



Thomas Navarre
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Robert Turner
Financial Secretary

To: Mayor Steven Schewel
Durham City Council Members
Durham City Manager Thomas Bonfield

From: Thomas Navarre
Durham County FOP Lodge 2 President

Date: May 29, 2020

Re: Durham FOP Concerns and Recommendations for FY 2020-2021 Budget

I am writing you on behalf of the members of the Durham County Fraternal Order of Police in reference to the proposed Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget. As you can imagine, the members of our organization are frustrated and disappointed that they will not be receiving a raise this year. While we can't speak for other city employees, I am sure they are feeling the same frustration and disappointment. The employees of the Durham Police Department, Durham Fire Department, Solid Waste Management, Water & Sewer, Public Works, and many more, have been providing essential services during the current Covid-19 pandemic. During this time, everyone has continued to perform services for the City of Durham while adapting to the ever changing rules and regulations that have been imposed during this health crisis.

In addition to employees not receiving their annual raise this year, Police and Fire employees were expecting a market analysis adjustment this year. It is completely understandable that the market analysis adjustment be placed on hold this year. However, without the annual raise and a market adjustment, the City of Durham is going to fall further behind other cities which may make recruitment and retention of employees much more difficult in the future. Recently, Raleigh, NC has published their proposed 2020-2021 fiscal year budget, which includes a 2% salary increase for all employees. In the event that the city decided to go in this direction too, the pay bands could be adjusted accordingly and this could take care of the market analysis issue that will arise next year. It will also save the city money in the long run by not having to hire a consultant and saving the Human Resources department countless hours putting the market analysis together. If no action is taken this year, the amount of money that the city will have to budget in the 2021-2022 fiscal year will have to be dramatically increased in order to keep our salaries competitive with other agencies in our region. While we do not know how long this financial impact will continue, there have been several published articles that say Durham will be one of the top ten cities in the country to recover quickly. In the event that Durham's economy does rebound quickly and the projected revenue shortfalls are better than expected, what does the city plan on doing with the expected excess revenue?

We understand that the current Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a revenue shortfall from local businesses being forced to close during this time. This is not only a local problem, but one that is affecting cities nationwide. While city employees have been able to continue to work either on site or remotely, we recognize that the unemployment rate has risen throughout the state and nation. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the City of Durham did a great job taking a proactive approach to providing benefits to their employees. We are appreciative of the time off benefits that were provided to all employees. This provided employees with time off to prevent them from having to burn their own time if they were not able to work onsite or telecommute. This was a very smart move on the city's part and it did provide a morale boost. In addition, selected employees were also provided hazard pay for continuing to provide essential services. Those who received it have been very appreciative for the city's effort to provide extra benefits for front line employees.

We are respectfully requesting that the city try and find a way to provide city employees with their annual pay increase or a modified pay increase. If this is not possible this year, we are suggesting an alternative compensation benefit this coming fiscal year. As a show of good faith, it would be beneficial to provide all city employees with another set of leave time just like you did with the Covid-19 leave (classified as vacation time instead of sick time). By providing this benefit, employees are still receiving a form of compensation for the 2020-2021 fiscal year without causing any financial hardship to the city.

If you have any comments or questions about what has been discussed in this letter, we will be more than happy to speak to you through a virtual meeting. I am also requesting for each of you to please provide some feedback about what has been discussed in this letter. Thank you for taking the time to listen to our concerns and working towards a solution to benefit all City of Durham employees.