



NEWS RELEASE

COUNCILMEMBER MARTI EMERALD

Date: 10.01.13

For Immediate Release

Contact: Marisa Berumen
Phone: 619.236-6699
E-mail: mberumen@sandiego.gov

Marti Emerald, Chair of Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee Warns City Must Boost Pay for Police, Firefighters and Lifeguards

Councilmember Marti Emerald says it's time to meet public safety needs head on. While approving new five-year contracts with City workers, Emerald announced plans to discuss a contract "re-opener" with public safety employees.

"I'm sure our police officers appreciated a recent bonus recently approved by the City Council," Emerald told her council colleagues. "But a bonus for a uniform or equipment will not solve our police retention problems. We need to raise pay and benefits to compete with police earnings in other comparable cities."

The Councilmember says the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department and Lifeguard Services are also struggling to keep qualified people on the job. Emerald has scheduled a hearing at the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee for October 30, 2013 at 2pm, 202 C Street, Council Committee Room, 12th Floor. The Committee, which Emerald chairs, will learn the latest on salary and benefit comparisons with other cities competing for our police officers, firefighters and lifeguards.

The San Diego Police Department say they are losing nearly 40 officers a month to retirement or other law enforcement agencies that offer better pay and benefits. Further, the department says nearly half of our police officers are eligible for retirement in the next four years, with some expected to leave for other public safety jobs. The San Diego Fire-Rescue Department says it is also losing firefighters to other agencies that offer better pay and benefits.

"It is my intention to re-open contract negotiations with our public safety professionals this next year to end this dramatic and dangerous trend," says Emerald. "I urge my Council colleagues to join me in approving this plan to retain our safety professionals and keep our City and neighborhoods safe."

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