECOMMENDATION

The Disaster and Fire Safety Commission (DFSC) recommends that the Berkeley Fire Department require that all overtime recorded for Fire Suppression be coded properly in the Telestaff application to show the reason for the overtime. Further, to assist determining what overtime is eligible to be charged to Measure GG as “Minimum Staffing” that overtime must be properly coded as supporting minimum staffing. (Currently, this would be code 00FS10 and 00FS11). This would not affect charges for Measure GG approved time or overtime.

In addition, we recommend that in any future reports to the DFSC on Measure GG budget that the report include a breakdown of the time by labor purpose of both regular and overtime.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Utilizing the purpose codes for minimum staffing should significantly reduce the time required to properly determine the overtime charges which can be legitimately charged to Measure GG.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Currently, the tendency is to report a large percentage of worked overtime to Measure GG. The DFSC believes that much of this overtime is not demonstrably in alignment with the intent of the measure - to enable the city to keep fire stations open and improve medical emergency response and disaster preparedness - resulting in overcharges to the Measure GG Budget. As a partial result, the funds for measure GG support to the Berkeley Fire Department are in danger of running out without meeting all of the intended purposes intended by the measure.

BACKGROUND

The DFSC has sent several previous recommendations or communications to City Council to discuss what the commission saw as excess charges to the Measure GG

fund. The feeling of the commission has been, and still is, that more overtime is being charged to the Measure GG accounts than is actually justifiable.

In the past the claim has been made that the accounting system was not adequate to properly separate out the overtime required for minimum staffing. However, the current system both has the ability to track this time with more accuracy and the ability to extract reports based on that tracking. At the time of this writing, the supervisors are apparently not coding overtime assignments in Telestaff, however that coding is both possible and fairly easy.

At the August 4, 2021 Disaster and Fire Safety Commission regular meeting, the commission voted to recommend that the Berkeley Fire Department require that all overtime recorded for Fire Suppression be coded properly in the Telestaff application to show the reason for the overtime. Motion: Rader, Second: Degenkolb, Vote: 6 Ayes: Couzin, Rader, Dean, Bradstreet, Degenkolb, Stein; 0 Noes; 2 Absent: Simmons, Bedolla; 0 Abstain.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

There is no environmental or climate impact to this recommendation.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Measure GG clearly specifies what the funds generated by the voter approved tax were to be used for. In the past the excuse that our accounting system was not up to properly tracking that information provided an impetus to charge all fire suppression overtime as applicable to Measure GG. With the new accounting system, that rationale is no longer valid. As such, improper charges of overtime to Measure GG has become a matter of misappropriation of public funds. This recommendation is intended to make it easier to properly separate out charges that are appropriate to the intent of the Measure GG tax.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

While previous recommendations have been made, none have been practical until now.

CITY MANAGER

The City Manager concurs with the content and recommendations of the Disaster and Fire Commission's Report. At the time of this report, details regarding how the information was being transferred from the Telestaff program and added to Enterprise Resource Management Application (ERMA) was not fully realized by the Disaster and Fire Safety Commission.

Telestaff records all overtime of personnel with various codes that relates to specific reasons that personnel are being hired to work. Those codes are noted and assigned in ERMA when payroll is being completed by finance staff. The Commission's recommendation is a standard practice when staff is completing payroll procedures.

CONTACT PERSON

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