

# Office of the County Auditor

## Auditor's Analysis

### Council Bill No. 47- 2025

Introduced: June 2, 2025

Auditor: Maya Cameron

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#### Fiscal Impact:

The Administration estimates that this bill will increase County expenditures by approximately \$1.6 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 and \$2.3 million in FY 2027. We reviewed the Administration's calculations and found them to be reasonable.

There will be a 1% pay increase in July 2025, a 3% across the board increase in January 2026, and a 4% across the board increase in January 2027. The COLA will be paid from the Fire and Rescue Tax Fund. The FY 2026 budget includes funding for the FY 2026 salary increases.

Estimated cost to the Department of Fire and Rescue Services (DFRS) for the air quality testing for each fire station would be a onetime expense of approximately \$7,000 per station (*we have reached out to DFRS to confirm this*) and to be completed by December 2027. Currently, the water quality testing requirement will continue to be provided to all stations on well water by the Howard County Health Department with no expense to DFRS.

The bill has no impact on County revenues.

#### Purpose:

To approve a multiyear bargaining agreement between Howard County and the International Association of Firefighters Howard County Local 2000. The agreement includes the payment of compensation in future fiscal years and approves provisions that are in conflict with the provisions of Title I Human Resources of the County Code and Employee Manual.

#### Other Comments:

- Currently, 512 employees will be affected by this legislation.
- No recommendations were issued by the Work Hours Study Group.
- Significant changes to Exhibit 2 of the legislation are as follows:

- Article 5 – Hours of Work and Work Schedule – Revisions were made to the days that are worked in the 12-hour schedule. There is no additional cost associated with this contract change.
  - Article 12 – Advanced Life Support Pay - Revisions were made to this Article to provide a credit for those holding an EMT-I certification.
  - Article 14 – Compensation for Temporary Assignments – Revisions were made to the HVO Acting pay.
- The Administration noted the following costs to be minimal:
    - The Fire Chief's ability and decision to promote an employee who has died in the line of duty is final and shall not be subject to grievance.
    - Members who served as an EMT-I in Howard County may submit a request for credit for time served in grades E, F, and H to the Fire Chief for consideration. Any approval will be applied prospectively.
    - The Union may request the County to appoint one Union Representative to serve as an appointment to a County-established committee, task force, or advisory group which includes members of the public that deliberates on policies, procedures, and decisions affecting bargaining unit members. Approval will be subject to the CAO's discretion and when appropriate, County Council approval.