



UNIFIED FIRE AUTHORITY

MEMORANDUM

24-048

March 28, 2024

TO: All Personnel

FROM: Chief Burchett

SUBJECT: Benefits & Compensation Committee Meeting Update

Earlier today, the Benefits and Compensation Committee held its second meeting to discuss its final recommendation on wages and insurance for FY24/25.

The next step in the budgeting process is to present the entire budget to the Finance Committee in two separate meetings on April 15 and May 6.

This has been a challenging year regarding wages for our sworn employees. Remaining in the “Top 3” position for all sworn ranks prior to application of a COLA would have been a total cost in excess of \$3,000,000, which equates to a 4.5% member fee increase all by itself. Adding a 3% COLA, civilian wage increases, and insurance renewals would have resulted in a member fee increase of 8%. This number would not take into account several critical operational needs that I feel are necessary and would not include inflationary increases for this coming budget year.

In the meeting this morning, the Committee members made clear that most of our member entities were not in a position to go much above a 5% overall member fee increase. Focusing all the energy on wages would have required me to cut services or forgo investment in our capital replacement budget.

The final recommendation from the Benefits and Compensation Committee was to set compensation at 3% below the “Top 3” position for sworn ranks, include the 26 civilian market adjustments, and add a 3% COLA for all employees. With this approach, UFA will be able to address critical operational needs and inflationary costs with a proposed overall member fee increase of 5.5%.

I want to highlight a few things about this recommendation:

1. By providing a 3% COLA, UFA will meet the Board’s goal of sworn compensation being in the “Top 3” starting July 1. The Board and I do not want or intend to get behind in wages or operational needs.
2. If adopted as proposed, every employee will see an increase in base compensation on July 1; among sworn employees, the smallest individual increase will be 4.28% with the largest increase being 15.22%. These percentages include market, COLA, and step increases/longevity.
3. The Board and I are doing everything we can to operate a sustainable budget that focuses on service delivery and employee satisfaction. I feel strongly that the recommendations from the Committee will allow us to remain competitive with wages, but also address some areas in operational needs and

service delivery where I believe we may have fallen short in the past few years due to budgetary constraints.

It is my hope that current and potential employees can see the other benefits and opportunities that exist at UFA beyond wages. We have ample overtime (average of 11 constant staffing shifts per day last year), promotional opportunities (39 sworn promotions last year), multiple and diverse specialties, opportunities for growth, education, training, and a large service area, to name just a few. I trust that we can remain focused on the balance that the Committee achieved and consider it a win for the employees and the long-term sustainability of the organization.

Proposed increases that each sworn position will receive if the budget is fully adopted in June:

**Unified Fire Authority
FY24/25 Wage Adjustment - Sworn
March 28, 2024**

Last Updated 3-28-2024

Rank	Benefits & Compensation Committee Recommendation			
	Market	COLA	Step/Long	Total
Entry Firefighter - Steps 1,2,3,4,6	6.64%	3.00%	2.75%	12.39%
Entry Firefighter - Steps 5,7,8,9	6.64%	3.00%	5.58%	15.22%
Entry Firefighter - Step 10	6.64%	3.00%	1.00%	10.64%
AEMT Firefighter - Steps 1,2,3,4,6	2.00%	3.00%	2.75%	7.75%
AEMT Firefighter - Steps 5,7,8,9	2.00%	3.00%	5.58%	10.58%
AEMT Firefighter - Step 10	2.00%	3.00%	1.00%	6.00%
Specialist - Steps 1,2,3,4,6	0.28%	3.00%	2.75%	6.03%
Specialist - Steps 5,7,8,9	0.28%	3.00%	5.58%	8.86%
Specialist - Step 10	0.28%	3.00%	1.00%	4.28%
Entry Paramedic - Steps 1,2,3,4,6	3.02%	3.00%	2.75%	8.77%
Entry Paramedic - Steps 5,7,8,9	3.02%	3.00%	5.58%	11.60%
Entry Paramedic - Step 10	3.02%	3.00%	1.00%	7.02%
Senior Paramedic - Steps 1,2,3,4,6	5.19%	3.00%	2.75%	10.94%
Senior Paramedic - Steps 5,7,8,9	5.19%	3.00%	5.58%	13.77%
Senior Paramedic - Step 10	5.19%	3.00%	1.00%	9.19%
Captain/BC/DC/OC/FM/AC - Step 10	1.10%	3.00%	1.00%	5.10%

Pending full budget adoption in June, all civilian employees will receive the 3% COLA. The following 26 civilian positions were reviewed for market adjustments and will receive the percent increase noted below, in addition to the 3% COLA.

FY 24/25 BUDGET YEAR CLASSIFICATION REVIEWS					
Division	Current Position Title	Current Grade	Proposed Grade	% Increase	Full-time/ Part-time
Finance	Chief Financial Officer	42	43	3%	FT
Logistics	Lead Mechanic	25	26	3%	FT
	Office Specialist	15	16	3%	PT
Information Outreach	Digital Media Specialist	24	26	6%	FT
EMS	EMS Training Specialist	27	28	3%	FT
	Administrative Coordinator to EMS Division Coordinator	19	21	6%	FT
Wildland	Wildland Coordinator	27	28	3%	FT
	Wildland Foreman	25	26	3%	Variable
	Wildland Squad Boss	21	24	8%	Variable
	Wildland Squad Boss	21	24	8%	Variable
	Wildland Squad Boss	21	24	11%	Variable
	Senior Wildland Firefighter	19	20	3%	Variable
	Senior Wildland Firefighter	19	20	3%	Variable
Special Enforcement	Fire Investigator	27	29	6%	FT
	Fire Investigator	27	29	6%	FT
	Fire Investigator	27	29	6%	FT
	Fire Investigator	27	29	6%	FT
Information Technology	Information Technology Manager	39	40	3%	FT
	IT Technician II	24	25	3%	FT
Human Resources	Human Resources Director	39	40	3%	FT
	Administrative Coordinator to Human Resources Technician	19	21	6%	PT
Fire Prevention	Office Specialist	15	16	3%	FT
US&R	Office Specialist	15	16	3%	PT
Emergency Management	Emergency Management Director	38	39	3%	FT
	GIS Specialist	28	29	3%	FT
	PIO/JIC Manager	28	29	3%	FT