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October 27, 2023

Dear Salt Lake County Council Members,

While participating in the Salt Lake County Employee Associations Meeting on October 16th, it was alarming when the statement was shared that not only would the increases in employee wages be less than last year, but we would be fortunate to receive half of last year's increase. It was also claimed that this year's budget is being built based on taking care of the employees first. Below are several examples that show this is not the case.

- The County's HR department has come back with market data specifying that Salt Lake County employees are below market for two years in a row. The public sector market data provided by County HR shows that we are 7% below market. Several direct competitors to the county have given much more significant pay increases. There seems to be an ever changing goal post when it comes to compensation at the county. County leadership intentionally made the decision to go to a market based pay model, but when the market data hasn't been convenient for leadership it's thrown out the window in favor of a pittance.
- At no point during the County's budget process has there ever been a good faith attempt to work with employees and the organizations that represent them. Rather than seeking feedback from the frontlines the County has chosen to wait and then offer incomplete or lacking info to employee groups, with no time to make meaningful changes.
- The County continues to waste money on high priced consultants rather than investing in it's employees. Why is the County pursuing a pay for performance model that has repeatedly been shown in peer reviewed academic research to be ineffective and ill-conceived for use in the Public Sector?

The County's claim that they take care of employees first when building it's budget is clearly not the case. If that were true your employees would be made whole and tough decisions on programs and other costs would come later. Clearly employee pay was not the top priority as the Mayor's team was not able to provide concrete data a week out from her budget presentation.

As the cost of living along the Wasatch Front remains high and increasing in some areas, coupled with the 10% increase in health insurance premiums being proposed, county employees deserve more than what is being offered. It was stated in the October 16th meeting that the five year plan will address employee retention. What is being proposed in the budget this year is doing the exact opposite. The risk is that good employees will look elsewhere for higher wages. It is imperative to make difficult decisions and adjustments in order to retain a strong workforce in Salt Lake County and provide a substantial wage increase in order for employees to provide for themselves and their families.

To keep up with economic hardships and to retain employees in the workforce the County should be looking for solutions to provide salary increases between 12% - 15% over the next three years. A 4.5% increase this lean year with plans to bring in more income (tax increases, etc.) over the next two years we believe will retain and attract new employees to the County. Utah's unions have been working with employers over many decades in collective bargaining agreements to develop solutions to retain employees and raise salaries in order to bring dignity and professionalism to the workplace. It's a partnership that works well and has a proven track record. It has been impossible in Salt Lake County to have such a partnership when we are invited to give input at the last days before the budget is proposed, numbers have been determined, and suggestions/solutions cannot be implemented due to the time crunch to present the proposed budget to elected boards and officials.

AFSCME Local 1004 respectfully requests that adjustments be made to the budget to implement a 4.5% increase to salaries this fiscal year for Salt Lake County Employees. We would also encourage Salt Lake County to begin discussions with AFSCME Local 1004 to open up a collective bargaining agreement with our union in order to create solutions in the coming years to increase salaries, develop policies, and retain the best employees.

Sincerely,

Brad Asay  
Executive Director AFSCME Local 1004  
Vice President of the Utah AFL-CIO



10/27/2023

Dear Salt Lake County Council,

On behalf of the Utah Public Employees' Association and its Salt Lake County membership, UPEA would like to thank the Salt Lake County Council and Mayor Wilson for giving the association the opportunity to provide comments regarding the proposed compensation package.

Each year, prior to the budget discussions, UPEA surveys its county membership to evaluate their priorities. As you can guess, compensation was the top priority for the employees. UPEA supports Mayor Wilson's proposed pay increase, however, as you go through the budget process, UPEA asks that any savings in the budget be applied to employee compensation to help combat high turnover and retain quality employees.

UPEA looks forward to working with the council as you go through the budget process.

Sincerely,  
Valerie Marin

Utah Public Employee Association