



Hosing the Taxpayers: DFL Duluth Fire Department Union Letter

www.dfdduluthexposed.com

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To all,

Mayor Larson is choosing to take money AWAY from the 2018 fire department budget for other city spending priorities (i.e. fixing streets). Chief Edwards reluctantly supports her position, and will take action that will negatively impact the department through a staffing reduction.

If you are new to Duluth, know this:

Mayors come and go...

Chiefs come and go...

But cuts to our department are FOREVER:

3 Engine, 4 Engine, 5 Engine, 8 Engine, 4 Truck, 8 Truck, Squad 242, AC 252, ALL GONE.

THIS IS WHY **NO CUTS ARE ACCEPTABLE**. We are already short-staffed, and run volume is increasing. We must stand together as a group against these cuts, such as permanently removing a firefighter from 1 Tower (which is the chief's current plan).

Your executive board members are busy meeting with elected officials, the chief, and news reporters, to get our message out. We are also using social media. But we need your help.

****We are asking CAPTAINS to ask the chief to visit stations and explain, face-to-face to our members, his plan for cutting the DFD.** Captains can request a meeting with the chief directly through e-mail, or work through Ellen or through the chief's Outlook Calendar.

Cutting the department goes against everything Chief Edwards stood for, before he was appointed. He is setting a disastrous precedent by going down the path of reducing crew size.

Consider the following:

The DFD survived Governor Pawlenty, Mayor Ness, Councilor Stauber, and The Great Recession, WITHOUT a permanent reduction in daily staffing. Now, with the city sitting on millions in cash reserves, the mayor and chief are cutting the department for internal budgeting reasons. It makes no sense. We didn't go through consolidation in 2013 just to help the mayor and chief make cuts they hope the public will not notice, such as a reduction on 1 Tower.

ON HIRING TEMPS:



A quick word on hiring temporary employees to cover a six-month departure of 8-12 firefighters: After discussions with the chief and careful deliberation, your executive board believes that **hiring temps sets a bad precedent**. It is problematic for both reasons known and unknown. **WE ARE, THEREFORE, 100% OPPOSED TO HIRING EMPLOYEES ON A TEMPORARY BASIS.**

Still, Chief Edwards has the ability to hire temporary employees, and probably will. **But our position is that the city should hire permanent employees, combined with OT hiring**, to fill vacancies during the first six months of 2018. If an “extra person” is available after the return of our 8-12 members, existing rigs can be up-staffed to meet NFPA 1710 and “extra person VA” may be offered.

It’s disappointing that the chief is not communicating his plans to the membership. That’s why we are asking you to reach out to him. But remember, don’t fall into the trap of trying to “solve” the problem. That road leads to a reduction in daily staffing. **The city is well-funded and has an array of options** that don’t involve cutting our budget.

If you have questions, let me know. Thanks for your support.

In **solidarity**,

Pete Johnson

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