

Response to Questions on the FY 2013 Budget

Request By: Supervisor Cook

Question: What process, if any, is used to substitute volunteer firefighters for paid firefighters as a way of reducing overtime costs?

Response: The Fire and Rescue Department (FRD) continually explores opportunities to streamline operations in order to reduce overtime without compromising resident or firefighter safety; this includes maximizing volunteer utilization. In fact, operational overtime decreased approximately 5 percent from \$15.1 million in FY 2010 to \$14.4 million in FY 2011. The challenge with using volunteers is their limited availability during the weekdays as many of FRD's operational volunteers have daytime jobs and are unable to commit to 24-hour shifts. Therefore, volunteers are not used to meet minimum staffing levels. On weekends and when available, the department takes full advantage of volunteer availability and uses them to up-staff units, place additional units in service, fill in while career members are attending training or provide staffing to maintain a front-line unit in service.