



City of Yakima

News Release

Subject: Grant to Provide Three New Firefighters

Contact: Yakima Fire Chief Bob Stewart – 575-6060

Communications & Public Affairs Director Randy Beehler – 901-1142

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Grant to Provide Three New Firefighters

The Yakima City Council on Tuesday night, January 16th, approved a grant that will provide three new full-time firefighters for the Yakima Fire Department. The Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response (SAFER) grant is for three years and was awarded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"The grant funding will help us reduce our reliance on overtime to provide adequate staffing in support of the emergency needs of the community," Yakima Fire Chief Bob Stewart said. "Our employees are susceptible to injury and illness just like any other workforce, and when they are unable to work we must fill their vacant positions to ensure our operational readiness. With the additional firefighters, we will have a buffer before having to utilize overtime funding," said Stewart.

The Yakima Fire Department hopes to have the three new firefighters on board by February 16th.

The grant will cover 75% of the firefighters' salaries and benefits during each of the first two years and 25% during the third year. The City of Yakima will be responsible for 100 percent of salary and benefits starting in the fourth year.

"The grant from the federal government allows the City to add three new firefighters now and plan to absorb the full cost of those firefighters into the budget over the course of the next three years," said Councilmember Carmen Méndez, chair of the Council Public Safety Committee.

"The grant is allowing the City to plan ahead to fully budget for the three firefighters in the future while getting to benefit from extra staffing now."

The Yakima City Council authorized Stewart to apply for the SAFER grant during its regular business meeting on February 7th, 2017.