

PUBLIC SAFETY AND HEALTH COMMITTEE REPORT
Wednesday, June 9, 2010 9:30 AM – 10:00 AM
Council Chambers, 140 West Pine Street, Missoula, Montana

Members Present: Dave Strohmaier, Pam Walzer, Roy Houseman, Bob Jaffe, Jon Wilkins, Lyn Hellegaard, Dick Haines, Renee Mitchell, Ed Childers.

Members Not Present:

Others Present: Jason Diehl, Dax Fraser, Gordy Hughs, John Engen, Bruce Bender, John Hendrickson, Jason Wiener

I. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

1. Approve Minutes from [June 2, 2010](#). Minutes approved unanimously.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

III. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

IV. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

1. Authorize the Mayor to sign a memorandum of agreement extending the contract between the City of Missoula & International Association of Fire Fighters Local #271 ([memo](#)).—Regular Agenda (Mike Painter) (Referred to committee: 06/07/2010)

Motion: The committee recommends the city council authorize the Mayor to sign a memorandum of agreement extending the contract between the City of Missoula & International Association of Fire Fighters Local #271.

John Engen described the negotiations with Firefighter Union 271 regarding the proposed Firefighter contract. He provided an overview of the proposed contract. He discussed current budget challenges, a Public Safety Levy, and the need to replace aging equipment.

Bruce Bender provided a [chart](#) that outlined the fiscal impact of the current firefighter contract, the proposed contract, historical averages, and an additional scenario. He discussed the fiscal impact of the various scenarios.

John Engen stated that the firefighters are negotiating on good faith, and that they are providing good leadership on this issue.

Bruce Bender stated that successfully negotiating this agreement with the firefighters union will have a positive impact when negotiating agreements with the other City unions.

Bob Jaffe inquired about the level of compensation for Missoula firefighters.

Bruce Bender asked if that was in comparison to other firefighters in the state.

Bob Jaffe stated that he would like a comparison.

Jason Diehl generally described the compensation. He said that a comprehensive salary survey has not been done recently, but they did conduct a brief regional one.

John Engen stated that the Missoula firefighter compensation is competitive.

Renee Mitchell wanted to know what the lowest, highest, and average annual pay is for a Missoula firefighter.

Jason Diehl referred her to the chart provided by Bruce Bender.

Renee Mitchell asked for an educated guess.

Jason Diehl stated that the average annual salary is about 43-45 thousand per year.

Renee Mitchell asked how much an entry level firefighter would be compensated

Jason Diehl replied that it would be about 37 thousand dollars a year.

Renee Mitchell stated that pay cuts for non-union staff is on the table. She described her desire to cut duplicate programs. She feels that the firefighters are very well compensated, and noted that many Missoulians are financially insecure.

Mayor Engen noted that approving the new firefighter contract will actually reduce costs over continuing the current contract for two more years.

Ed Childers noted that the firefighters still have two years remaining in their current contract. He described the expectation of a certain level of services for City residents. Ed indicated his concern for the budget issues that the City will face next year. Ed indicated his willingness to support this contract. He made the motion to ratify.

Lynn Hellegaard expressed concern about the sustainability of the contract. She discussed the tax burden on the citizens. She stated that a three to three and one half percent pay increase translates into one million dollars, an amount the City cannot really afford. She feels that the taxpayers in Missoula will be unable to shoulder the increased tax burden. She stated that budget cuts are a better long-term solution to the City's budget woes.

Roy Houseman believes that increased private sector unionization would help reduce the income gap that exists in Missoula. He supports the proposed contract.

John Hendrickson asked about the City's responsibility for increased payroll overhead. He asked if those costs are accounted for in the chart provided by Bruce Bender.

Jason Diehl stated that the costs are included in the chart.

Dick Haines indicated his dismay that this matter was not addressed at an earlier time rather than right at the end of the fiscal year. He does not feel that the committee has had enough time to properly review this issue.

Jon Wilkins agrees with Dick Haines about the timeliness of the discussion.

Jason Diehl described the consequences of delaying this decision.

Bob Jaffe asked if the anticipated \$200,000 savings in the proposed firefighter's contract was reflected in the Mayor's budget proposal

John Engen replied that it was.

Bruce Bender clarified.

Bob Jaffe outlined his understanding of the contract negotiations.

Bruce Bender described how this process falls under negotiation laws.

Bob Jaffe asked about the consequences if the Council pushed to change the proposed contract.

Bruce Bender stated that the negotiation might be violated, but that would be a question for the City Attorney.

John Engen did not think that it would be cause to sue the City. He stated that the consequences would probably cost the City more money.

Bob Jaffe wanted clarification of the laws regarding Council involvement in union negotiations.

Dick Haines asked about the timeline of the negotiations

Bruce Bender provided a general timeline.

Dick Haines expressed his displeasure at being forced to make a decision on this matter with the deadline so close.

Pam Walzer believes that this matter is best handled by Administration. She supports reduced wages across the board. She is in favor of the proposed contract. She called the question.

The motion carried. Voting Aye: Dave Strohmaier, Pam Walzer, Roy Houseman, Bob Jaffe, Jon Wilkins, Ed Childers. Voting Nay: Lyn Hellegaard, Dick Haines, Renee Mitchell,

John Engen stated that Bruce Bender will be available to answer questions.

V. HELD AND ON-GOING AGENDA ITEMS

1. Police Department Update – Ongoing in Committee. (Mark Muir)
2. Fire Department Update – Ongoing in Committee (Mike Painter)
3. Health Department Update – Ongoing in Committee. (Ellen Leahy)
4. An [ordinance](#) amending Missoula Municipal Code Chapter 6.09 entitled "Missoula Cat Ordinance" section 6.09.010 through 6.09.090 to amend definitions, to limit the number of cats over the age of four months that a person, family, or household can harbor, keep, or maintain to five and to enact other general amendments. [\(PS&H\)](#) (Returned from Council floor: 01/12/09)
5. An [ordinance](#) amending Missoula Municipal Code Title 6 entitled "Animals" generally amending Chapter 6.04 entitled "Animals Running at Large" and Chapter 6.08 entitled "Dogs and Pet Shops," increasing the fee when an animal is impounded and establishing a fee for a boarding kennel license. [\(PS&H\)](#) (Returned from Council floor: 01/12/09)

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 AM. Submitted by Gregg Schonbachler.