

RE: IMPORTANT: FORBES REQUEST FOR COMMENT

Tinsley, Kristin <Kristin.Tinsley@seattle.gov>

Tue 6/23/2020 5:39 PM

To: Adam Andrzejewski <Adam@openthebooks.com>

Thanks Adam for allowing us to comment. The current Fire Chief (Harold Scoggins) is a salaried employee. The two former Fire Chiefs (Former Fire Chief Gregory Dean and Former Interim Fire Chief Michael E. Walsh) and one Assistant Chief (Former Assistant Chief Alan Vickery) were also salaried employees, and a portion of their wages are a result of cash outs upon retirement from the City. The remaining employees are hourly workers and a significant portion of reported wages are a result of overtime compensation or comp time, vacation, and sick leave payout to repay pensions or at retirement.

We currently have 80 firefighter vacancies, partly due to a significant number of retirements in 2019 and only two recruit classes per year approved by the city budget to hire new firefighters. As a result, overtime is utilized to ensure shifts are covered due to paid, unpaid and administrative leave.

Firefighters and paramedics must complete a recruit academy and undergo a significant amount of training for a highly technical job that requires you to put your life on the line. Additionally, Chiefs are put in the position of serving as the incident commander of large scale incidents that can have a significant impact on loss of life or property. Pay is negotiated through respective labor unions and must be comparable to other neighboring fire departments to attract and retain a diverse and effective workforce. Base hourly rates of members are identical across positions, rank and seniority.

The higher dollar amount for some employees simply reflects that they worked more hours outside of the set work schedule. Additionally, some employees have a longer period of service which reflects a higher pay in the pay range (ex: Former Assistant Chief Alan Vickery worked for SFD for 54 years).

Base pay for uniform personnel are as follows:

- Firefighter (starts at \$79,800 per year)
- Fire Lieutenant (starts at \$108,473 per year)
- Fire Captain (starts at \$124,248 per year)
- Firefighter-Paramedic (starts at \$115,170 per year)
- Battalion Chief (starts at \$134,376 per year)
- Deputy Chief (starts at \$153,408 per year)
- Assistant Chief (\$153,739-253,671 per year)
- Fire Chief (\$153,739-253,671 per year)



Kristin Tinsley

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From: Adam Andrzejewski <Adam@openthebooks.com>

Sent: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 12:37

To: Tinsley, Kristin <Kristin.Tinsley@seattle.gov>

Subject: Re: IMPORTANT: FORBES REQUEST FOR COMMENT

CAUTION: External Email

Thank you, Kristin. Much appreciated. Our piece will publish at 4pm EST; however, I'll update it in as real time as possible when I get your feedback.

Our readers will certainly appreciate your comment and perspective. In the email below, I sent you the entire segment of the piece where your department is mentioned.

Adam

Adam Andrzejewski (say: Angie-eff-ski)
CEO & Founder | OpenTheBooks.com | 312.320.1867

Senior Policy Contributor | *Forbes*
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From: Tinsley, Kristin <Kristin.Tinsley@seattle.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 2:30 PM
To: Adam Andrzejewski <Adam@openthebooks.com>
Subject: RE: IMPORTANT: FORBES REQUEST FOR COMMENT

Hi Adam – we will be providing you with a comment. Hope to have that to you by end of today. Big thing to note is that all but four of those positions are hourly (not salary) employees, meaning they worked extra hours.

From: Adam Andrzejewski <Adam@openthebooks.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 10:54
To: Tinsley, Kristin <Kristin.Tinsley@seattle.gov>; SFDPIO <sfdPIO@seattle.gov>
Cc: Adam Andrzejewski <Adam@openthebooks.com>
Subject: Re: IMPORTANT: FORBES REQUEST FOR COMMENT

CAUTION: External Email

Hi Kristin,

We are confident in the data, as it came to us via open records request from the city. However, I was reaching out to you for comment, context, and on the record feedback. We would love to have a response or quote for the piece. For example, Seattle City Light utility gave us a quote/response.

Adam

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From: Tinsley, Kristin <Kristin.Tinsley@seattle.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 12:24 PM

To: Adam Andrzejewski <Adam@openthebooks.com>; SFDPIO <sfdPIO@seattle.gov>

Subject: RE: IMPORTANT: FORBES REQUEST FOR COMMENT

Thank you Adam for sending this over. We will not have time to verify this information for SFD by June 23, but will be in touch soon if there are any changes.



Kristin Tinsley

Sr. Communications Manager | Public Information Officer

Seattle Fire Department

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From: Adam Andrzejewski <Adam@openthebooks.com>

Sent: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 08:43

To: SFDPIO <sfdPIO@seattle.gov>

Cc: Adam Andrzejewski <Adam@openthebooks.com>

Subject: IMPORTANT: FORBES REQUEST FOR COMMENT

CAUTION: External Email

2nd request --

To whom it may concern,

My name is Adam Andrzejewski, a senior policy contributor at Forbes. We are working on a piece exploring salaries and compensation of public employees in Seattle city government. The deadline for comment is today, June 23, 2020, at 4:00 PM ET. If you miss our deadline, we will do our best to update the piece after you respond.

Please respond to this email with "**REPLY ALL.**"

In these times of national crisis, please provide us with an on-the-record justification for your compensation. All compensation numbers are via open records request of the City of Seattle.

Here is the section(s) where your entity is mentioned:

Seattle Fire Department (SFD) – 866 highly compensated employees of the fire department earned six-figures and 59 earned more than \$200,000 last year.

Harold Scoggins, who became Chief of the Seattle Fire Department in 2015, earned \$229,877. He was out-earned by fifteen SFD employees. The top five high earners included Jay Schreckengost (deputy chief - \$282,055); Dennis Dahline (deputy chief - \$276,872); William Zander (safety chief - \$275,405); Tamalyn Nigretto (battalion chief - \$264,509); and Thomas Walsh (deputy chief - \$256,815).

Other highly compensated earners included paramedic Michael Mann (\$213,922); dispatcher Jore Lund (\$215,398); captain Rory Dees (\$233,234); and lieutenant Paul Andrews (\$253,842).

Overall, SFD employees earning six-figures last year cost taxpayers \$120 million and included 603 firefighters, 156 lieutenants, 58 captains, 25 battalion chiefs, and 8 deputy chiefs. These also included 222 drivers who earned between \$100,057 and \$191,639. The highest paid driver was Firefighter Patrick Williams.

Our auditors additionally found 78 six-figure annual pensions. Some of the highest paid retirees included Alan Dennis Vickery (former assistant chief - \$233,604); Gregory Michael Dean (former chief - \$206,136); Michael Walsh (former interim chief - \$185,196); and Steven Oleson (\$162,600).

Any context, feedback, or comment would be important to our readers at Forbes.

Sincerely,

Adam

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