

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Howard Tipton, Town Manager

FROM: Carolyn Brown, Support Services Director
Lisa Silvertooth, Human Resources Manager

REPORT DATE: May 22, 2023

MEETING DATE: June 5, 2023

SUBJECT: Ratify a MOU Between the Town and the International Association of Firefighters Local 2546 (IAFF)

Recommended Action

Ratify MOU between the Town and IAFF.

Background

The Town of Longboat Key has a long commitment to public safety and providing an exceptional Fire Department with highly trained emergency personnel. As evidenced in past budget allocations, the Town's strategic priorities and community expectations, and high scores of extraordinary service on the annual Citizen's Satisfaction Survey, residents of the Town value and appreciate knowing they are safe and in capable hands in the event of an emergency or catastrophic event.

A confluence of multiple forces has made it extremely difficult for the Town to recruit, hire, and retain Firefighter/Paramedic positions in the Fire Department. As a reminder, the Town only hires Paramedics and not Emergency Medical Technicians in order to provide the highest levels of advanced life support service. Competition is fierce between the surrounding municipalities who all pay a great deal more than the Town for these same positions and it should be noted are looking to pay even more in the future as contracts get renegotiated.

Due to continual vacancies from resignations of staff leaving for other municipalities, retirements, or those out on various forms of leave, it has been a struggle to keep the necessary number of staff on our payroll. Despite continual recruiting efforts and attempts to attract highly trained staff to join our team, efforts have continually failed due to the disparity in salaries compared to other local fire departments. To put it simply, the Town was behind in keeping up with the market. This led to a discussion with the IAFF about a wage reopener with the urgency to put a new pay plan in place sooner rather than later, allowing salary adjustments to occur at the end of June 2023. The information below outlines the changes.

IAFF MOU

The current IAFF Contract will terminate on September 30, 2024, at which time a new contract will be negotiated.

Two Wage Re-opener meetings were held over the past two months. The Town and Local 2546 reached a tentative agreement on the terms of a MOU:

- Wage proposal (23% pay plan increase for Firefighter Paramedic; 37.3% pay plan increase for Lieutenants)
- Reduction of steps in the plan (from 12 – 10 for Firefighter Paramedics, from 9 – 5 steps for Lieutenants)
- Changes would be in effect for the remainder of FY23 and FY24.

The union conducted a ratification vote that was completed on May 30, 2023. Ratification of the MOU passed with a vote of 19 in favor and one against.

The Finance Department participated in the negotiations. The cost of the changes amount to \$115,000 for the remainder of FY23 and \$716,850 for FY2024.

Funding for FY23 may require a budget amendment at fiscal year-end, but is available in the proposed FY24 budget to support the implementation of the new MOU.

Staff Recommendation

The MOU with the IAFF addresses the Town's goals of:

- Addressing operational issues
- Ability to recruit and retain
- Considers peer fire department compensation plans (with the market).

Staff recommends ratifying the MOU between the Town and IAFF.

Attachments

Proposed IAFF MOU (Available in Town Clerk's Office)

End of Agenda Item