

Martha Alvarez, MMC

From: breton lobner <bklobner42@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 14, 2022 3:48 PM
To: Suzanne Hadley; Steve Napolitano; Richard Montgomery; List - City Council; Joe Franklin; Hildy Stern
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MB Fire Department Issues

EXTERNAL EMAIL: Do not click links or open attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear City Council -

A good many residents in Manhattan Beach appear concerned about issues relating to our City's Fire Department, including salaries, retirement benefits, hiring practices, overtime, alleged poor management by the City Manager, and the continuation of local control.

The City Council needs to address these issues publicly and do so with all deliberate speed. Some of the issues that should be addressed are:

(1) Why does it appear there is an avoidance of promoting MB fire department employees within the department? [I presume this because most of the department's employees qualify as classic employees under CalPERS' retirement system which may mean that the City has been filling vacant senior positions from outside rather than by promoting from within.)

(2) It is alleged there has been a high turnover of fire chiefs over the past few years? Is this true? If true, why? Was one chief a personal friend of the City Manager? Did the City Manager participate in this hiring process. (How about for other hirings?)

(3) Why is the City's Fire Department so "top heavy" with employees who are classic employees exempt from PEPRRA? What studies have been conducted to assess the contingent liability in having so many classic employees retiring in the future? What are the projected costs over the next 30 years?

(4) Why is the City paying so much overtime to its Fire Department employees? Is the overtime justified or is it a result of poor management? Is it true that if the overtime expense were reduced or eliminated that the City could employ additional employees? What are the relative benefits and burdens of overtime pay? Is overtime calculated into the retirement benefit formula for Fire Department employees in the same manner for PEPRRA versus classic employees?

(5) Apparently local fire departments have ratings. If so, what rating applies to our City's Fire Department? How does that rating stack up when compared to other local fire departments in the South Bay?

(6) What assurances are there that the City will retain its own Fire Department? (I assume most residents wish to see the City retain its own police and fire and, likewise, would like to have a local City prosecutor to prosecute misdemeanors committed within the city.)

To address the concerns being raised by many of the City's residents, it would seem prudent for the City Council to (a) investigate the above issues (and others that have been

raised), and (b) to conduct a public hearing to determine whether the City Manager, the Fire Chief, and all who are involved in managing our Fire Department are doing so properly, economically, fairly, and judiciously.

Bret Lobner