



Mike Pettit
Assistant County Executive Officer

September 10, 2024

Scott Powers
County Chief Financial Officer

Board of Directors
Ventura County Fire Protection District
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, California 93009

Danielle Keys
County Human Resources Director
Labor Relations

Subject: Public Hearing Regarding Adoption of the 2024-2028 Memorandum of Agreement Between the Ventura County Fire Protection District and the Ventura County Professional Firefighters' Association.

Recommendations

It is recommended that your Board:

1. Commence a public hearing on adoption of the proposed 2024-2028 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Ventura County Fire Protection District (District) and the Ventura County Professional Firefighters' Association (VCPFA); and
2. Set a second public hearing on September 24, 2024, as required by Article 20, Section 2006(B), of the Personnel Rules and Regulations, and adopt the proposed MOA at the conclusion of the hearing.

Fiscal/Mandates Impact

Mandatory:	No
Source of Funding:	Fire Protection District
Funding Match Required:	No
Impact on Other Departments:	None

Summary of Fiscal Impact:

	<u>FY 2024-25</u>	<u>FY 2025-26</u>	<u>FY 2026-27</u>	<u>FY 2027-28</u>	<u>FY 2028-29</u>
Total Cost	\$5,265,006	\$5,413,866	\$4,722,346	\$3,629,331	\$930,686

California Government Code sections 31515.5 and 23026 require that the County give written notice of any salary and benefits changes, including an explanation of the financial impact of the changes on the funding of the County's retirement system. The proposed four (4) year agreement spans five (5) fiscal years with an average value of approximately five and forty-four hundredths of a percent (5.44%) increase in salary and benefits per year, which is higher than the actuarially assumed increase of three and one-quarter percent (3.25%) for the retirement system. Accordingly, the proposed salary and benefits

increases are above the actuarial assumptions and will result in an actuarial reduction to the funding status of the retirement system.

Strategic Priority

This agenda item supports the County strategic priority to attract, hire, develop, and retain a diverse workforce empowered to meet the needs of our customers.

Discussion

Formal negotiations for a successor agreement to the 2021-2024 MOA between the District and VCPFA commenced on May 29, 2024. The 2021-2024 MOA had a term through July 31, 2024. The parties participated in 10 bargaining sessions and reached a tentative agreement on the terms of a successor MOA on August 15, 2024. The VCPFA membership subsequently ratified the terms of the proposed successor MOA.

Below is a summary of the major proposed revisions reflected in the proposed MOA:

- Four (4) year term through midnight, September 23, 2028.
- General salary increases (GSIs) of 5.50% in the first year of the MOA, 4.00% in year two, and 3.50% in years three and four.
- Market-based wage adjustments (MBAs) for all classifications covered by the new MOA. Said adjustments shall be 1.50% in the first year of the MOA, 1.00% in year two, and 1.50% in years three and four.
- Increases to the District's Flexible Credit Allowance in years one through three to pay for premiums associated with purchasing a VCPFA-sponsored medical, dental and/or vision plan. These increases are outlined in the attached MOA.
- Language that automatically converts an employee's irrevocable election for combined leave redemption in the event they are reassigned from a staff assigned employee (40 hours/week) to a line-assigned employee (56 hours/week) or vice versa, to ensure the employee's irrevocable election stays in line with the constructive receipt doctrine.
- Increases to the Hazmat Incident Response Team (HIRT) and Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) premiums.
- Creation of a new US&R pool premium to ensure US&R team coverage when there are employee absences.
- Documenting the District and VCPFA's current practice as it relates to Paramedic School sponsorship.

- Two lump sum \$1,000 payments for eligible full-time employees. The initial payment of \$1,000 to be made in September 2024 and the final payment of \$1,000 to be made in September 2025.

Summary

The District's compensation philosophy has been, to the extent possible, to keep total compensation within five percent (5%) above or below the identified market median. The recommended increases are aligned with national and regional inflation and wage growth trends. Your Board has historically granted GSIs to keep District salaries competitive in the market. The proposed GSIs are designed to generally keep up with increases in the cost of living and to keep salaries competitive.

MBAs have historically been utilized by the District to target and adjust compensation for job classifications that have been found to be compensated below comparable jobs in other surveyed jurisdictions. The proposed MBAs strive to support your Board's goal by providing wage adjustments that are data-driven and that keep up with market demand.

The proposed increases to the Flex Credit Allowance of thirty-five dollars (\$35) per pay period in each of the first three years of the MOA will significantly assist our employees with their out-of-pocket costs for increasing health insurance premiums. The increases in the Flexible Credit Allowance for the term of this contract will better align the District's allowance with that of the marketplace and will mitigate the impact on District employees of rising healthcare premiums.

In addition, despite the conclusion of successor MOA bargaining, the District and VCPFA have agreed to bifurcate negotiations regarding the District's Substance Abuse Program, as outlined in Appendix "A" of the MOA, in order to update the program in line with current state and federal law. The parties have agreed to form a committee and will commence meeting no later than October 1, 2024. The parties have also agreed to meet a minimum of once per month and to conclude no later than April 1, 2025.

If approved by your Board, the MOA will provide pay and benefits increases for each year of the proposed four-year term. The proposed wage increases are sustainable and will both preserve current public service levels and assist in the District's efforts to recruit and retain a skilled workforce.

A redlined copy of the proposed MOA with the changes redlined is attached as Exhibit 1 and a clean version is attached as Exhibit 2. We recommend that your Board commence a public hearing on adoption of the proposed MOA between the District and VCPFA, set a second hearing for September 24, 2024, and adopt the proposed MOA at the conclusion of the hearing.

The County Executive Office, Auditor-Controller's Office, Ventura County Civil Service Commission, and County Counsel have reviewed this letter. If you have any questions regarding this item, please contact me at (805) 654-2561.

Respectfully submitted,



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County Human Resources Director/Labor Relations



Sevet Johnson, PsyD
County Executive Officer

c: Jeffery S. Burgh, Auditor-Controller
Tiffany N. North, County Counsel
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Scott Powers, County Chief Financial Officer
Ventura County Professional Firefighters' Association

Attachments:

Exhibit 1 – VCPFA MOA 2024-2028 (Redlined)
Exhibit 2 – VCPFA MOA 2024-2028 (Clean)
Exhibit 3 – Civil Service Commission Statement