

Tentative Agenda  
Finance Committee  
July 5, 2016  
6:00 p.m.  
Council Chambers Conference Room

Roll Call

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- 1) EMS Market Wage Adjustment  
Doug Jones, Emergency Medical Services Director
  
- 5) Next Meeting Date – August 9, 2016

ADJOURNMENT



**City of Raytown – Emergency Medical Services**

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To: Finance Committee

From: Doug Jones, EMS Director

Date: 2016-07-05

Subject: Market Adjustment

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EMS will be requesting the Board of Aldermen approve a budget amendment to EMS civilian wages, in the amount of approximately \$52,352, subject to confirmation by Finance Department that amount will be sufficient, to cover a market adjustment of paramedic and EMT hourly wages. In addition, since vacant positions have been covered mostly by full-time employees on overtime, additional funding may be needed to prevent shortfall—again, pending confirmation from Finance.

Over the course of several years, we have noted an increase both in the turnover of personnel—principally paramedics— as well as progressively more difficulty in attracting qualified applicants to fill vacant positions. Comparing Raytown EMS to seventeen other area EMS agencies, we find that Raytown EMS has the lowest starting wage among them: forty-six percent under the highest, and eighteen percent under the average. I believe this to be the biggest factor influencing our employees to seek employment elsewhere, as well as a large factor in influencing applicants away from our service. An eighteen percent increase to starting wages— with proportionate increases to current employees—would return Raytown EMS to approximately the middle of the range, and I believe would begin to turn this adverse situation around, influencing more employees to stay, and more candidates to apply for those openings which do arise. As discussed in more detail in the appended documents, being shorthanded creates serious, interrelated difficulties for operations, as well as for the remaining employees.

Alternatives include:

- Continuing at current rates
- Adjusting by a different rate

Please see the attached documents (Power Point slides and notes) for more information.

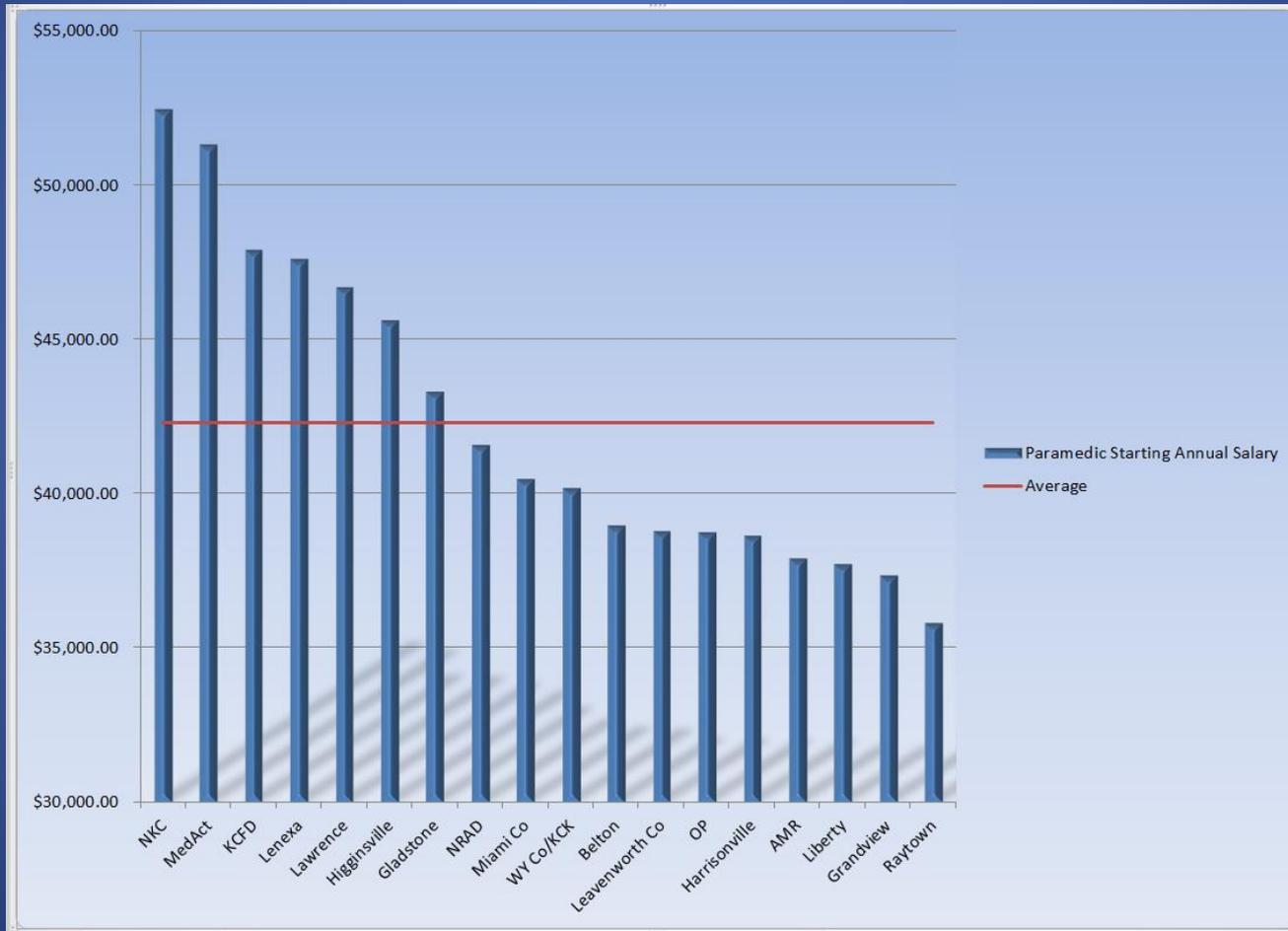


# **The Need For A Market Wage-Adjustment**

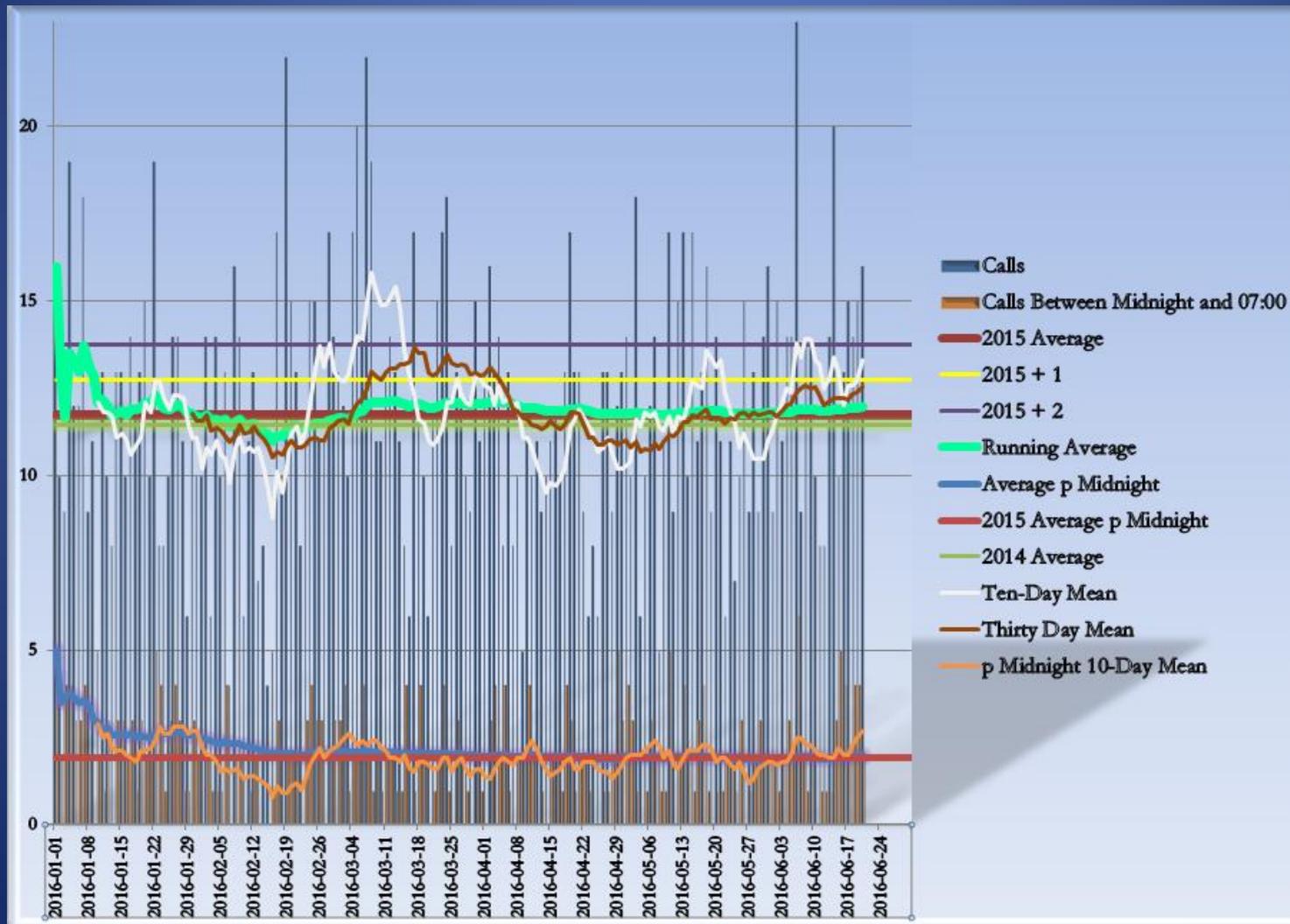
**Raytown EMS**

**5 July 2016**

# The Current State of Things...



# The Current State of Things



# The Current State of Things

- Low wages is, arguably, the biggest factor in our staffing difficulties
- We have two paramedic positions open, and have had at least one opening since November 2015
- No new applications have been received in many weeks; one applicant from last year has scheduled to re-test

# The Current State of Things

- Being short-staffed increases the workload on remaining staff
  - Extra shifts to cover
  - Times when only one ambulance is staffed
  - Employees still make use of sick/vacation leave
- Short staffing increases need for mutual-aid
  - Though most of our mutual aid need is while two ambulances are staffed...

# The Current State of Things

- Low pay and increased workload lead more people to seek employment elsewhere, compounding the problem

# Our Objectives...

- Our Mission
  - Two Ambulances 24/7
    - EMT Academy
    - Child Safety Seats
    - PR

# Our Objectives

- Our authorized staffing – 15 total for the department – is minimal to begin with
- With every vacancy, operations become increasingly difficult

Our goals thus become...

# Our Objectives

- Attract new applicants (in a shortage environment)
- Retain the people we have

# Our Objectives

We are competing for scarce resources, currently trying to attract them with the lowest wages in the region.

We are currently attempting to retain employees in the same environment—

# The Best Start to Achieve Our Goal

- An adjustment to EMS wages— one that would bring Raytown EMS to about the middle of the group would be a substantial help in attracting and retaining quality personnel
- Increase existing paramedics and EMT's in proportion with increase to starting wage

# The Best Start To Achieve Our Goal

- The average starting pay for paramedics, of the 18 listed services, is \$42,299.66, 18.02% higher than our current starting paramedic wage.
- Part-time wages should be increased proportionally, too
  - Part-time EMT wage, especially, as it is extremely low for a part-time wage— only \$0.14 per hour over the FT EMT starting wage, compared to the paramedic part-time at 14.7% over FT starting

# The Best Start to Achieve Our Goal

- Our Finance Director has indicated that \$31,000 would be sufficient to raise the eight paramedic positions 17.2%. If this is so, the following proportionate calculations should be sound.

|         | For All Field Staff<br>For Period + PT | Additional<br>Funding Needed |
|---------|--|------------------------------|
| 18.02%  | Full Year                              | \$157,055                    |
| 18.02 % | Four Months                            | \$52,352                     |
| 10%     | Full Year                              | \$88,819                     |
| 10%     | Four Months                            | \$29,606                     |



Questions?

- Since I was made Interim Director in October of 2012, we have lost fourteen employees to resignation, thirteen of whom were paramedics.
- Of those employees
  - Five went to higher paying EMS jobs
  - Three went to higher paying air-ambulance jobs
  - Two went to higher paying non-EMS firefighting jobs
  - One took a higher paying job in EMS education
  - One became an RN and took a higher paying hospital job
  - Two are “whereabouts unknown.”
- Of the most recent three openings, the first came open on 2015-11-19, and took 173 days to fill; the second came open on 2016-03-06, and has remained open since then; the most recent opening opened on 2016-05-27.
- The resulting open shifts are mostly covered by full-time employees; part-timers will help out some, but it’s mostly OT.
- Not all open shifts get filled, causing the remaining ambulance on that shift to be double-busy, and additional need for mutual aid.
- The most recent hire – 2016-05-10 – happened by pure chance. One of our paramedics struck up a conversation with a fellow shopper at Aldi, who happened to be a paramedic, new in town from South Dakota, and looking for work. He applied, passed all pre-employment testing and screening, and was hired.
- Apart from that, we have had very few paramedic applicants since the position opened in November. Of those, two or three who passed pre-employment written test withdrew their application prior to completing the background checks; all but one of the rest either failed to return my call inviting them to test, or failed to achieve a passing mark on the test, except for one who passed, but did not pass the background check.
  - I know that one of who withdrew did so in favor of a higher paying EMS position, and I suspect that was behind the others as well.
- As of 2016-06-04, we have no paramedic applications to process, the last one was received on 2016-05-06.
- We are currently the lowest paid full-time EMS in the metro.
- Once an application is received
  - It can take a week or more to arrange for the applicant to take the written exam.
  - Once all candidates have tested, it can take another week or more for interviews.
  - Once a candidate has been selected, the background investigation can take two weeks or more to complete.

- At that point, the new-hire generally needs two additional weeks to give proper notice at his/her current job.
- Once the new-hire has started, orientation can take anywhere from one to six weeks or more before the new-hire can be placed in a regular position without an FTO.
- This adds up to two months or more between receiving an application and having a “street-ready” new hire.
- The low pay, the extra work associated with covering open shifts, the extra work associated with open shifts not getting covered, all tend to increase fatigue and decrease morale.
  - Between contact at hospitals, social media, student contacts, and the recent publicity arranged by outside influences, word gets around the EMS community and has a chilling effect on the flow of applications. There are few applicants and many other agencies competing for them, all of which pay better than we do.
  - Bringing Raytown EMS pay above the Metro median will begin to turn that around – higher quality applicants, as well as keeping the staff we have, and the ability to develop a robust part-time roster.