

I submit this letter for this evening with limited information from the posted agenda packet and without hearing the mid-year budget presentation. With that disclosure in place, it appears to me the ask from city staff tonight is to add or fill several General Fund positions. My ask from Council would be to please proceed with caution and consider the long term impacts this will have on our current employees and our ability to be a competitive employer. I do not speak for the other bargaining units, so I won't. Per the city's third party salary survey, the fire bargaining unit is approximately 16% behind "like" cities in the Valley. I would argue, when you get into the intricacies of fire department salaries, we are closer to 24% behind "like" cities in the Valley. Truth be told, we have been providing the city and the city council with this information (free of charge by the way) for the last several years.

It appears to me, the ask tonight at a minimum, is to look at funding or re-funding General Fund positions with an annual cost of approximately \$883,000 (please correct me if I am wrong). I stand before you tonight (virtually) to remind you, again, that the Firefighters 1- have not been made whole from "temporary" concessions made over several MOUs a handful of years back, and 2- in recent years we have not been able to keep up with basic CPI cost of living. In the face of COVID we stepped back during negotiations and proposed a simple contract extension with no wage increase in an effort to help the city navigate the uncertain financial impacts that may come. I would hope that a decision tonight to proceed with the filling of these positions would also have the forethought to ensure we will once again be a competitive employer or that we would ensure our employees have been caught up prior to adding more positions.

Chad Englert

Firefighters Association