

COUNCIL AGENDA STATEMENT



Meeting Date: July 12, 2022
To: Honorable Mayor and Council Members
From: George Garrett, City Manager

Agenda Item: **Resolution 2022-74**, Approving A Memorandum Of Understanding Between The City Of Marathon And The Professional Firefighters Of Marathon, To Include Non-Union Firefighters And Paramedic Of The City Of Marathon Fire Department; Said Memorandum To Be Approved In Consideration Of The Pay Disparity Between The City's Fire Service And Similarly Sized Services, Including Monroe County, And Providing For An Effective Date.

BACKGROUND

The City of Marathon has maintained a competitive and extremely well-trained fire and emergency medical service for more than a decade. This has occurred through the extremely professional guidance of Chief Johnson and his current very well-trained staff of firefighters and Paramedic.

Throughout, the City has trained our personnel to the highest level we can while understanding that we will lose these individuals to the mainland counties in most instances. So many of our firefighters and Paramedic grew up and have families there while working in the City of Marathon. When they return in a few years to the mainland, they are also returning to salaries that are comparative to our own.

By the end of this coming fiscal year, we will have been in negotiation on a new collective bargaining agreement with the union. Between now and then, our salaries are no longer competitive with Monroe County. Differences in key positions through fire captain are between \$11,000 and \$13,000 per year. We are currently at risk of losing as many as six individuals to that Service. And, on top of that, the Navy is soon to open their service with higher salaries yet.

Understanding the importance of a collective bargaining agreement and what it represents, I have still engaged in a conversation with the fire staff to try and rectify some of the disparity immediately. The proposed MOU and Resolution would bring an additional 5% to the firefighters, union & none union. This would amount to approximately \$95,000 this year for the union employees and a total of a little over \$154,000 in this year's remaining budget period. Because of vacant positions, the funds exist in the budget. We would still intend to provide a CPI adjustment at the beginning of the fiscal year and negotiate a further adjustment as we discuss the bargaining agreement over the course of the coming year. This approach will create an increase this year and in this budget which is manageable. I will make a further adjustment in next year's budget and conclude, through the bargaining agreement, with funds that will be made available in the FY 23-24 budget cycle. The goal will be to bring the fire service staff up to or approximately up to parity with the salaries of similar departments.

CONSISTENCY CHECKLIST:

Yes

No

- 1. Comprehensive Plan
- 2. Other – 2010 Sewer Mandate

 X
 X

FISCAL NOTE:

APPROVED BY FINANCE DIRECTOR:

RECOMMENDATION:

Approval



**Professional Firefighters of Marathon
International Association of Firefighters
Local 4396**

June 30th, 2022

Dear George;

As a follow-up to our meeting on March 10, 2022, when we discussed some of the important changes required to maintain appropriate staffing levels and employee retention, we have compiled some relevant information for your review.

All of the neighboring and size comparable Fire Departments are exceeding our current hourly wages/salaries for starting firefighters all the way through the rank of Captain. We are losing and will continue to lose personnel to these departments as long as we are stagnant and not competitive. We risk significantly reducing our exceptional level of service that we provide to the citizens of Marathon, something we have been proud to maintain for years. It is critical that changes are made to our current wages so that new employees stay and current employees don't leave. We currently stand to lose four people in the immediate or very near future. Future opportunities will also become available and the loss will continue.

In addition, as the City of Marathon develops and experiences population growth, so does the Department's need to meet these changes. Our call volume has already increased significantly and we are stretching our resources thin. We can't continue to operate in the same capacity with our already grossly understaffed Fire Stations.

Please see the starting salaries for neighboring departments:

Ocean Reef

\$48,800, (FF/ EMT-P) starting
\$51,240 at 6 months
\$56,364 after one year

Monroe County

\$56,432 (FF/EMT-P)

Village of Islamorada

\$49,900 (FF/EMT-P)
Plus 10 Shifts OT Plus Holiday Pay

City of Key West

\$66,232 (FF/EMT-P)

City of Marathon

\$45,027 (FF/EMT-P)

I strongly believe that we can make a difference by implementing the necessary changes to both staffing levels and employee wages. Please review the information provided and I look forward to meeting again to discuss our proposed modifications.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. I'm looking forward to positive changes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JM Malmquist', with a stylized flourish at the end.

James M. Malmquist
President, Local 4396
Professional Firefighters of Marathon



**Professional Firefighters of Marathon
International Association of Firefighters
Local 4396**

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN
PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS OF MARATHON
AND CITY OF MARATHON**

WHEREAS, recent wage analysis studies have shown that the current wage schedule established for all bargaining unit employees (hereinafter “firefighters”) and found in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article 21 and Appendix D has been identified as falling well below the industry standard for South Florida and in particular, for those neighboring Fire Departments with similar size and demographics.

WHEREAS, in an effort to improve recruitment and retention, the City has agreed to produce a more competitive benefits package by modifying the current wage schedule by way of an emergency salary adjustment and increase all firefighter’s base hourly wage by 5%.

WHEREAS, such modifications to the wage schedule shall be retroactive to June 18, 2022, the first date of the pay period that follows the 5% negotiated increase.

FOR CITY OF MARATHON:
FIREFIGHTER

FOR PROFESSIONAL
OF MARATHON:

DATE: _____

DATE: 06/05/2022

RESOLUTION NO. 2022-74

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MARATHON, FLORIDA, APPROVING A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE CITY OF MARATHON AND THE PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS OF MARATHON, TO INCLUDE NON-UNION FIREFIGHTERS AND PARAMEDICS OF THE CITY OF MARATHON FIRE DEPARTMENT; SAID MEMORANDUM TO BE APPROVED IN CONSIDERATION OF THE PAY DISPARITY BETWEEN THE CITY'S FIRE SERVICE AND SIMILARLY SIZED SERVICES, INCLUDING MONROE COUNTY, AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, The City of Marathon has maintained a competitive and extremely well-trained fire and emergency medical service for more than a decade; and

WHEREAS, this has occurred through the extremely professional guidance of Chief Johnson and his current very well trained staff of firefighters and paramedics; and

WHEREAS, throughout, the City has trained our personnel to the highest level we can while understanding that we will lose these individuals to the mainland counties in most instances; and

WHEREAS, so many of our firefighters and paramedics grew up and have families there while working in the City of Marathon. When they return in a few years to the mainland, they are also returning to salaries that are comparative to our own; and

WHEREAS, by the end of this coming fiscal year, the City will have been in negotiation on a new collective bargaining agreement with the City's Firefighters union; and

WHEREAS, between now and then, our salaries are currently no longer competitive with Monroe County. Differences in key positions through fire captain are between \$11,000 and \$13,000 per year and we are at risk of losing as many as six individuals to that Service. And, on top of that, the Navy is soon to open their service with hire salaries yet; and

WHEREAS, understanding the importance of a collective bargaining agreement and what it represents, I have still engaged in a conversation with the fire staff to try and rectify some of the disparity immediately; and

WHEREAS, the proposed MOU would bring an additional 5% to the firefighters. We would still intend to provide a CPI adjustment at the beginning of the fiscal year and negotiate a further adjustment as we discuss the bargaining agreement over the course of the coming year; and

WHEREAS, this approach will create an increase this year and in this budget which is manageable. I will make a further adjustment in next year's budget and conclude, through the bargaining agreement, with funds that will be made available in the FY 23-24 budget cycle; and

WHEREAS, the goal will be to bring the fire service staff up to or approximately up to parity with the salaries of similar departments; and

WHEREAS, the preceding is considered and carried out with an interest of preserving the City's outstanding fire service, attempting to retain its key personnel, and with the intent of preserving the greatest benefit toward the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens and visitors to the City of Marathon,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MARATHON, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The above recitals are true and correct and incorporated herein.

Section 2. That the Council approves the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Professional Firefighters of Marathon attached as Exhibit "A."

Section 3. The City Clerk is requested to transmit this Resolution and the attached MOU to the appropriate union representative.

Section 3. This Resolution shall become effective upon adoption.

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MARATHON, FLORIDA, THIS 12TH DAY OF JULY, 2022.

THE CITY OF MARATHON, FLORIDA

John Bartus, Mayor

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

ATTEST:

Diane Clavier, City Clerk

(City Seal)

**APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY FOR THE USE AND RELIANCE OF THE
CITY OF MARATHON, FLORIDA ONLY:**

Steve Williams, City Attorney

EXHIBIT "A"
Interlocal Agreement to share the functions of the Monroe County, Florida
Contractors Examining Board