

MANAGERS REPORT



DATE November 3, 2022
TO: Mayor Benage and City Council
FROM: Ty Lasher, City Manager
RE: November 8, 2022 Workshop Agenda

2023 Proposed Salary Schedule:

In 2021, the Police Department lost half its force in a few months due to low salaries. The city hired WSU to complete a salary and benefits study. They found that our benefits were above average however many positions were under average in pay. Police had the greatest disparity with all positions needing increased. The study also identified a number of supervisors and other staff that were below the market. Council felt the police department was an immediate need and had an impact on the budget, so they concentrated on putting those positions at the top for the market. The result was all police positions were filled and we have had no issues in retaining or hiring since that time.

Over the last year, the job market has changed dramatically, and we are now finding that the positions which were not addressed in the last salary schedule have fallen farther behind. Cities in our region are giving anywhere from 10% - 15% salary adjustments and revising their pay schedules to reflect that. We have several positions open with few applicants. I have heard some staff are looking at other cities due to the higher wages. We know there is a cost to hiring and training good employees, making retainment key. Ted and I have spent the last few months reviewing the WSU study, pacing the market, and trying to speculate the future. As a result, we have drafted a revised salary schedule that we feel matches the market and will allow us to retain our good employees as well attract new staff to our open positions.

The City of Bel Aire has 43 full-time employees on the pay scale. Jaci and I are negotiated via our employment agreements. In September, the City Council approved a 5% increase (merit or COLA was not decided) for each employee in the 2023 Budget. City Council also continued the bonus program that pays for "exceptional" performance. Ted will give his updated FY22 budget performance at the workshop. Current budget revenues are

exceeding expectations due to growth and budget expenditures are on trend. This gives the city money needed to make the proposed salary changes adopted by council. We are proposing all 43 full-time employees receive a 2.5% COLA on the first pay period in 2023 (budgeted). All 43 full-time staff could receive another 2.5% merit step after the completion of their annual evaluation (budgeted). All 43 full-time employees **could** receive a bonus of up to 2% via the bonus program (budgeted). Any full-time employee hired before January 1, 2022 and who did not receive a salary adjustment in February of 2021 will receive an additional 2.5% COLA (5% COLA total) on the first pay period in 2023. We feel this proposal addresses the issues we are seeing in pay differentials as well as falls within the 2023 budget for salary increases. In the end, some employees could get a 9% increase if they are exceptional and have been here for a few years. These are the people we want to keep. This amount is less than most cities are giving but we feel that with our excellent insurance benefits, it puts us on an even playing field. Not to mention, we strive for a great work culture.

I would like to remind the governing body that staff from all departments will be watching this meeting. So, I recommend keeping comments positive to ensure morale stays positive. It is also important that you understand some position descriptions may contain only one person. If you call out a certain title, everyone will know who you are talking about. Ted has spent many hours working through the budget ramifications of our recommendation and would not have proposed this schedule if he thought there was a negative impact on future budgets. We ask that you simply look at the overall picture: how spending roughly \$30,000 to keep staff, reduce the stress caused when workers leave, and reduce the amount of time and money it takes to onboard new staff, is well worth those dollars. You have spent \$50,000 fixing potholes along 53rd street that will return in a few years. Staff brings much more to the organization than fixing a pothole. So we are asking you to simply consider the schedule and subsequent expenditure as an easy decision, to provide the best service we can to our citizens. If you have specific questions, feel free to contact me.

Fireworks Ordinance:

Prior to 2009, fireworks were not allowed to be sold or detonated in Bel Aire. After much discussion amongst the Governing Body and input from citizens, fireworks were approved in Bel Aire. Said ordinance allowed fireworks to be sold for one week prior to July 4th, only 4 sales permits were allowed which had to be affiliated with a non-profit and fireworks could only be detonated on July 4th between specific hours. In 2015, the ordinance

was amended to allow public displays as well as remove the requirement for non-profit affiliation. This was done as Wholesale Fireworks was purchasing a building along Woodlawn to sell fireworks from that location. The revised ordinance allowed for fireworks to be sold out of a building that meets zoning, fire and building codes. Being associated with a non-profit was removed. The Bel Aire Lions Club expressed concern earlier this year as they receive a substantial donation from a fireworks company for having a tent in Bel Aire. Any fireworks company could choose not to work with a nonprofit and still receive a Bel Aire permit. At the October 11th workshop, council discussed this issue with language allowing support of local non-profits as well as businesses who have a building. During the workshop, Council wanted to look at possibly reducing sales days, increasing detonation days and more enforcement. Included in your packet is a report detailing what our vendors had to say on these topics.

Ballot Questions:

Councilmember Welch asked for Jaci to clarify what can go on the election ballots as questions. Specifically, why USD 259 had a question similar to the one Bel Aire requested regarding term limits and Mayor's term in office. Jaci will have that information to share.