

# Maintenance Department Tree Trimming Crew

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Justification

3/2012

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## **Background:**

Currently the district has an annual contract for tree trimming valued at an average of \$500,000 dollars per year for moderate to large scale tree trimming services at all facilities. Historically, three (3) contractors would provide these services based on per man hour charges that include the necessary equipment to complete the work. On larger projects, all 3 contractors would place a bid based on a site visit with the project leader, and the lowest price would be awarded that particular job. On the latest bid (effective 2/22/12) only one (1) contractor was chosen in anticipation of moving towards developing an in house crew.

## **Current Process:**

As stated above, the majority of tree trimming is accomplished utilizing contracted services. Due to the annual expense of the contract, the scope and scale of work is limited to safety issues, dead or diseased trees, low hanging branches in parking lots and bus circles, trees and limbs in contact or in very close proximity to buildings, rodent control and PM at hurricane shelter locations.

## **Proposed Changes:**

Eliminate the need for an annual contract for tree trimming services by funding four additional maintenance department positions to perform the service in house. We are requesting one (1) certified arborist and three (3) tree trimmers along with the necessary equipment to support the tree trimming crew to establish a full time 12 month a year program.

## **Proposed Job Titles:**

All positions would be on the non-exempt salary schedule as follows:

- Certified Arborist – Pay grade D11
- Tree Trimmer – Pay grade D08

The specific job descriptions are currently being developed.

## **Funding of Positions/Equipment:**

The positions would be funded by the elimination of the annual tree trimming contract (\$400,000 - \$600,000/year). The arborist position (D-11) would have a midpoint salary of \$40,350 x 33% (fringe & benefits) = \$53,666. The 3 tree trimmer positions (D07) would have a combined midpoint salary of \$82,635 (3 x 27,545) x 33% (fringe & benefits) = \$109,905. **Total combined personnel salaries, fringe & benefits = \$163,571**

The equipment needed to perform all duties would be 1 – 65' bucket/chip truck (\$140,000), 1 – Chipper (\$40,000), 1 – self propelled aerial lift (\$25,000), 1 – ¾ ton pickup (30,000), 1 – stump grinder (\$25,000).

**Total cost for equipment = \$260,000**

Note: The equipment was approved for funded in 2011/12 by the capital outlay committee contingent upon the approval of additional four new positions.

Average total of annual tree trimming contract	\$500,000
Combined total of certified arborist position (1)	-\$ 53,666
Combined total of tree trimmer positions (3)	-\$109,905
Total of equipment purchases*	-\$260,000
<b>First year savings</b>	<b>\$ 76,429</b>

\* Equipment purchases are first year expense only; average life cycle replacement for vehicles and equipment is 7 – 10 years.

**Year two (2) and thereafter the annual savings would be – \$336,429**

**Benefits:**

- Annually save \$336,429 after the first year.
- Increase productivity by implementing a tree trimming program that operates full time 12 months a year.
- Provide facilities with not only the services currently provided under the annual contract, but also provide additional services to all facilities such as campus wide tree trimming and campus beautification projects (i.e. palm tree trimming, landscape beds and foliage installation and maintenance).
- Ability to provide manpower and equipment support from the grounds and sites sections of the maintenance department for larger projects.
- Better control over flexibility of scope and quality standards due to in house personnel performing the work.

**Rationale:**

The creation of an in house tree trimming crew will offer a substantial savings in the operational budget and increase the amount and scope of work that can be completed. It will also provide an added benefit of creating additional promotional opportunities for employees.