



## Response to Monterey Firefighters Association (MFFA) Local #3707's Statement

Issued Tuesday, November 28, 2023 at 12:30 p.m.

### City of Monterey Response to MFFA's Vote of No Confidence in Fire Chief: A Message from City Manager Hans Uslar

It's important for me to provide a perspective on the current situation between the City of Monterey and the Monterey Firefighters Association. **The City Council and I take the vote of no confidence and the firefighters' association's concerns seriously**, and we want to assure residents that the Monterey Fire Department has, and will continue to provide responsive, professional, and high levels of service to the community. **Our Monterey Fire Department is well trained, and fully staffed with dedicated, experienced, and talented personnel.**

The timing of **the resolution coincides with a contentious binding arbitration process scheduled for mid-December** to negotiate a union contract that expired on June 30, 2022. This resolution and vote of no confidence comes at an interesting time and parallels the labor agreement negotiations. All of the other six City of Monterey bargaining units have two-year labor agreement contracts that continue through June 2024, except for MFFA.

The safety of the public as well as the dedicated men and women of the MFFA takes precedence above all. This will continue while the agreement continues to be negotiated.

I think it is also important to point out the results of a current study that analyzed fire services. In a **Community Risk Assessment and Standards of Cover Study (Volume 1) (Volume 2)**, conducted in 2022 by leading fire services analytics firm Citygate Associates, with input from MFFA representatives, the report found that **"In Citygate's more than 20 years of conducting fire service deployment studies, very few client agencies have met all the key best practice response performance measures to the same degree as the Monterey Fire Department."** Given the Citygate team's experience conducting over 400 fire service studies, the City of Monterey takes great pride in an independent firm verifying a high level of service in the fire department.

**In the past three years, the City has purchased two new fire engines, one Type 3 Wildland fire engine, one aerial ladder tiller truck, a flatbed and enclosed trailer unit at the cost of about \$4 million.**

Discussing and working through the current challenges, including securing a new contract, is of utmost importance. The City of Monterey is a full-service municipality that, in addition to fire services, provides a variety of other services to the community. Our City leadership continues to support fair and competitive benefits and compensation for our firefighters based on industry standards while taking into account the variety of needs throughout the City. **The City supports fair and competitive salaries for our firefighters that are also reasonable and cost-effective for our taxpayers.**

We are committed to support a best solution that works for all involved and continues the excellence service the community deserves and expects.

It's important to know that these negotiations are purposeful and provide a platform that helps create solutions that support outstanding service levels for the community, including fire, police, public works, parks and recreation, libraries, and other City services. **We will continue to keep the media and community informed of the negotiations between the City and MFFA.** Thank you for your trust in us. We are very proud of the work we do to keep you and our communities safe.