



Legislation Text

File #: Res 31831, Version: 2

CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION requesting that the Department of Finance and Administrative Services, the Seattle Fire Department, and the City Budget Office include in the City’s contract for Basic Life Support Emergency Services provisions that provide to emergency medical technicians (EMTs) a prevailing wage and benefits comparable to other emergency workers employed in comparable cities and similar sectors in the City of Seattle; and requesting the departments to provide additional analysis, data, and information.

WHEREAS, emergency medical technicians (EMTs) do vital, life-saving work in Seattle every day, assessing, treating, and transporting people in all manner of emergencies, from psychiatric crises to car crashes to strokes; and

WHEREAS, American Medical Response, Inc. (AMR), a nationwide for-profit corporation providing Basic Life Support and Advanced Life Support ambulance services in 40 states and the District of Columbia, is owned by Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co., a global investment firm that reports managing \$176 billion in assets as of March 31, 2018; and

WHEREAS, the 430 EMTs employed by AMR and serving the City of Seattle are members of Teamsters Local 763; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, The City of Seattle (“City”) entered into a five-year contract, with a two-year extension expiring in 2018, with AMR to provide Basic Life Support ambulance services; and

WHEREAS, the City Budget Office, under the authority of the Mayor, is reviewing a proposal from AMR for a successor contract to provide Basic Life Support ambulance services beyond 2018; and

WHEREAS, the 2011 contract between the City and AMR states: “The combined compensation and fringe benefit program for field personnel, on-site management and EMS dispatch personnel should provide a

financial benefit to those personnel that is, at least, substantially equivalent to the average rate of compensation for similar private sector field personnel in similar sized and cost-of-living areas of the United States”; and

WHEREAS, EMTs are employed in various ways by government agencies; for example, some EMTs are employed directly by the government agency and some are employed by a third party such as AMR; and

WHEREAS, EMTs employed by AMR in Seattle provide Basic Life Support services and have a wage scale that goes from \$15.54 an hour as the starting wage and progresses, based on longevity with the company, to a top wage of \$24.96 an hour; and

WHEREAS, the starting wage of \$15.54, according to AMR EMTs, is 28 percent less than the starting pay for EMTs employed by AMR in comparable and lower cost-of-living cities in Northern California, according to the 2015 collective bargaining agreement between the United Emergency Medical Services Workers AFSCME 4911 and AMR (West); and

WHEREAS, according to AMR, EMTs in Seattle employed by AMR, which is a private company, are paid 34 percent less than EMTs employed by the federal Veterans Administration in Seattle as determined by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment Standards Administration, Wage and Hour Division; and

WHEREAS, some EMTs employed by AMR in Seattle report having a substandard healthcare plan that forces many workers to forego necessary healthcare; and

WHEREAS, a starting wage of \$15.54 an hour, if the individual works full-time, equates to \$32,323 a year and may cause an EMT in Seattle to be severely rent-burdened, given that the median rental price of a one-bedroom apartment in Seattle is \$2,000 a month; and

WHEREAS, EMTs in Seattle report that low pay has forced them into debt and financial precarity, including unstable living conditions, long commutes to work each day, and even homelessness, along with dependence on food banks and other public assistance to provide nutrition for their children and themselves; and

WHEREAS, EMTs employed by AMR in Seattle report that low pay and inadequate healthcare have resulted in unacceptably high turnover among their coworkers; and

WHEREAS, the City has a significant interest in the uninterrupted provision of the critical services provided by EMTs; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE THAT:

Section 1. The Seattle City Council requests that the Department of Finance and Administrative Services (FAS), the Seattle Fire Department (SFD), and the City Budget Office (CBO) include in The City of Seattle's contract for Basic Life Support Emergency Services provisions that contractors and their subcontractors: 1) pay EMTs in Seattle the prevailing wage similar to the wage paid to EMTs in cities of comparable size and cost of living and 2) provide mental health and healthcare benefits comparable to other emergency workers employed in similar sectors in the City of Seattle.

Section 2. The Seattle City Council requests that FAS, SFD, and CBO exercise their oversight authority and actively monitor the City's contract for Basic Life Support Emergency Services, including wages and benefits outlined in Section 1 of this resolution, during the entire contract term for compliance with all terms of the contract.

Section 3. The Seattle City Council requests that the Executive provide the City Council with a draft of the City's contract with AMR for Basic Life Support emergency services once it has been negotiated.

Section 4. The Seattle City Council requests that the FAS, SFD, and CBO require any future City of Seattle contracts for Basic Life Support attempt to retain all qualified employees of previous contracts at similar wages, benefits, and job classifications.

Section 5. The Seattle City Council requests that FAS, SFD, and CBO provide the City Council with:

A. data that compares the prevailing wages and benefits of EMTs providing Basic Life Support services in cities of comparable size and cost of living, as well as the criteria used to determine comparable cities;

B. information on how EMTs are scheduled and suggested ways to insure EMTs have adequate rest between shifts and advance notice of their scheduled hours; and

C. a report outlining how the City can promote greater EMT workforce stability through specific measures including but not limited to increasing average EMT wages in Seattle to \$25 an hour.

Adopted by the City Council the _____ day of _____, 2018, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this _____ day of _____, 2018.

President _____ of the City Council

Filed by me this _____ day of _____, 2018.

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)