



October 27, 2023

Members of the Salt Lake County Council,

Thank you for giving Operating Engineers an opportunity to give our insight on the upcoming budget and Employee compensation within that budget. The Operating Engineers can appreciate the time and effort that it takes to prepare budgets and recommendations for Employees compensation and we appreciate your consideration on the issues we address.

I have to admit that I am more than a little concerned about the direction the County is going when it comes to compensation. To hear the level that insurance is rising on the County's side is completely different than what we have seen in the private market. In fact the Operating Engineers has only had a 9.7% increase in the overall costs for our health care since 2017 and 1% in 2023. It was also curious to see that the County has done an external survey and overall that the County is only claiming 7% below market. The private market contractors are paying roughly 20% more for wages than the County is currently paying under our occupation. Most recently we received 12.7% in wage increases on July 1, 2023 with 7.6% wage increase coming in 2024 and 7.4% in 2025.

With the level of inflation we saw last few years and the compensation that was offered last year compounded with what is being offered this year our members and your employees are being priced out of their community. We understand the difficult decisions that have to be made in trying times, but we stand by our Brothers and Sisters in AFSCME who are asking the County to look at a 4.5% wage increase for their Employees. This is well under the market and what other government agency have offered their employees this year.

As a sitting member and the current Chair of the Salt Lake City Citizens Compensation Advisory Committee I have been able to see the inner workings of city budgets and comparisons of surrounding communities. Salt Lake City opted to accept the SLCCAC's recommendation of paying no less than 5% for the upcoming year. I would recommend the County look to create a Citizen Compensation Advisory Committee to help advise the Mayor and Council on these tough decisions going forward. It has been an honor to work for/with SLCCCAC and to hear from different voices in our community.

If I could conclude with just a few observations and recommendations.

- Employees have little to no involvement on the budget process. We would ask that Employees be given a seat at the table and allowed to help with the solutions at SLCO.
- Morale is down, costs are up and Employees are struggling to see the County as a career rather than a pit stop before their next job.
- The bonus structure being offer will obviously help with one time needs, but offer little relief long term. The bonus structure being offered has different tax ramifications as well as puts Employees further behind on their compensation year over year.
- We would encourage the County Council to earmark any proposed budget cuts to go directly to Employee compensation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our input on this year's Employee compensation and as always feel free to reach out to me with and questions or help that I can provide.

Sincerely,

Brandon Dew
District Representative Operating Engineers Local Union #3
President Central Utah Federation of Labor