

Water Distribution Reclassification

To Milwaukee Water Works Management and the Department of Employee Relations:

This letter highlights various reasons for a Pay Scale reclassification for the Water Chief Repair Worker and Water Repair Worker 2 positions. The purpose for the reclassification is to properly compensate Water Distribution Workers for the increased job duties, various training and new certifications required, to attract more qualified applicants, increase retention rate of current employees, offset increasing insurance rates and cost of living.

This proposal recommends that the following annual pay scales be adopted as the new salary rate. Chief Repair Worker's new starting annual salary should be **\$68,000** with a maximum salary of **\$79,040**. The Water Repair Worker II new starting annual salary should be **\$57,800** with a maximum of **\$68,050**. Along with the salary reclassification we propose to have a yearly raise increase to range from 2%-4% based on performance. These pay scales and increase for larger raises will incentivize the accumulation of knowledge for the water distribution system; improve workplace environment, and a continued increase of effective and efficient completion of work.

To determine a fair and equitable wage for we began with the essential functions of our job and compared them to comparable positions within various City Positions and their pay scales. We began with the Municipal Equipment Special Equipment Operators as their job duties include heavy equipment operation. This positions responsibility and competency is compensated at a higher rate with less responsibility as our current operators. We are required to have the skill and knowledge to properly operate heavy equipment as well as possess knowledge and skills required to perform extensive plumbing and pipefitting services for all functions of water distribution and its system. Both Chief Repair Worker and Repair Worker 2 have to possess the ability to manage and train a 4 person crew on an everyday basis.

In the past whenever a lead lateral was disturbed a patch repair would suffice. With the new laws the procedure for lead service leaks has changed and so has the requirements and job knowledge. The new procedure has significant public health benefits. It also poses a greater level of safety risks to Water Repair Workers and requires a new set of skills when approaching lead lateral services. Since the passing of the new city ordinance we are now required to perform complete lead service replacement versus the previous repairs made in the past. In order to do so the Water Repair Crews are required to tap water mains live to reduce lead disturbance in the water system. In addition, we are also required to perform more extensive plumbing as we are responsible for replacing the public side of the lateral from the curb stop control valve to the water main. Lead service replacement requires the team to strategically approach each job for the safety of the crew and the public.

With constant change and growth taking place within the Water Department we as Repair Workers 2 and Chief Repair Workers are encouraged to grow and gain more knowledge about Water

Distribution and various safety standards. Our management has done so by giving us the tools and resources we need to be successful. With that being said we are required to become more educated and are constantly being challenged to grow through various workshops within the city and courses offered outside the city. Some examples of the training and certifications we have had are Plumbing Training, Confine Space Training, Caulker/Joint Assemblers Card, WI DNR Distribution License, HOP training, Job Site training, CDL license (A class), Backhoe training, and etc. We are constantly being pushed and challenged which ultimately allows us to be successful and efficient at our job.

Safety responsibilities and exposure to inherently risky situations are a key element in deciding proper compensation of any given position. The Water Repair Crews work in a high risk situation on a day to day basis. We work around heavy equipment, in excavations that can range up to depths of 15 feet below the ground, and handling heavy materials by machine or manually. We also have outside safety factors such as working in high traffic areas and working in high crime areas at all times of the day. Being an emergency service we are required to work everywhere within the city and its limits having to deal with a wide variety of people. As an emergency service we tend to work long hours especially in the winter where the demand for our public service is increased to maintain water service for the public. Ultimately there are numerous on the job and outside factors that make our daily operation extremely hazardous.

As cost of living in the City of Milwaukee continues to rise each year, our pay scale as essential employees has remained stagnant. The proposed wage increases would help bring employees to a wage that accounts for increased living expenses. In addition, the employee contributions to health insurance and pensions plans have continued to increase without being offset by wage adjustments. Employees are now required to work more years of service to reach eligibility for maximum pension benefits. A wage increase will provide employees an opportunity to compensate for these changes as they plan for retirement or "Life after the City". With a pay increase the Water Department will attract more qualified employees and increase retention rate and the want to excel for current employees.

To conclude Chief Water Repair Workers and Repair Workers 2 have been faced with many challenges in the last couple years within the Water Department. We continue to grow and become more knowledgeable about Water Distribution, we show adversity and flexibility to accomplish all tasks at hand. We work hand in hand with management to meet the needs of the general public. We are more efficient in our repair times and also more cautious about safety and excavation practices. We work long hours in all of Wisconsin's weather conditions to provide a public service. We are deserving of a reclassification so that we can continue to succeed and excel as a Water Department.

Respectfully,

Department of Water Works