Item # 20
Date: 11/23/26

ITEM # _____
DATE: xx-xx-xxxx

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

AGENDA ITEM: Approval request to increase the volunteer firefighter stipend.

HISTORY: The Nevada Fire Department has one full-time paid fire chief and 38 volunteer members. The members respond to 870 calls per year and have the largest fire district in Story County totaling 137 sq. miles. NFD is the busiest volunteer department in the State of Iowa. The volunteers have not had an increase in stipend since it was last reduced in 2012 from $10 per call to $7.50 per call. Since 2017, the volunteer firefighters have been taxed on their stipend making their compensation equivalent to $4.50 per call.

The city-wide pay study several years ago recommended the city improve volunteer firefighter compensation. Attached is a document showing the fiscal implications for raising the stipend. The department has an approved budget of $24,000 towards volunteer stipends. Increasing the stipend to $10 per call for 911 calls while keeping the stipend at $7.50 for scheduled community events is feasible with the existing budget. For the last few years, our budget has operated in the black and would be able to cover anything exceeding the $24,000 budgeted if this proposal were implemented.

While this is not a long-term solution to the increased call demand on our volunteers, it does show a commitment from the city to continue the great support they have shown in providing outstanding equipment and apparatus for the members. It is recommended the volunteer firefighter stipend be raised from $7.50 per call to $10.00 per call for all dispatched calls for service and leaving the stipend at $7.50 per scheduled community event. A cap of $2500 per member every 6 months shall be set with this proposal increase.

OPTIONS:
1. Increase the volunteer firefighter stipend to $10 per call and remain $7.50 per community scheduled events with a cap of $2500 per member each 6 months.

2. Increase the volunteer stipend to a flat $9 per call.

3. Reject the stipend increase at this time and have staff seek other options.

STAFF'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:
The Public Safety Director and Director of Fire and EMS recommends approval of option #1. The city has continued to support several positive changes to improve the department. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the Interim City Administrator that Council approves Option #1.

NEVADA PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT

1209 6th Street – P.O. Box 530 Nevada, Iowa 50201 Tele: 515-382-4593

Chris Brandes
Public Safety Director
Chief of Police

COST ANALYSIS BETWEEN EMERGENCY CALLS AND NON-PAGED SPECIAL EVENTS

October 28, 2025 to October 28, 2026

NON-PAGED COMMUNITY EVENTS:	58
MEMBER RESPONSES TO COMMUNITY EVENTS:	337

TOTAL COST @ $7.50 PER CALL NON-SCHEDULED: $2527.50

TOTAL PAGED CALLS FOR SERIVCE:	809
MEMBER RESPONSES FOR EMERGENCIES:	2315

TOTAL COST @ $10 PER CALL: $23,150.00

COMMUNITY EVENT TRENDS:	2020	162 EVENTS
	2022	100 EVENTS
	2025	58 EVENTS *

*This figure is from October 28, 2025 to present (1 year).

Note: Since Chief Reynolds and our police officers who respond to fire calls do not get paid per call, all of those responses were not included in these figures. The department has drastically cut back on special events and requests where possible to reduce volunteer burnout from doing extra events. Our highest number of community requests came during Covid when the department participated in birthday driveby events due to social distancing.

OTHER VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT COMPARISONS

Nevada FD 1st Busiest Vol FD in Iowa	870 calls	Currently $7.50
Eldridge FD 2nd busiest Vol FD	800 calls	$20 per call
West Burlington FD	600 calls	$100 per month $275-$325 (Captains and above)
West Story FD (old Kelley FD)	100 calls	$0

Baxter FD	100 fire calls	$0
Baxter EMS	100 EMS calls	$50 per call for provider $10 per call for drivers
Huxley FD	50 fire calls	$15 per call Ambulance pay is as follows: $8/hr on call. $70 per call for EMS provider that takes the patient. $30 per call for Driver.
Slater FD	50 fire calls	$5 per call
Slater EMS	150 EMS calls	$5 per call $10 for primary EMS provider to include completing the pt care report
Gilbert FD	300 calls	$0
Maxwell FD	50 calls	$10 per call / $5 per meeting or training
Colo FD	220 calls	$9 per hour/call and $6/hr for training
Cambridge FD	240 calls	$5 per call clothing allowance
Story City FD	120 calls	$11 per call and training $5 per meeting $22 Fire Chief per call
Mitchellville FD	500 calls	$10 per call $30 for paramedics $100 for weekend stipend to remain in town on call.

CONCLUSIONS AND BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The fire department operating budget line items 001-150-6010 Fire Salaries coverns the fire chief wages and the volunteer stipend reimbursement. There is $24,000 dedicated towards volunteer stipend reimbursement.

To implement the proposal of $7.50 for scheduled community events and $10 for 911 calls for service (paged responses) based off the last 12 months would require a total **$25,677.50**

Our top stipend participate is Chief Fred Malven, who has been paid $4162.50 from October 28 (2025) to October 28 (2026). He will be retiring from the department at the end of March. With the loss of Fred on

our payroll, I anticipate we could make this proposal work and come under budget. Using the last 12 months and excluding Fred's salary we would need $21,515.00 of the $24,000 budgeted.

It is my recommendation we adopt the proposal effective April 1, 2026. Our response level during the day calls along with not having the large call volume Fred Malven offers would allow the additional savings to start right after Fred's retirement.