



Memorandum

TO: Members of the City of Bloomington Common Council (“Council”)

FROM: Margie Rice, Corporation Counsel
Enedina Kassamanian

CC: Kerry Thomson, Mayor
Gretchen Knapp, Deputy Mayor
Nicole Bolden, City Clerk
Jessica McClellan, City Controller
Sharr Pechac, Human Resources Director
Roger Kerr, Fire Chief

RE: Resolution 2024-18

DATE: October 21, 2024

Summary

Resolution 2024-18 is a resolution to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement (“CBA”) between the City of Bloomington and the Bloomington Metropolitan Firefighters, Local 586 (“Union”).

The Bloomington Fire Department (“BFD”) has recruited firefighters so that they are considered at full capacity; however, the market is becoming increasingly competitive. In order to assist with retention of the firefighters we have hired and trained, when the CBA became open for negotiations this year, the City decided to directly address concerns that the Union felt were previously ignored.

Similar to the situation with law enforcement, the General Assembly removed residency requirements, allowing firefighters to live in any county in the State of Indiana. This has resulted in an increasingly competitive market. Firefighters across the state have chosen to work in counties far from where they reside in order to earn higher salaries.

In order to try and retain our trained firefighters, the City and the Union worked swiftly to reach an agreement in a way that showed commitment to BFD employees. Both the City and the Union agreed that this was a very positive and efficient process and the results should increase retention.

The following are some of the most significant changes in this CBA:

- The salary for a Firefighter First Class was increased from \$54,625.00 to \$78,503 for 2025. In 2026, the salary will be \$83,503.
- Lieutenant was added back into the CBA, and the salary for a Chauffeur and a Lieutenant was increased from \$56,784 to \$81,565 for 2025. In 2026, the salary will be \$86,760.
- A Captain was being paid \$61,126, but will be paid \$87,845 in 2025. In 2026, the salary will be \$93,440.
- Longevity steps were increased from 20 to 25 years and tops out at \$12,500 for 2+ years.
- Command pay for Sergeants was increased from \$500 per year to \$900 per year.
- Efforts were made to move closer to a full quartermaster system, where the City provides uniforms.
- Juneteenth was added as a holiday.
- Bereavement pay will be allowed for during a firefighter's probationary period.
- Mandatory unscheduled duty pay will not be paid from the time a firefighter receives a call from a supervisor and must change plans to begin traveling to the station, rather than when a firefighter arrives on station. This recognizes the interruption that unscheduled call-ins cause to firefighters' lives.
- A firefighter who is called in to work an unscheduled shift will also be paid time and a half, even when the FLSA threshold has not been met, which will provide consistency and reduce irritation from a firefighter who is called in to work out of rotation.
- Acting pay will be provided for a firefighter covering a higher rank (due to illness, vacation or retirement) upon 15 consecutive calendar days, rather than 30.
- Increases were provided in vacation days.
- Firefighters must contact HR for FMLA events, and this was emphasized in the CBA. It is a goal that BFD will work more consistently with HR, and both Chief Kerr and HR are committed to increasing communication.
- Bloomington Police officers who transfer to BFD will maintain their longevity.

The Controller also worked with Human Resources ("HR") and others to adjust salaries up the chain of command to prevent compression. Per the Controller, these increased salaries and other benefits provided for in the CBA will be paid from the General Fund and collectively the increases total approximately \$1,520,380.

This increase in base pay will have a positive effect on pension payments to officers. The increases will, obviously, also increase the cost of overtime; however, the Controller, HR, and BFD administration intend to keep a close eye on overtime costs and work to reduce unnecessary overtime costs, which could result from absenteeism.