

Stephen M. Wontrobski
27132 Sombras
Mission Viejo, CA 92692

October 6, 2016

Mrs. Tammi McConnell, Program Manager
Orange County Emergency Medical Services
405 W. Fifth Street, Suite 301A
Santa Ana, CA 92705

Ref: OCFA Member City 2018 Withdrawal

Dear Ms. McConnell:

You may be aware that individual city members of the OCFA are contemplating leaving the OCFA in 2018. There are very good reasons for considering such a move.

Various member cities are currently financially strapped. Instead of addressing these member city financial needs for monetary relief, the OCFA recently signed a new firefighter union contract that grants even higher wages and benefits and imposes new work rules that add to an even higher cost structure at the OCFA.

The OCFA EMS union wages, benefits and work rules are way out of line when compared to wages, benefits and work rules in EMS private industry. My attached September 29, 2016 "OCFA 2015 Wage Compensation" letter provides evidence to support this fact.

In addition, widespread concern has arisen among both OCFA structural fund and contract city members regarding their ultimate city liability for the OCFA firefighters UAAL pension cost with OCERS. Previously, the member cities were advised by the OCFA that they had legally nothing to worry about regarding this matter. However, serious concerns regarding this initial legal advice have now arisen, and the OCFA is currently seeking outside expert legal counsel to advise it on this matter.

One of the options for a city withdrawal from the OCFA in 2018 is for a city to obtain EMS services from a private company ambulance provider with no impact to public safety. The city could obtain such private ambulance company services at a fraction of the cost it is now paying the OCFA. In order to do so, the cities contemplating such a move must first comply with Orange County EMS Policy No. 700, Section III-B-1 by submitting:

"A commitment of support from a responsible local government agency, i.e., city, County, or fire district."

Can you please advise me what an individual city must detail to you in its commitment of support letter and provide samples of any past commitment of support letters from Orange County or any neighboring county.

I thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Stephen M. Wontrobski

E:emccocfamembercitywithdrawal10-6-16

Cc: Orange County Board of Supervisors; OCERS Board of Directors; OCFA Board of Directors

Stephen M. Wontrobski
27132 Sombras
Mission Viejo, CA 92692

September 29, 2016

Board of Directors
Orange County Fire Authority
1 Fire Authority Road
Irvine, CA 92602

Reference: OCFA 2015 Wage Compensation

Dear Board Members,

In the September 1, 2016 OCFA Board of Directors meeting, I objected to the signing of new OCFA contracts with the:

- a) Orange County Professional Firefighters Association; and
- b) Memorandum of Understanding - Chief Officers Association

I recommended non-approval of the two contracts, since there were no major reforms in wages, benefits, pensions or work rules included in the contracts. Simply put, in my opinion the firefighters were currently being paid too much and would be compensated even more under the proposed new contracts. I based this opinion on information regarding total 2015 compensation for the following OCFA work groups derived from the OCFA web site.

1. Firefighter
2. Fire Apparatus Engineer
3. Fire Captains
4. Fire Battalion Chiefs - Staff
5. Regular Fire Battalion Chiefs
6. Fire Division Chiefs

Firefighter

The average firefighter made over \$235,000 in total wage compensation for 2015, and they will be paid even more under the new labor contract.

Fire Apparatus Engineer

There were 225 workers in this category.

- a) All but two of the 225 workers in this group made over \$200,000.
- b) 134 of the 225 workers in this group made over \$250,000.
- c) Seven individuals in the Fire Apparatus Engineer Group made over \$300,000, and thus were included in the \$300,000 Club at the OCFA.

Fire Captains

There were 228 individuals in the Fire Captains Group.

- a) Of the 228 workers in this group, only 17 individuals made less than \$250,000.
- b) 98 individuals made between \$250,000 and \$300,000.
- c) 111 individuals made between \$300,001 and \$399,999 and thus were included in the \$300,000 Club.
- d) 2 individuals made over \$400,000, and thus became members of the \$400,000 Club.

Fire Battalion Chiefs - Staff

There were nine individuals in this wage category.

- a) Only one individual made less than \$300,000 in total yearly compensation
- b) 8 of the 9 group members made over \$300,000 in total yearly compensation.

- i) Two individuals made between \$300,000 and \$350,000;
- ii) Five individuals made between \$350,001 and \$400,000; and
- iii) One individual made over \$400,000, and thus became a member of the \$400,000 Club.

Regular Fire Battalion Chiefs

There were 23 individuals in this wage category.

- a) 20 of the 23 individuals in this wage category made over \$300,000.
- b) Of those individuals making over \$300,000, one individual in this group of 20 made over \$400,000 in total yearly compensation, and thus became a member of the \$400,000 Club.

Fire Division Chiefs

There were 10 individuals in this wage category.

- a) Every member of this group made over \$330,000.
- b) The individual member's total compensation ranged from approximately \$331,000 to \$403,000.

Past Informal Wage Studies

It is interesting to note that individual Board members and myself have conducted past informal surveys with potential applicants for starting OCFA firefighter positions. The informal surveys showed that an applicant's dream starting salary at the OCFA would be approximately \$75,000 with full health insurance benefits. This is dramatically below what OCFA starting members are currently being paid.

With OCFA salary packages so high, it is easy to understand why various members of the public have the following questions:

1. Why are starting firefighter wages so high, when top of the line recruits would jump at the opportunity to work at their "dream job" for far less in total wage compensation than what is currently paid at the OCFA?
2. Why are the OCFA workers being over compensated so much, when equally trained and experienced workers in private industry EMS and fire suppression groups are being paid fairly and objectively so much less?
3. Don't the overly generous OCFA compensation packages bring to mind the past large compensation packages of the City of Bell?
4. Shouldn't the OCFA labor negotiator and OCFA Executive staff receive failing grades of "F" for the failing results they obtained in the negotiation of the new firefighter contract?
5. Why weren't union work rules changed to provide cost relief to OCFA financially strapped member city costs? (Instead the contract work rules were made more burdensome and costly in the new labor contract.)
6. Why hasn't the Board set up an ad hoc committee to provide recommendations for all individual member cities to vote on implementing to reduce fire and EMS services in their cities without any negative impact to public safety?

Summary

It is interesting to note that I give the OCFA Board of Directors a grade of "D-" for the results they obtained in the negotiation of the new firefighter contract. Their grade would also have been an "F" were it not for the one Board of Directors vote against the contract by Director Rick Barnett from Villa Park. In my opinion the residents of Villa Park are privileged to have a director place the interests of his city residents primary in this issue, rather than other directors who voted to approve the contract to benefit their own future political and financial gain.

As in the past, I am submitting this updated wage report as a draft. I encourage the OCFA staff to review my findings and get back to me with any errors they might discover in the draft report. If I do not hear anything from the OCFA within ten business days, I will consider the report to be accurate and final.

Sincerely,

Stephen M. Wontrobski

E:ocfawagecompensation9-29-16

cc: Orange County Board of Supervisors

