



CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

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June 4, 2020

Senate Interim Committee on Judiciary

Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair

Senator Kim Thatcher, Vice-Chair

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Committee Members:

The City of Salem reacted strongly and swiftly in mid-March 2020 to slow the spread of the coronavirus and ensure the health and safety of our community and our employees. Our primary concern is the well-being of the more than 800 of our employees who have remained in the field serving our community in this time of need. From our firefighters and emergency medical response teams and public safety officers, to crews maintaining our streets, parks, and sidewalks, and those testing and treating drinking water and wastewater.

To help ensure employee safety, we established our Emergency Operations Center (EOC) with the primary responsibility of securing personal protective equipment (PPE), and we enacted immediate changes to our leave policies to support our employees through quarantine and testing. This letter is in response to testimony submitted to the Committee regarding the City of Salem's safety policies specific to the COVID-19 emergency.

**Personal Protective Equipment**

The EOC and Risk Management worked to assist all City departments in creating safety policies, which included selecting appropriate PPE and ensuring employees were trained and medically cleared to use equipment. We are still actively working on safety initiatives during the emergency and are currently focused on return to work plans for those who were able to work remotely. Our plans aim to re-open in-person services for two of our customer-facing services by June 22, 2020.

N-95 masks, face shields and proper eyewear have been available to all our first responders, including the Police department, since prior to the COVID-19 emergency declaration. Training for such equipment is provided as a part of the job. Additionally, after the emergency arose, every officer was issued an N-95 respirator to use, with access to additional respirators in storage. In late March, memos and re-training went to each officer, along with additional N-95 respirators. On April 4, 2020, the City was able to procure N-100 respirators for our responders, and specific training and fit testing followed immediately after. Other PPE provided includes: gloves, disposable handcuffs, disinfectant wipes, dust masks, face shields and safety glasses. Training includes: power point presentations, OSHA respirator training, in-service discussions, and reminder emails and memos. Patrol cars are being disinfected regularly by a third party during the crisis.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

Women, minorities, and disabled are encouraged to apply•ADA Accommodations will be provided upon request

**Sick Leave**

The City has implemented a temporary leave policy that allows 80 hours of leave for employees prior to using their own accruals. Also, another 80 hours of overdraft time is allowed for each employee, which can be paid back over time (or forgiven if separated). A catastrophic leave program is in place for anyone who may run out of accruals due to long-term illness, which allows other employees to donate leave in support of their colleagues.

We believe we've prepared diligently to protect our employees from all workplace hazards and have provided benefits to cover personal losses should they become ill. As a self-insured City, we work with our third-party adjuster to investigate any occupational injury or illness claims, and compensability decisions are made on a case-by-case basis based on the evidence. We hope the actions we've taken to protect our employees are considered during the legislative process.

Respectfully,



Steven D. Powers

City Manager

cc: Members of House Interim Committee on Judiciary