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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Council approves tentative global settlement with fire union

Tentative settlement will allow the parties to focus on improving services to citizens

SAN BERNARDINO, CA - Jan. 25, 2016 - Today, following closed session, City Attorney Gary Saenz announced the Common Council's approval of a tentative global settlement between the City and the San Bernardino City Professional Firefighters (SBCPF) union, resolving all pre and post-bankruptcy litigation claims and disputes. The Common Council will vote whether to adopt the final settlement agreement during the Feb. 1 Council meeting. The final agreement will be available to the public in the agenda packet set to be released no later than Thursday, Jan. 28.

The proposed global settlement will bring a close to nearly nine years of legal disputes between the firefighters and the City. It will also assist in preventing future litigation and will save the City substantial legal costs and liabilities which would have otherwise been incurred.

"The SBCPF has come to the table with an equitable settlement that clearly is in the best interest of the City and the Firefighter Union, and gives the parties the best chance of moving forward in a fair and reasonable manner," said Corey Glave, attorney for the San Bernardino City Professional Firefighters.

"I believe the tentative global settlement to be fair to both parties and will allow the City to focus on implementing vital public safety components of the bankruptcy plan of adjustment," said City Attorney Gary Saenz.

The global settlement agreement, if ratified by the Union and the Common Council, will eliminate any union opposition in relation to annexation of fire services to the County Fire District. The joint City/County annexation plan continues to be reviewed by the Local Agency Formation Commission for San Bernardino (LAFCO). LAFCO has evaluated the proposal to confirm, among other things, that the annexation plan provides sustainable fire suppression and emergency medical response service delivery, finances and governance.

"We understand the City's need to shift services to County Fire and have developed a plan that will rebuild and reinvest in, not only incident response service but, all services associated with the district," said County Fire Chief Mark A. Hartwig. "This includes fire prevention, dispatch and communications, administration, and facilities and equipment."

On Wednesday, Jan. 27, LAFCO will hold a hearing to discuss the annexation and staff's recommendation to approve. The LAFCO staff team concludes their extensive analysis by stating; "This plan is important to the City in that it provides a means to return to the City's coffers an estimated of \$7,000,000 to \$8,000,000 for use in addressing other service deficiencies that currently exist, such as police protection, roads, parks, or even street lighting. These service determinations will need to be made by the City in its future budgeting process. This is no small thing for the residents of this City."

"LAFCO's conclusion is right on the mark," said City Attorney Gary Saenz. "Although annexation comes with a special tax to property owners of \$148.23 per year, those are funds will go directly to improving fire service. This, in addition to settling with the Fire Union, will allow us to redirect revenue that would otherwise go to litigation or status-quo fire services, to crime prevention programs, parks and community services, and economic development."

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