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## CHELSEA FIREFIGHTERS TO FACE LAYOFFS WHEN GRANT RUNS OUT

Officials with the Chelsea Area Fire Authority reported today that three firefighting positions are in jeopardy of being permanently lost. The positions, two of which are presently occupied, were funded by a “SAFER” grant, or Staffing for Adequate and Emergency Response grant, from the federal government. Officials say that the grant money has now run out, and there are few options left to support these positions within the Fire Authority’s \$1.4 million annual budget. Chief Jim Payeur told reporters that he would rather re-join the force as an active firefighter than see the positions eliminated. That alternative was quickly rejected by the Fire Authority’s Board, however, which directed Payeur to revisit his budgetary options. One alternative to eliminating the three positions involves tapping into the Fire Authority’s \$650,000 reserve fund. The Authority would use part of that money to temporarily cover the salaries of the three fire-fighting positions. It would then turn to the voters in the next election, asking for an increase in its operative funds to cover the positions permanently. The Authority’s auditor, however, disfavors this option. Instead, the auditor proposes that the three firefighting positions be cut from the budget entirely. This would result in changing shifts at the fire department: currently, the department runs three, four-person shifts; if the positions are eliminated, the department would be required to move to three person shifts. The Board is expected to make a decision at its next meeting, currently scheduled for this coming Tuesday. For more details on the article [Click Here](#) Where can you find the most jobs? [Click here](#).

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