



City of San Diego

CARL DEMAIO
CITY COUNCILMEMBER – DISTRICT 5

LORIE ZAPF
CITY COUNCILMEMBER – DISTRICT 6

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 21, 2011

TO: Andrea Tevlin, Independent Budget Analyst

FROM: Councilmember Lorie Zapf *Lorie Zapf*
Councilmember Carl DeMaio *Carl DeMaio*

RE: Fire Department Compensation 137% - 325% Higher than Private Sector Benchmarks

Despite the city's financial problems, we are committed to providing the maximum level of public safety services for San Diegans. To achieve this goal, we believe every expenditure should be scrutinized and every opportunity to achieve efficiencies in service delivery and staff costs should be explored.

At the request of Councilmember DeMaio, your office recently released a memorandum with compensation comparisons between Fire Department employees and employees of Rural/Metro Ambulance Company for EMT's and Paramedics.

Your analysis (recapped below) showed the Fire Department is paying salaries that are 29% to 186% higher than private sector benchmarks – and when fringe benefits are included, the cost differential for total compensation between the Fire Department and the private sector is much worse (137% to 325% higher).

ROLE	COSTS	CITY FIRE DEPT	PRIVATE SECTOR	PERCENT HIGHER
SINGLE EMT	Salary	\$31,907.00	\$24,000.00	33%
	Fringe Benefits	\$39,649.00	\$6,240.00	535%
	Total Compensation	\$71,556.00	\$30,240.00	137%

FFII/EMT	Salary Inc. EMT Pay	\$68,765.13	\$24,000.00	186%
	Fringe Benefits	\$59,641.00	\$6,240.00	856%
	Total Compensation	\$128,406.13	\$30,240.00	325%
SINGLE PARAMEDIC	Salary Inc. EMT Pay	\$58,902.48	\$45,500.00	29%
	Fringe Benefits	\$44,236.00	\$11,830.00	274%
	Total Compensation	\$103,138.48	\$57,330.00	80%
FIREFIGHTER II PARAMEDIC	Salary Inc. EMT and Differential Pays	\$79,335.69	\$45,500.00	74%
	Fringe Benefits	\$59,641.00	\$11,830.00	404%
	Total Compensation	\$138,976.69	\$57,330.00	142%

It is important to note that these figures do not include overtime compensation paid – which in recent years has been significant in the Fire Department and has allowed many individual firefighters to spike their annual salaries.

The only result one can take away from your analysis of Fire Department compensation is that the City is paying a much higher costs for individual salaries and benefits when compared to costs in the private sector for employees with similar skills and duties. More importantly, correcting this disparity in compensation will save taxpayers money – and redirect funds to improving public safety services for our neighborhoods.

Request 1: Analysis of Savings from Potential Labor Cost Reforms

Based on the troubling analysis you present, we believe there is room to achieve savings by rethinking our salary and benefit structure in the Fire Department.

In preparation for next years' labor contract for fire personnel, we would like to know what savings could be achieved if the Fire Department's salaries and benefits were brought in line with these private-sector benchmarks. We would also like your office to create a matrix of all provisions in the Fire labor contract and calculate the corresponding expense to taxpayers for each provision.

Request 2: Examination of Alternative Service Delivery Models

We believe there are opportunities to rethink how we respond to 911 calls and deliver emergency medical services. Several other cities and counties across the country have experimented with alternative service delivery models for Fire-EMS.

As such, we request that your office prepare a report that looks into alternative service delivery models. We believe changes to the service delivery models could yield large financial savings while maintaining high standards of service.

Both of our offices have previously suggested opportunities to change the service delivery models. In a memo dated February 15, 2011, Councilmember Zapf recommended a pilot program for alternative staffing to ease brownouts during low call

volume hours. In November 2010, Councilmember DeMaio released the *Roadmap to Recovery* which calls for reforming the Fire Department's service-delivery model by looking at expanding our use of ambulances and other response vehicles versus fully-staffed fire trucks.

Our hope in requesting this report is to look at a variety of options which may be available to the City on saving costs while maintaining service levels. The potentially large dollar savings can then be reprogrammed for a variety of options such as paying to eliminate the browned out fire stations as well as any number of threatened service cuts throughout the proposed budget.

We believe the compensation analysis your office has provided should serve as a motivation to critically review the labor costs and service delivery model in the Fire Department to ensure every single taxpayer dollar is well spent. We look forward to working with your office to achieve this important goal.

CC: Mayor Jerry Sanders
Members of the City Council

Attachment: IBA Memo dated April 14, 2011