



South Bend Common Council

Personnel & Finance Committee

Bill 21-20 Comments & Request for Information

June 22, 2020

To: Mayor James Mueller

We join with you and the administration in helping our community in the reshaping and the redefining our public safety reforms. We realize that the transformation of public safety departments, their role and relationship to our communities requires a change in culture, accountability, training, policies, and practices. Furthermore, we are keenly aware that the recruitment, retention of qualified police officers and the retirement of officers continually are some of the greatest challenges facing law enforcement. Please know that we value our police department and supports our officers.

Likewise, we acknowledge the importance of our police officers and the work that they do daily to ensure the safety of our community and the safety of our citizens. We know communities rely on police departments to "protect and serve" and the police, in turn, rely on citizens for their support and cooperation, but the relationship is not always harmonious as we have most recently experienced.

We wish to acknowledge that Bill 21-20 was given a first reading and assigned to the Personnel & Finance Committee on May 26, 2020 and set for a second and third reading for June 8, 2020. As a number of council members expressed various concerns and the need for additional information, the bill was tabled indefinitely with a vote of 3 to 1.

This action was misunderstood and added to the frustrations and disappointments of police officers, FOP leaderships, and others. It also has caused additional stressors in relationships at a number of levels.

Please note, that as Chair of the Personnel & Finance Committee, committee members were contacted seeking their feedback as how best to proceed as well as, questions and information they needed in regard to this bill after the June 8th Council meeting.

I do plan on recommending to the Council that Committee Chairs, once bills have been given a first reading and assigned to their committee, to reach out to the department and/or sponsor of the bill prior to second and third reading of the bill. This would give the chair an opportunity to ask questions and/or seek further clarification regarding bills assigned to their committees.

Likewise, I will ask that the administration prior to filing a bill/resolution that they would reach out to the Chair of the Committee that the bill will be assigned as well. Mainly for the purpose of informing them that a bill will be filed and the scope of the bill.

The following is a summary of questions, concerns and request for additional information pertaining to Bill 21-20.

A. Police Offices Proposed Pay Raises

Timing Comments :

A number of Council members respectfully asked that table Bill 21-20 be tabled, for numerous reasons. First, there were concerns of passing a pay raise, as deserved as it may have been, was not the right time in light of the current racial tensions in our city and through the country.

Second, questions regarding the bill and the need for additional information were also raised. Third, the need to be sensitive to the funeral of Mr. George Floyd and the one year shooting of Mr. Eric Logan were also raised.

Tabling the bill, at the Committee level did not only saved this piece of legislation for future potential passage, but it showed we are listening to the signs of the times and national wide protests. In addition to have border community dialogue.

B. General Questions:

- Why can't the 2.5 percent raise be placed in the upcoming budget?
- What is the fiscal impact?
- In light of COVID-19 impact on our income streams and projected decreases in property, sales and motel and hotel taxes how do you support a 2.5 percent raise increase at this time?
- What is the projected pay increases for city employees? Especially the essential workers?

C. Collective Bargaining Agreement Questions:

- Does this breach the collective bargaining agreement?
- How would the 2.5 percent raise request impact upcoming negotiations with police, teamsters, city employees and fire fighters?
- Has the city ever increased base salaries for employees outside of their negotiations?
- Should we separate the two aspects of the bill to move one along faster than the other? Or so both have a better chance of being passed.
- There are 2 aspects of 21-20 that are bundled into the one bill: a) 2.5% salary raises; and b) the \$2,500 residential incentive. We could separate them to move one along

faster than the other or if we think that separately, one has a better chance of passing than the other.

- Need to know if similar support is being requested of our fire personnel, what their current salaries are, and if there are similar residency incentives in place.

D. Incentive pay for police officers to live in the city and recruitment

- Any idea of approximately how many officers would move into the city?
- What is the demographics of officers that reside in the city?
- How many officers have been accepted into the academy at this time?
- How long does an officer have to reside in the city to get the City Residency Incentive?
- The issue of the recruitment and retention of police officers has been an issue for some time. At what point did this become a crisis this year?

E. Additional Suggestions:

- **Presentations:** We do not have to, but we could hold a series of public meetings and/or presentations to include the following:
 - Presentations of the 21 CP findings and Recommendations
 - Presentation by the Mayor's office to formally present the salary study done by the Dept of Innovation and Tech. stats and demographics of the police department currently (age, diversity, % eligible for retirement, % living in city, etc.).
 - The first public budget hearing (July 8th) will be held. This will give the public an opportunity to speak to department budgets and priorities. We could combine some of the above points into one meeting/presentation or hold separately or not.
 - Opportunities for dialogue and action involving residents and police will lead to better relationships, more equitable treatment by the police, greater police responsiveness and accountability, and greater willingness of residents to work with police

We look forward to working with you on this important piece of legislation.

Thank you

Personnel & Finance Committee

Council Woman Karen L. White, Chair

Council Man Jake Teshka, Vice Chair

Council Woman Rachel Tomas Morgan, Committee Member

Council Woman Shelia Niezgodski, Committee Member