

From: [Matthew Joseph](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: Public Commet 09/28
Date: Monday, September 28, 2020 12:29:07 PM
Attachments: [city council meeting statement.pdf](#)

Please see the attached letter from Sparks Firefighters. For use in the event I am not able to zoom in properly.
Thank you.

Monday, September 28, 2020

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Council,

I am writing on behalf of the Sparks Firefighters. I want to address the recent closure of our fire station and suspension of our mutual aid response to the nations wildfire crisis.

I want to be very clear that the Firefighters did not advocate for either of these things. In fact, before and after receiving the news of a positive Covid case in our fire house we (as a labor group) offered several low or no cost options to keep our members working and all stations open. These suggestions were disregarded.

For those of you that don't know, a Firefighter tested positive for Covid after returning from a wildfire assignment. I would be happy to share the details with you but the end result was the fire station that serves Wards 2, 3, 4, and 5 was closed. And, none of our firefighters will be allowed to aid the the suppression efforts of the wildfires currently destroying lives, property and polluting our air.

I can think of no scenario where closing fire stations furthers the City's mission of keeping the public safe. Sparks Firefighters are ready, willing and able to work. We can handle any emergency under any circumstance but only if we are in our station and on our rigs.

Staffing is a right of management and you get to determine the level of service our citizens deserve. Sparks Firefighters respectfully disagree with the level you have chosen. The City has invested a tremendous amount of time and money, training and equipping our members for this exact scenario. Our members have dedicated their lives to this profession and are experts in the many disciplines of the Fire Service. To put your best and only players on the bench during the 4th quarter of fire season and a global pandemic is disappointing at best.

You will likely be told that your department managers were just following policy. Policies don't put out fires. Policies don't come to the aid of the sick and dying. Sparks Firefighters do. If a policy conflicts with our ability to show up to work you are no longer mitigating risk, you are fabricating it.

Somehow, every other fire agency in the area and abroad have figured out how to keep their players in the game. We would be happy to work with you on a solution. I hope you will reconsider your policies. There are a lot of people counting you to keep them safe. Restricting your Firefighters ability to work is not the solution.

Respectfully,

Local 1265
Sparks Firefighters