



## News Release

### **GALLATIN FILLS ALL VACANCIES IN FIRE DEPARTMENT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN TWO YEARS**

*Fire Chief Says Hires Must Have "A Servant's Heart" to Qualify*

**Gallatin** – The Gallatin Fire Department recently filled eight firefighter positions, making it fully staffed for the first time in approximately two years. Turnover is a common problem for municipal fire departments in smaller cities that certify new recruits who afterward quit to work for neighboring cities with higher salaries.

"I don't think we are immune from challenges in talent management...what we are doing to attract and retain talent because we have competition around us," said Fire Chief Jeff Beaman. "That scenario has happened to us in the past. I think though we are making positive changes here."

Mayor Brown and the Gallatin City Council are expected to announce the results of a pay study in March, which will bring Gallatin's salaries in-line with similar jobs in other cities. In his first year with the city, Gallatin's Fire Chief has also worked to promote internally and create a positive work environment. "We've had four people who have come back to work here from other departments and I think that's a good example to use of our environment changing," said Beaman. "I feel pretty strongly that we're going to be competitive with our pay, and our benefits are already pretty good. I think we're closing that gap."

In order to be certified as a firefighter in Tennessee, new recruits attend an eight-week program that is taught in-house with a curriculum established by the Tennessee on Firefighting Commission. After completion, they then attend a two-week class on hazardous materials. Chief Beaman also enrolled new recruits into Emergency Medical Responder Training, which gives firefighters the ability to provide medical care to patients. While sending uncertified recruits to a state fire school is an option, there can be limited availability and the city can train recruits for approximately \$1,000, whereas the state's training can be \$6,000 to \$7,000 per student.

During the recruitment process, Beaman says there isn't a particular type of skillset required of new hires, but rather a personality trait that he looks for when looking for the best candidates.

"I would prefer you to have the heart, the want and the desire because I can teach you to be a firefighter, but if you don't have those innate characteristics then I can't teach you how to be a servant," said Beaman. "That's our job, we serve everybody. You call us, we're coming to help you and we really don't care who you are. We're just going to come help you, and if you have a servant's heart and you have desire to do this, we can teach you how to be a firefighter."

Those working full time with the Gallatin Fire Department are eligible for the City of Gallatin's benefit plans including no-cost health, dental, and vision insurance, enrollment in the State of Tennessee's retirement plan, 12 paid sick days per year, 14 paid holidays per year, paid vacation, no cost Life insurance and short-term/long-term disability insurance.

