

FROM	NAME & TITLE	Cedric McCray, Acting Director	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Office of Equity and Civil Rights		
	SUBJECT	7 E. Redwood, 9 th Floor, (410) 396-5735		
		City Council Resolution 20-0250R – Paying DPW Workers What They Deserve		

DATE:

TO

The Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
City Hall, Room 400

November 10, 2020

Bill Summary

Council Bill #20-0250R, Paying DPW Workers What They Deserve, calls on the Mayor to provide temporary Department of Public Works employees who perform similar work to solid waste workers with an immediate \$4 per hour raise, at a minimum. It also calls on the Mayor and union officials to re-negotiate the contracts of those permanent Department of Public Works employees to include a \$4 per hour raise, at a minimum.

Comments and Analysis:

The Office of Equity and Civil Rights (OECR) shares the sponsor’s commitment to fair pay and a livable wage for all city employees. Salary ranges and increases are accessed based on many factors including budget constraints, internal compression issues, pay equity considerations, job responsibilities, and skill requirements. Pursuant to the Municipal Employee Relations Ordinance (“MERO”), the salaries for full time employees are collectively bargained between the City and the respective Union representing that class of employees. Compensation is a term or condition of employment that is subject to mandatory bargaining and salary ranges are driven by the comparative labor market. Salary increases are negotiated with the Union to ensure equitable outcomes across the entirety of the bargaining unit.

In 2019, the City’s Department of Human Resources (DHR) conducted a market study for members of AFSCME Local 44 and recommended salary grade increases for numerous classifications including solid waste worker and solid waste drivers. The increases were approved by the Board of Estimates and implemented in January 2020.

In addition to the study conducted by DHR in 2019, several initiatives were recently announced to improve the pay for the employees targeted by this bill. Those initiatives include:

- COVID-19 Mission Critical Stipend of \$200 per pay;
- 37 new full-time positions in the Bureau of Solid Waste;
- 9% increase to salaries of Solid Waste Drivers; and a

- one-time \$500 bonus to Solid Waste Drivers, Solid Waste Workers, and Lead Solid Waste employees due to the increase workload resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please bear in mind that an additional blanket increase to the wages of the workers targeted by this bill will have significant impact on the human and fiscal capital of the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the city. The blanket increase would further strain the budget of DPW, particularly in light of the recently announced initiatives. Further, the current approach avoids corrupting the pay scale by creating an imbalance and inequity between the targeted employees of this bill and the higher skill-set positions of immediate and indirect supervisors. Such a result would lower morale and move us further away from our fair compensation goals. For example, the proposed salary increases to permanent employees would result in solid waste workers being compensated at a rate significantly higher than skilled-labor classifications that require certification, or in some cases, licensure.

The recent actions approved by the Mayor provide recognition and compensation to DPW workers during this unprecedented time.

Conclusion:

Ensuring DPW employees are paid equitably can increase efficiency and productively by helping to attract the best employees, reduce turnover and increase commitment to the city. Sanitation workers are on the frontline helping keep our city clean, healthy, and safe. One of the cornerstones of equity in public administration is the importance of demonstrated employee value. Our Sanitation workers have one of the most important jobs in our city and are deserving of a pay increase that reflects their value.

The Office of Equity and Civil Rights (OECR) remains committed to fair compensation for all employees. Our role as the home of the Wage Commission is to serve as the City's ombudsmen for fair wages for all in the public and private sector. We annually monitor the market as it relates to rates of pay for labor within the City of Baltimore and the State of Maryland. The OECR will continue to support any efforts that responsibly compensate employees while balancing the current fiscal limitations.