



ST. LOUIS POLICE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE - LODGE 68

ST. LOUIS' FINEST



July 7, 2017

Dear Members,

The quest to secure competitive salaries for our members has been, and continues to be, our number one priority. The following is an update on the most recent significant legislative and bargaining developments. Although this update is lengthy, given the vital importance of this issue, we felt a high level of detail was necessary.

WHERE WE ARE AND WHAT IS AT STAKE

We remain at the bargaining table but we've been forced to call in a federal mediator to assist in the union contract negotiations. Our current contract was set to expire July 1, 2017 but we have a signed agreement with the City to keep the current agreement in effect so long as negotiations are ongoing.

Violent crime is on the rise. Our citizens are on edge. Our members are stretched too thin and being asked every day to do more with less. According to the most recent manning table, the Department is already 112 officers down from its authorized strength. We realize this shortage has forced our members to work inordinate amounts of overtime. Nevertheless, when we are called, we serve for the safety of our citizens and co-workers.

City municipal elections on April 4th brought us a new Mayor for the first time in 14 years and several new members of the Board of Aldermen.

The most significant development, however, came as a result of the April election in St. Louis County. 63% of County voters passed Proposition P which approved a half cent sales tax dedicated to public safety. This will generate \$80 million a year to be split among St. Louis County and the municipalities within the County to hire more officers, boost officer pay and provide necessary equipment. St. Louis County alone anticipates hiring 110 new officers. On January 1, 2018, County will implement a new pay matrix that increases the annual pay range to \$52,000 for new officers and \$77,000 for officers with 15 years' experience. On average, County officers will see a 30% pay raise.

Starting pay for a police officer in the City is around \$42,000 and tops out at \$62,000. The disparity between upper ranks will climb to more than \$13,000. The dozens of municipal departments within St. Louis County intend to hire more officers and increase their salaries as well.

Based on the recent in-depth survey of our members, we conservatively estimate losing 100 more officers in the next year primarily due to the pay disparity between the City and neighboring jurisdictions. The final results of our survey are almost complete and will be released in the coming days. We have not seen any plan or been included in any discussions which deal with the inevitable

reduction of officers and staff. We are deeply concerned about the negative effect that additional departures will have on those who remain and their ability to protect themselves and the public.

Despite these dire circumstances, as of today, we have no enforceable commitment from the City to increase your salary. That must change.

HOW WE GOT HERE

Anticipating the perfect storm we currently find ourselves in, we began to address the impending pay chasm over a year ago with our political endorsement process for the April 4th elections. We interviewed virtually every candidate running for alderman or mayor and conveyed to them that our number one priority is to address our critical manpower shortages by funding salaries that were competitive with neighboring police departments. We warned candidates that the pay disparity that existed before Prop P was about to increase exponentially. We endorsed only those candidates who were committed to addressing the pay gap crisis immediately.

No candidate pledged action on this issue more forcefully than mayoral candidate Lyda Krewson, the long-serving alderwoman from the Central West End. Krewson had been supportive of the SLPOA and our membership over the years and was the chief sponsor of a number of important bills that we supported during her legislative career. Her commitment seemed convincing and sincere. We went “all in” on her campaign for mayor and whole heartedly endorsed her. We invested our manpower and financial resources in support of her election effort. Frankly, most of Krewson’s opponents had a track-record of being unsupportive or unresponsive to the police. Supporting her seemed like a no-brainer.

Krewson made fighting violent crime a centerpiece of her campaign, rolling-out a plan to increase “neighborhood safety” and promising on her website and in campaign materials to find \$20 million in the city’s budget to combat crime and raise police salaries. <http://www.lydakrewson.com/neighborhood-safety-plan/> She proclaimed during the campaign:

“First and foremost, I want to be very clear – we will find the money to fund this plan. Period.” “This amount represents 8% of the city’s General Fund. This spending will be my administration’s top priority and it’s quite possible that other spending may be replaced with this new spending.”

Crime and violence were central themes on most of her TV commercials as well. Even when she started to bend to the pressure of the activist community during the election, we remained hopeful that she would be a strong ally once elected.

We were happy to see her eke out an election win. Her 888 vote margin of victory was so narrow that it was clear to us that our support put her over the top in an election where every neighborhood in the City said addressing crime should be the top priority. According to the detailed exit poll after the Mayoral primary, UMSL found that 71% of all Mayoral primary voters supported a tax increase for police. For Krewson voters, this support jumped to 89%.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0ByitGxTOBLO0LXc1Q2h5ZUhNLUU> . We thought she understood the significance of our support in her victory. We would soon find out we were wrong.

BUDGET AND LEGISLATION

Just days after taking office, the Mayor sent a budget to the Board of Aldermen that included no money for police raises. We were shocked. During her campaign she promised us and voters she would find the necessary money without a tax increase. When she finally met with our leadership team, her attitude was openly hostile. We came to the meeting armed with a dozen different suggestions about how to fund desperately needed police raises. She dismissed every suggestion we made out of hand. After the meeting we felt completely betrayed.

Right after Chief Dotson resigned, the Mayor announced the members of her Chief search committee. Though every other sector of the community is represented, not a single active duty City police officer is on the committee.

Hoping our initial meeting with the Mayor's office was an aberration, we continued budget discussions and went to work on our allies at the Board of Aldermen. Mayor Krewson accepted our invitation to speak to our members at the May 31, 2017 legislative meeting. As those who attended can attest, the Mayor again voiced her support for our raises. Contrary to her campaign platform, she indicated that a tax increase was the only long term solution to address the growing salary disparity. She requested our help to support such a measure. Her support for our issues would turn out to be short-lived once again.

Shortly after her appearance at our hall, Alderman Vaccaro offered amendments in the Ways & Means Committee to add \$4 million to the current budget to increase police pay. The proposed amendments were shot down by the committee chair at the Mayor's behest. We persisted. Aldermanic president, Lewis Reed, sought to add the \$4 million again at the Board of Estimate & Apportionment but Krewson again worked against the effort. The budget was approved by the Board of Aldermen without a dime for police raises. We were also told that none of the public safety revenue coming in mid-year from the recently enacted Prop 1 would be appropriated for police salaries.

We turned our efforts to the sales tax increase measure being billed as the City Prop P (Board Bill 60). We went on a press campaign over police raises and the growing disparity with neighboring departments. We also recruited allies within the business community, local clergy and others to lean on the Mayor to address the issue of police wages.

As initially filed, Board Bill 60 would have put a half-percent sales tax increase on the ballot to raise \$23 million for public safety. That is almost precisely the amount that would be needed to achieve parity with St. Louis County. Imagine our outrage when the Mayor showed up at the committee hearing with her plan to siphon proceeds to fund social programs and other pet projects. At her appearance at the hall, she certainly did not warn us that the proposed tax would be split up for a number of new programs unrelated to police pay. By the time they were done carving up the pie,

only \$12.8 million was dedicated to the police department, and there was no guarantee that any of that would be used for police raises.

Due to the complete lack of trust, we were forced to propose an amendment to Board Bill 60 to ensure the money for the police department went solely to raises. Again, our proposed amendment was killed in committee at the Mayor's request.

Last Friday, we took our case to the full Board of Aldermen. At our urging, Alderman Jack Coatar led the effort to amend Board Bill 60 to earmark the entire \$12.8 million solely to raises. He initially had enough support among fellow aldermen to pass the amendment. However, in what can only be described as a colossal double-cross, the Mayor showed up personally at the Board of Aldermen meeting and lobbied aggressively against the amendment, which was narrowly defeated. We want to thank Aldermen Jack Coatar, Brandon Bosley, Sarah Martin, Larry Arnowitz, Beth Murphy, Carol Howard, Tom Oldenburg, Marlene Davis, Joe Vaccaro, and Lewis Reed for sticking with us on the amendment. Even Alderman John Muhammad, who has been a critic of the police in the past and ultimately voted against the amendment when it became clear it didn't have the votes, gave an impassioned speech on the aldermanic floor about the need to fund competitive police salaries. Sadly, we found out that the Mayor even diverted part of her own pet project funding in the bill---not to police raises—but to fund one alderman's pet project to secure his vote against our amendment.

It is our belief that, *at best*, \$8.2 million of the over \$23 million generated a year by this proposed tax will be given to police raises by this Mayor—which barely gets our pay to 50% parity with St. Louis County. The final vote on the legislation is set this Friday and if approved, the proposed tax will be placed on the November ballot.

The Mayor has used every opportunity and every tool at her disposal to fight all of our efforts to secure adequate and dedicated funding for police raises to stem the tide of departures. We have been excluded from every task force and policy discussion involving the police and public safety. We are baffled how the Mayor believes that undermining police officers at every turn will help her pass a new tax much less develop and maintain the vital partnership needed to keep our citizens safe and move our community forward during these turbulent times.

CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

While our legislative committee and lobbying team are hard at work trying to raise police pay, our labor committee, bargaining team along with our business manager and labor attorney have been engaged in a seven month-long negotiation with the City over our union contracts for Police Officers and Sergeants. Most of the two union contracts are done with agreements on a number of important issues related to our members' benefits and working conditions but salaries have not been settled and that gives us an important bargaining tool. Despite the fact that we were unable to lock-in police raises in the sales tax bill, **we can still reach binding, enforceable agreements at the bargaining table that would incorporate raises into our union contracts.** We demanded that a Federal Mediator be brought into the negotiations last month because we thought having the feds in the room would help us get to a deal. The City's bargaining team has done an about face since we

brought the feds in and we now feel like we are closer than ever to contracts for PO's and Sergeants. The City even signed an agreement at the last bargaining session extending the current union contract until we work out a new agreement. But there is still no agreement on wages.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

We are not signing off on an agreement that doesn't include significant raises and full funding of Sergeants overtime. If the Mayor's office thinks that we are going to support a sales tax on the ballot without an enforceable agreement on competitive wages, she's simply lost touch with reality. We're not going to spend our political capital to pass another sales tax where—at best—only about 1/3 of the money will be for police raises....without any guarantee. We will not mislead voters that this is pro-police measure. To accept the terms currently offered by the Mayor would be a slap in the face to every member and would be nothing more than a lie to the voters we are sworn to protect and serve. We will stand firm. Remember, every member will have the opportunity to vote on any deal we reach with the City before any contract becomes final.

It is now time for action on your part. Politicians respond to public pressure from voters and taxpayers. We're asking you to call or email your alderman and the mayor's office and ask them to do something about the police pay disparity in the City. If you don't live in the City, call the alderman who represents the district you work in. If you're not sure who your alderman is, call the Police Hall and our office staff can tell you who they are and give you their contact info. You can search by address at this website: <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/aldermen/search-for-your-alderman.cfm>. Calls and emails work. You can also use social media. Take to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or resort to old fashioned letters to the editor. Ask your family and friends to do the same and demand action by elected officials. We are also planning rallies and an aggressive media campaign to drive our message home. Stay tuned for more on that.

This fight is far from over and we need everyone's participation. This is no time to be complacent. We need to show the Mayor and other elected officials that they woke a sleeping giant.

Fraternally yours,
SLPOA Executive Board