CITY OF JOPLIN
COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

ITEM
Council Bill 2025-551 – Approving the Salary Administration Plan for Classified and Unclassified positions with a new position and amending the budget for Emergency Communications

MEETING DATE
November 17, 2025

ORIGINATING DEPT
Finance

ATTACHMENTS
CB 2025-551 Ordinance; Exhibit "A"-Salary Administration Plan for Classified and Unclassified positions

REVIEWED BY
Department Head: Leslie Haase; Human Resources Director: Michelle Ducre; City Attorney: Peter Edwards; City Manager: Nick Edwards

SUMMARY
This Council Bill approves the Salary Administration Plan for Classified and Unclassified positions with a new position and amends the budget to help address the critical staffing needs in Emergency Communications.

BACKGROUND
An internal working group comprised of Chief Ezell, Deputy Chief Nimmo, Chief Pearson, Assistant Chief Lewis, Captain Duncan, Finance Director Leslie Haase, Human Resources Director Michelle Ducre, and Public Safety Communications Manager Cheryl Konarski met to develop a plan to help address a critical staffing shortage in Dispatch. A comprehensive short-term plan was presented to City Council at the last informal meeting. Following the feedback received during this meeting, the work group met again and presents this plan for your consideration. The plan needing formal Council approval is to create an Operator III position and to purchase new AI technology.

An Operator 3 position is being recommended, similar to the creation of the Transit 3 position, where qualified employees will have the opportunity to be promoted to a higher pay grade to provide an ongoing training component to the division, which includes not only training new Public Safety Communications Operators, but also developing continuing education training within the Emergency Communications Center and assisting with training opportunities across the public safety communications profession. Currently, the City only has three levels before reaching the Manager position. Other Emergency Communication Operations have five or more levels before reaching the Manager position. Much like creating the Transit 3 position, the creation of this third level will allow flexibility to bring lateral candidates to the organization at

higher steps in recognition of their experience. The City has had recent interest from lateral candidates and the work group believes this flexibility will help attract these experienced workers, along with the future opportunity to advance to Operator 3. The work group believes this position will help address both recruiting and retention. The estimated current cost of adding this position is $30,000.00 annually.

New technology is being developed that utilizes AI to improve work flows for dispatch. This tool allows for a voice transcription from a call to the dispatch console, which allows for faster work. This tool will also reduce work demands on dispatchers. This tool costs $11,500.00 for the first year and $10,000.00 annually thereafter. This tool is still in development and is anticipated to be available publicly during the first quarter of 2026. The City will purchase and implement this new tool when it becomes available.

While there are no guarantees, the work group believes these two measures will help address the critical staffing shorting in dispatch for the short-term. However, this plan does not fully address a long-term solution. The organization as a whole has a critical need for additional resources and funding to allow for a more permanent and long-term solution for dispatch. Absent an additional revenue source, the proposed measures are only short-term corrections.

This council bill also includes a budget amendment of $41,500.00 to fund the new position and the cost of the new AI technology.

FUNDING SOURCE
This item includes a budget amendment.

RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends approval of this council bill on first reading.