

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
**Department of Human Resources**  
INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

**DATE** : February 21, 2020

**To** : Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., Chairman, Board of Supervisors

**FROM** : Julie Landry, Chief Human Resources Officer, Department of Human Resources  
*Dev Jeyar for J.L.*

**SUBJECT** : **Initial Informational Report on Plan for Allocating Combined \$600,000 Allotted for Potential Wage Increases for Milwaukee Building Trades and Construction Personnel**

**Request:**

The Department of Human Resources was requested to provide an initial report regarding plans to address wage increases for Milwaukee Building Trades and Construction personnel. The 2020 Milwaukee County Adopted Budget provided for a combined \$600,000 pool for potential wage increases.

**Background:**

The appropriation put forth was as a result of a general understanding that Milwaukee County's trades and craft employees have generally fallen behind the local market with respect to wages.

Resulting increases that will be recommended would be effective mid-year in 2020. Based on past practice, the typical effective date would be on the beginning of pay period 14 in 2020 which equates to an effective date of June 16.

The \$600,000 allocation that is available to be applied will impact employees represented by The Milwaukee Building & Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO. In that these employees are represented, their wage increases are bargained on an annual basis. The resulting bargained increases are subject to state-mandated CPI limitations. The effective date and amount of these increases will not be not known until agreement is met and approved.

Discussions with the Office of Corporation Counsel have indicated that establishing additional steps to facilitate higher rates in Milwaukee County's represented building and trades roles as opposed to increasing the existing wage rates provided by the current one-step grades may be the preferred course of action. Our ability to

unilaterally increase the wages by increasing the current one-step grade rates may present issues.

It should be noted that different craft roles at Milwaukee County are represented by the same bargaining unit (e.g. plumber, painter, electrician, etc.). Our research into current market rates indicates that the different craft roles are not uniform in their variation from market competitive rates. As a result, it may be preferred to implement varied increases across the represented ranks (e.g. electricians appear to be the furthest away from market, as a result, it may stand to reason that electrician increases as a result of this process should be higher than others).

In that the Milwaukee Building & Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO wages are settled on in an annual negotiating process (with the last increase being effective June 16, 2019). Wage increases resulting from this pool should be applied after the 2020 negotiated increase and its effective date has been determined. If that is after the targeted June 16<sup>th</sup> date for these increases, these increases could be implemented retroactively to June 16<sup>th</sup>.

Additionally, Milwaukee County has other employees that are not represented who have job scopes that can be considered related to the represented craft roles (e.g. ironworkers and some others) which may warrant consideration for market increases from this allocation as well.

For the purposes of increasing retention, it is suggested that a new position of "Lead" be considered. If implemented, this position would fall between the Journeyman and Supervisor roles in various craft progressions.

Additionally, Milwaukee county has slight variation in job titling for very similar craft roles. This effort would provide an opportunity to consolidate and simplify job titles for better consistency across the entire County.

**Recommendation:**

Human Resources will continue to work with Facilities Operations and Maintenance and OCC as well as others as required to:

- Validate the market data reference point methodology.
- Propose consolidation/standardization of craft titles and job descriptions.
- Make a final determination on the potential of recommending other craft-related salary adjustments with this funding allocation.
- Establish descriptions and requirements of Lead-level roles and determine the appropriate implementation scope associated with this pool.

- Further discuss timing as it relates to the Building Trades and Construction annual increase process.

Human resources will provide a follow-up report updating the Board on the status of progress made on the above during the June Board cycle.

**Fiscal Effect:**

The \$600,000 threshold provided for in the 2020 budget was intended to be in place for half of the year 2020, consistent with recent historical practice. That means that the impact will be double, or \$1,200,000 for FY2021 if the entire pool is allocated. Additionally, current practice requires us to account for the additional 7.65% impact of any increases for purposes of FICA costs.

Copy: