



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Bruce Mills, Interim Assistant City Manager *Bm*

DATE: August 10, 2023

SUBJECT: City and Austin Firefighters Association Contract Negotiations Update

This memorandum is to advise the Council that management's discussions with the Austin Firefighters Association (AFA) for a negotiated labor contract as an alternative to the pending interest arbitration proceeding have ended without achieving a negotiated labor contract.

Management has been engaged actively with the AFA for several months to achieve a mutually agreeable labor contract for our firefighters. Within the past week the parties had arrived at mutually agreeable language for all of the contract articles, which included a wage package that would keep our firefighters the overall best paid fire department in Texas by a significant margin, a reduction in scheduled work hours that directly addresses the AFA's request, and other enhancements to the firefighters' working conditions. Attached is a summary of key parts of the City's offer.

After arriving at agreeable contract language on all articles, management asked the AFA leadership to recommend these agreed contract terms to its members – just as we do for every labor contract with our public safety unions. We do this because it is critical for the AFA membership to see that the contract they are asked to approve is satisfactory to the leadership who negotiated the agreement on their behalf, and we think it is highly unlikely that the membership would vote to approve a contract that is not recommended by their leadership. Yesterday the AFA advised City management that it would not recommend the agreed contract to its membership and announced to its membership that the proposed contract would not be submitted to them for a vote. Given the efforts to try to achieve a negotiated labor contract that could be presented to the Council for approval, this is a disappointing result for both the firefighters and the City.

In light of this development, it appears that the labor contract with the AFA will have to be resolved through the pending interest arbitration proceeding. We expect a final ruling by the arbitration panel by mid-September and will update you if there are any further developments before that time.

The City Law Department is available for any questions you may have about this information.

cc: Jesús Garza, Interim City Manager
Joel G. Baker, Fire Chief

Attachments: AFD Labor Agreement - Summary Term Sheet



August 8, 2023

Labor Contract Proposal for Austin Firefighters Summary of Key Provisions

Contract Term: The new contract will become effective when approved by the Association membership and the City Council and will expire 09/30/2025

- Wages:**
- 4% increase starting September 10, 2023
 - 4% increase starting 1st pay period in FY23-24
 - 4% increase starting 1st pay period in FY24-25

- Lump Sum Payment:** Lump sum payment to each firefighter equal to:
- 4% of current annual base pay plus 4% of overtime pay for the period from 10/01/22 to date of the new contract; and
 - An additional 2% of new annual base pay

Shift Schedule: A commitment to decrease the scheduled work hours for firefighters by 52 hours per year (1-hour per week) no later than the last month of the contract

- Drug Testing:**
- Elimination of mandatory random drug testing and mandatory post-accident drug testing
 - Drug testing by saliva sample rather than blood sample
 - Protection from discipline for firefighters who test positive for cannabis so long as they have a prescription for medical cannabis, are using it as prescribed, and are not impaired while on the job

- Other Terms:**
- Assignment pay eligibility for firefighters in Wildfire Battalion, Arson Investigation, and Dispatch Division (\$150/month)
 - Staff pay eligibility for Assistant Chiefs
 - Additional paid holiday (Juneteenth – with exception vacation hours in lieu of the 2022 holiday)