



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 8, 2021

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**Mayor John Hamilton and Bloomington Police Chief Michael Diekhoff Issue Joint Statement re: Resolution 21-27**

**Bloomington, Ind.** - Mayor John Hamilton and Bloomington Police Chief Michael Diekhoff have shared the following joint statement with the Bloomington Common Council regarding Resolution 21-27:

"This evening the Common Council is considering Resolution 21-27, 'Calling for an Increase to Salaries for Members of the Police Department,' which urges an increase in Bloomington Police Department (BPD) base pay by \$5K/year beginning in 2022. We appreciate council members' strong support of our police department and agree with much of their rationale. For instance, we all agree that a high functioning police force that enjoys high morale and the best possible working conditions, equipment and benefits is the ultimate goal. Toward those ends, the City has been working for months on retention and recruitment strategies.

"We do not share quite the same ideas on how to go about achieving those ends. We need to work through these issues thoughtfully.

"One thing we appear not to agree upon is where negotiations over union pay should take place. It would be unprecedented to give a raise in base pay outside the normal bargaining cycle and process. We believe, and it is in our municipal code, that the appropriate place to negotiate base pay is in regular contract negotiations, which the code provides is undertaken by the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and the City administration. Normal union contract negotiations would begin in early 2022, but we appreciate the urgency and propose that negotiations begin next month.

"Based on recently compiled information, we believe that Bloomington is not at the bottom of peer Indiana cities and compares more favorably when all the elements of compensation are considered and officer classifications across cities are accurately compared. This information will be provided to the Common Council at tonight's meeting.

"It is important to note that any significant increase in base pay above the 2.9% increase for 2022 provided in the current Collective Bargaining Agreement will have significant, long term budget implications and will require careful planning over time. Taxes may need to be raised, alternative revenue sources identified, or cost-cutting measures implemented.

"Until we have a negotiated agreement, we propose the use of one-time America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds in the increased amount of at least \$500,000 to address retention of our current excellent BPD employees and recruitment of similarly highly qualified and trained staff to join our force.

"We want to support our BPD officers at every level and are grateful for their exceptional service, especially during these particularly difficult times in our community and our world. We look forward to working with the Council on how to address these crucial issues."