



# Mansfield Fire Fighters Union Local 266

140 EAST THIRD STREET

MANSFIELD, OHIO 44902

PHONE (419) 755-9818

To the citizens of the City of Mansfield,

Over the past few years, the Mansfield Fire Department has maintained and operated with a minimum of 19 firefighters and paramedics working each day across the City's 5 fire stations. The City's recent proposal to have fewer firefighters on duty is not in the best interest of the safety of those who live, work, or visit our great city.

Every day that the firefighters and paramedics on duty drops below 19 the safety and protection of the citizens are at risk in the form of increased response times to emergencies or incomplete fire crews being dispatched when team size matters most. Any cut or reduction of firefighters and paramedics on duty will have a domino effect on the entire City. If there is not an adequate number of firefighters and paramedics at each fire station, resources from the other fire stations around the city will have to respond to the emergency which ultimately leave the area/district they vacated less protected as well. Firefighters and paramedics are also on the front line of the Coronavirus pandemic. As the first link in the chain of public health MFD is responsible for providing emergency care not only to those with symptoms of Coronavirus but to the thousands of other citizens who call every year with other medical issues including heart attacks, strokes, traumatic injuries, imminent childbirth, and auto accidents.

The Coronavirus has certainly affected us all through stay at home orders and a "new normal". But firefighters and paramedics have risen to the challenge. Our response to medical emergencies has taken on additional precautions as we use more protective gear to keep our citizens and ourselves safe, but our dedication to the health and safety of our City has never been higher. That is what makes the decision and timing to reduce the number of firefighters and paramedics on duty each day that much more frustrating and counterintuitive. Cutting emergency responders during the emergency is never advisable. We don't send our firefighters back to the station while your home is still on fire or filled with smoke and the City should not be cutting fire department resources during a pandemic.

These are unprecedented times and our economy is certainly impacted. But the decision of the City to reduce firefighters and paramedics has the potential to make a bad situation much worse for far too many citizens of Mansfield.

Due to the reduction on firefighters and paramedics each day fire stations will either be temporarily closed or operating at 50% capacity.

Citizens of Mansfield do feel that their safety is important. The citizens of Mansfield have supported, voted for, and renewed a Safety tax levy that has been in effect since 1988 and more recently the citizens supported, voted for, and renewed a PRIDE tax levy that has been in effect since 2013. With the revenue generated from these two additional tax levies the City Administration has been able to create special revenue funds in the form of a Budget Stabilization fund and a Separation fund. Both the Budget Stabilization and Separation funds were established "to ensure the City can



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provide consistent, uninterrupted municipal services in the event of economic disruption or volatility” (City Ordinance 12-171 Separation Fund and City Ordinance 13-024 Budget Stabilization) The citizens deserve the safety and protection that they are paying for.

Firefighters and paramedics are sworn to protect this community and City. That means responding to fires, hazardous materials incidents, medical emergencies, and auto accidents. It also means speaking up and taking a stand on policies that impact the safety of our city. This is one of those times. Yes, we are in financially uncertain times and yes, some City policies may need to be revisited, but the first step is not to cut the services that people rely on to keep them safe, especially as those professionals are battling the pandemic on the front lines.

Our firefighters know what our neighbors expect, they expect us to keep responding with our entire team when they need us most-and we promise to deliver. We look forward to working with the City Administration to find ways to avert these cuts and keep firefighters and paramedics at the fire station-with a full team, ready to respond when our citizens call for help.

IAFF Local 266 President

Scott Miller