



## RAPID CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT



## RAPID CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

Jason Culberson  
Fire Chief

Don Hedrick  
Police Chief

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Rapid City Common Council  
300 6<sup>th</sup> St.  
Rapid City, SD 57701

Dear Council Members,

We write to you today about the recent HR proposal to implement a one-time increase for City employees who worked through the various COVID challenges, and specifically the City employees who work in public safety. We feel it is important to highlight a few issues.

We all remember the nature with which the pandemic was thrust upon us. It was a time of high uncertainty and stress for everyone. There were hard decisions to be made without much data or facts to support any type of decision. Most private businesses, schools, and government offices were shut down. The threat of spreading this unknown contagion was real.

However, the Rapid City Fire Department and the Rapid City Police Department remained at work. Our firefighters, police officers, paramedics, and office employees didn't change their duty stations. They didn't have the ability to work remotely. They didn't have the chance to take the precautions most everyone else was taking. They came to work, in their trucks, or their patrol cars, or their offices, *every day, throughout the whole ordeal*. They risked their safety, every day, and kept our city safe. They responded to calls for service, unsure of where the day would take them, or who they would come into contact with. They answered the call of duty without knowing if the person they were giving CPR to had COVID, or if the person who was spitting on with them while resisting arrest had COVID. Our office staff were also working with unknown exposure threats, unsure if what they were being exposed to at work would be brought home to their families.

Additionally, the morale hit we took over the course of the last year is still hanging on at the RCPD. Last year, we lost 20 officers, and another 10 have already left in 2021 with the year just half over. The RCFD was not exempt from the morale decline either. In 2020, they lost 7 employees, and to date in 2021, 9 have already left. City leadership can easily show support for these employees who have stuck it out, and continue to keep the

City protected, by moving this proposal forward. It will help show you understand the importance of retaining good folks who are willing to put in the hard work these jobs take, no matter the circumstance.

Our City's first responders stayed at work, and worked through countless changes, because that's what we do. We are dedicated to keeping our City safe; we didn't have the opportunity social distance, and zoom in, to get our work done. Monument Health was in the same boat, and they recently gave their employees COVID hazard pay. We feel that a small portion of the COVID expenditures can be given to our employees for working through 2020 under extreme stress and pressure.

Thank you for considering our request.

Jason Culberson  
Fire Chief

Don Hedrick  
Chief of Police