

Press Clippings - August 4, 2023

- Elgin Courier News

Elgin council agrees to hire private firm to supply crossing guards at city elementary and middle schools

By: Gloria Casas

August 03, 2023



A private company is being hired by the city of Elgin to provide crossing guards for schools like Huff Elementary when classes begin later this month. The change will mean city police officers will no longer need to fill in when there is a vacancy at a corner. (Mike Danahey / The Courier-News)

Crossing guard duties in Elgin are going to be outsourced to Andy Frain Services so city police officers don't have to fill in at some locations.

The Elgin City Council has tentatively approved a \$156,000 contract with the private company to provide crossing guards at 11 elementary and middle school locations in the city.

"This will free up (time) for regular police personnel who are required to step in and fill in for absent (guards)," City Manager Rick Kozal told council members at last week's meeting.

It will also ensure trained police officers' skills are put to better use while they're on the job, Kozal said.

The police department's Traffic Unit had been overseeing the crossing guard program, which has had a high turnover rate. Because it was difficult to fill the jobs and frequent absences and vacancies, traffic and parking control officers and even the traffic supervisor have had to fill in, police officials said.

In addition to freeing up manpower, outsourcing the jobs also will save that was being used

to hire and train crossing guards, officials said.

Police Cmdr. Steve Bianchi said there was no staff opposition to the change, responding to a question asked by Councilman Anthony Ortiz.

“(The officers) are more than fine,” Bianchi said. “They are happy they will not have to be out there at the last minute and they will be able to do their regular duties.”

Current crossing guards will be given the chance to keep their jobs and become employees of the new company, he said.

Andy Frain will recruit, select, train and employ the guards and provide a field supervisor, who will make random visits to crossing locations.

The requirements to become a crossing guard include being 18 or older and having good judgment and moral character, according to the job description included in the city’s proposed contract with Frain.

Applicants will undergo background checks and will not be hired if they have any felony convictions or convictions related to crimes against children, sexual assault or any other offense seen as related to inappropriate behavior around children, the contract said.

If approved at the next council meeting, crossing guards will be hired to start on the first day of school, Tuesday, Aug. 15, at the following locations:

- Channing Elementary School, 63 S. Channing St.;
- Coleman Elementary, 1220 Dundee Ave.;
- Creekside Elementary School, 655 N. Airlite St.;
- Harriet Gifford Elementary School, 240 S. Clifton Ave.;
- Highland Elementary School, 190 N. Melrose Ave.;
- Huff Elementary School, 801 Hastings St.;
- Lords Park Elementary School, 323 Wavery Drive;
- Lowrie Elementary School, 264 Oak St.;
- Washington Elementary School, 819 W. Chicago St.