

Office of the County Auditor
Auditor's Analysis

Council Bill No. 67-2022

Introduced: October 3, 2022

Auditor: Rebecca Gold & Michael A. Martin

Fiscal Impact:

Based on information provided by the Administration, the proposed legislation is estimated to increase personnel and premium costs by \$823,408 in Fiscal Year 2023 and \$1,971,102 in Fiscal Year 2024. The Administration provided their calculations to our Office, which we agreed with, but the calculations provided did not match their testimony. Please see **Attachment A** for a breakdown of these costs by fund.

Although the County Council approved the Fiscal Year 2023 budget with a 3 percent increase in personnel costs, the Administration stated that there will be adequate personnel cost savings to offset the 4 percent increase proposed under this agreement for Fiscal Year 2023. There are other potential costs that we are unable to quantify, such as premium pay. The Fiscal Year 2024 approved budget will need to reflect an approximately 8 percent increase in personnel costs as a result of the negotiated union agreement.

There may be a minor fiscal impact associated with the changes made to fatigue status and the mechanics' tool reimbursement program, however, the Administration confirmed this cannot be estimated at this time.

Purpose:

The purpose of this legislation is to approve a two-year collective bargaining agreement between Howard County and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Howard County Local 3085, Council 67, AFL-CIO (Local 3085) effective through the end of Fiscal Year 2024. Please see **Attachment B** for a listing of the proposed amendments to the existing agreement.

The legislation also approves provisions in the collective bargaining agreement between Howard County and Local 3085 that conflict with the provisions of Title 1 "Human Resources" of the Howard County Code and/or the Employee Manual.

Other Comments:

The Administration confirmed that the Park Ranger Salary study, a requirement of this agreement, has not been performed and will be due by January 1, 2023, at which point the County will meet with the union prior to making a final decision on the appropriateness of their existing pay grade. The Office of Human Resources will review the existing salary and pay grade for the Park Ranger classification and determine if the current grade and pay is consistent with other positions and with other similarly situated park rangers in other jurisdictions.

The Administration indicated that there would be no costs associated with performing this study, as it will be conducted with existing staff. If this study results in changes to the Park Ranger's salary scale, these changes to personnel costs would be implemented in Fiscal Year 2024 and would not require additional amendments to the collective bargaining agreement. It would, however, trigger the need to amend the Classification Plan to reflect any new grade assigned to this classification.

Attachment A – Personnel Cost Increases by Fund & Premium Pay Increases by Program

Fund	FY 2023 Impact	FY 2024 Impact
General County	468,821	1,126,345
Water & Sewer Operating Fund	202,715	487,024
Fleet Operations (Internal Service Fund)	86,988	208,990
Environmental Services Fund	35,994	86,475
Watershed Protection & Restoration Fund	6,272	15,068
Fire & Rescue Reserve Fund	4,885	11,736
Total Personnel Cost Increase	805,675	1,935,638

Additional Premium Pay*	FY 2023 Impact**	FY 2024 Impact**
Meal Reimbursement	7,147	14,291
Mechanic License	6,549	13,099
Deer Management Program	4,037	8,074
Total Premium Pay	17,733	35,464

<i>Total Cost Increase</i>	<i>823,408</i>	<i>1,971,102</i>
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*Our Office is unable to identify the Fund that will support the premium payments made to personnel over this period as we do not know who will earn such premiums They are estimates based on historical data.

**The total premium pay increase shown above for Fiscal Year 2023 is half of the amount shown in the Administration’s Testimony because the Administration included an entire year cost estimate for that year. The Administration confirmed that a half-year estimate should have been provided for Fiscal Year 2023.

Attachment B – Breakdown of Proposed Changes to Local 3085 Agreement

- *Section 1.2 - Unit Description:* adds Apprentice and Journey-Skilled Trades roles to the unit and provides for a Park Ranger position study to be completed by January 1, 2023
- *Section 5.7 - Fatigue Status:* provides for a change in how fatigue leave is implemented
- *Section 7.1 - Salary Scale; Adjustments:*
 - A new salary scale that corrects inconsistencies between steps and grades and adds a new grade at the top of the scale, effective January 1, 2023. The corrections to the salary scale will have an approximately 8 percent salary impact in Fiscal Year 2023
 - An across-the-board salary increase of 3 percent, effective January 1, 2024
- *Section 7.4 - Meal Allowances:* increases meal allowance (reimbursement) of \$14 per meal (including taxes and tips) to \$18 per meal
- *Section 8.3 – Call-in-Pay:* employees can now choose to receive compensatory time equal to the call-in-pay hours earned in lieu of paid call-in pay
- *Section 8.4 - Stand-by Pay:* employees now must work stand by as the Universal On-Call Policy states and employees can volunteer to fill in for those already scheduled; employees can request to receive the equivalent amount earned in compensatory time instead of receiving stand by pay
- *Section 8.8 - Mechanics' Tool Reimbursement Program:* reimbursements for tool costs eligible to mechanics increases from \$500 to \$600 in a given fiscal year
- *Section 8.9 - Mechanics' Certification Premium:*
 - additional pay for ASE-certified mechanics increases from \$0.05 per hour to \$0.10 per hour for each separate certification maintained
 - additional pay for EVT-certified mechanics increases from \$0.05 per hour to \$0.15 per hour for each separate certification maintained
- *Section 8.14 - Certified Trainers:* clarifies that CDL trainers are volunteers
- *Section 8.19 - Water Treatment License Premium:* clarifies that one's eligibility for this premium is a requirement per their job description
- *Section 8.20 – Deer Management Program Premium:* new policy stipulating that Park Rangers who obtain the Maryland NRP Hunter Education Instructor Certification, the Maryland NRP Treestand Safety Certification, the NRA Basic Rifle Certification, and completed the HCRP Shooter Competency Checklist shall receive an annual stipend of \$2,500 in their base pay calculated as an hourly rate.
- *Section 10.1 - Holidays:* replaces Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day
- *Article 20 – Labor/Management Committee:* the Office of Human Resources must now forward copies of changes to the Employee Manual to the Local 3085 Union president