

**Asheville City Council June 11, 2024 Email Comments Received**

**TimeStamp**

6/9/2024 10:05:00 PM

**Text**

Good afternoon,

I was able to answer my questions by researching the data. If you feel these answers are wrong, I urge you to speak on Tuesday, June 11th.

To the employees, please use your voice. Question the data. Stand up for yourself and for how hard you work and serve this community. Talk to each other and your leaders. Be loud.

To the Directors, your silence in not publicly advocating for proper staffing is acceptance and agreeance of status quo labor abuse. Chief Lamb is communicating with the public the dire need for 63 employees, please do the same. The public elects Council based on your input and communication. Tell us/the Public what you need so we can elect leaders who are aligned with that need. Ideally, this communication should go to the City Manager first, then to the community, but if that doesn't happen, you still need to speak to the public. That is your role as a Public Servant, which supersedes the Directors' Code of Conduct if the City Manager fails their obligation.

To the City Manager, you have specifically set up Chief Lamb and Chief Cayse for failure. Without the required staff, not even these highly qualified and respected leaders could succeed. You have not outlined in this budget how you will fill and pay for these vacancies and payroll deficiencies.

The data tells the story. Listen to it. And question it when it doesn't make sense, that usually means vital data was left out intentionally to gaslight the audience.

The City of Asheville has grown 13% per the 2010 census to the 2020 census. Projections confirm that the City has continued to grow since 2020. City Staffing in the past 5 years has not grown with the City. In fact, many departments have decreased in staff. With an alarming amount remaining stagnant in staff allocation. This is not a healthy equation.

I will use Mark Matheny's Department as an example. Mark has only been the Director for Development Services for less than a year (which is an alarming trend all on its own, how many new Directors will we have within a year of service, I'm counting 8: Development Services, Planning and Urban Design, Equity & Inclusion, APD Chief, AFD Chief, Transportation, Public Works, Human Resources) so this is in no way a reflection on him or his leadership, unless he has not been vocal in demanding more staff. If a City grows 13%, mostly in new construction, and the department that handles that growth reduces in staffing over the past 5 years by 17%, what are the consequences? Jade certainly feels those consequences when he can't meet deadlines for construction contracts because there are massive delays in permitting (because Mark's department is understaffed, by design per the FTE history). We are feeling only a slight imposition to these consequences now, the future will have a more devastating story for the things that were rushed or missed or disregarded.

The City has grown 13% but Transportaion has remained stagnant in staffing. How does that math make sense to anyone?

To City Council:

The City is broke and the City is broken. Staff is tired. You are damn lucky Staff are resilient and have a true love for this community because they are faced with being tired and underpaid for at least another 5 years of their life until you fix this. There is NO financial plan to make this City whole for the staffing demands that are equal to the City growth.

I don't know how you could approve a Budget without knowing how to fill and pay for every single job vacancy, over 100 openings. There are massive unexplained gaps, with HR never being at the table for the conversation when you need answers. Which doesn't let you off the hook, you should have been asking these questions 4 years ago when the census data came out. Or at the very least, asked those questions at the past 3 Policy, Finance, and HR Council Committees. Oh right, those meetings were cancelled.

If every single vacancy is filled in FY25 that would bring the fund balance to 11% (15% of the proposed General fund is \$26,768,131 minus the \$7,100,000 needed to pay these employees from the General Fund balance, bring it to 19,668,131, which is 11% of the total \$178,454,209) Council currently isn't even entertaining going down to 13.5% so Council has NO PLANS next fiscal year to bring this Organization to a fully staffed operation. You want to fix all the problems without staffing the people needed to fix the problems. The equation is wrong.

If I am wrong in this evaluation of the data, please, with true sincerity, tell us on Tuesday, June 11th, how you plan to correct this historical pattern?

Free Palestine.

Allison

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6/10/2024 10:19:00 PM

Congrats Mayor! Back in February you demanded a review of your salary and a raise based on your value add and how hard you work, and you got it! WOO!

Because information is not easy to find, for anyone curious, this is how I find it:

City of Asheville Government Page<<https://www.ashevilenc.gov/government/>>

Council Meeting Agenda<<https://www.ashevilenc.gov/government/city-council-agenda/>>

On this page, there are several hyperlinks to documents regarding the Agenda Topic Item, under Unfinished Business is the document<[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Yihx2-KoqHVVH2gbqVrA-z2bQv-LndFLM/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Yihx2-KoqHVVH2gbqVrA-z2bQv-LndFLM/view?usp=drive_link)> for Item B. The budget. This document shows their raise. Page 10, section 10 states where the raise is. Definitely super buried. I highly doubt this will be discussed tomorrow night, but I hope it is. Council would never give themselves a remarkable and substantial raise and then close the door behind them to fair and equitable raises for others.

Councilmembers are part-time employees. Based on 20 hours of work a week, below data for review:

Mayor is receiving a 9.2% raise of \$2,400 annually, for an hourly rate of \$27.18

Vice Mayor is receiving an 11.1% raise of \$2,400 annually, for an hourly rate of \$22.95

Councilmembers are receiving a 12.6% raise of \$2,400 annually, for an hourly rate of \$20.58.

Oh, and they receive a car allowance and travel pay. Similar to all Directors, many of whom work from home 50% of the year.

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The lowest paid Staff Employee will receive a 6.3% raise, for an hourly rate of \$19.00 an hour.

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I look forward to the Council meeting tomorrow when this gets discussed. I hope next year employees won't have to beg for a raise to barely survive and be granted a raise as easily as the Council got their raise.

Ceasefire now.

Allison

Subject: Re: City of Asheville Employee Salary and Vacancies

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6/11/2024 3:51:00 AM

Hello,

I am writing with concern about possible upcoming parking changes. I am a local business owner and thus know the people with parking services who enforce parking downtown. They recently told me that there are proposed new parking changes that mimic the parking enforcement in Charlotte, NC and other large cities. These changes would force cars to move parking spaces and parking zones every 2 hours. If not, they will be ticketed.

If this is enforced, this will be a huge inconvenience to both tourists, small business owners like myself, and downtown workers who park and pay every 2 hours to leave their car in one spot all day. I interact with tourists every day, and they have already had trouble with the new meters so I can't imagine the frustration with having to change parking spots every 2 hours.

I understand that the goal is to put more people in the garage, but the garages are already filling up very fast so that will not work. I also do not park in the garage as a petite woman for safety issues. I close up shop at night, and as parking services has also told me, it is just not safe to walk into the garage carrying bags of my merchandise.

We are Asheville, a special city of local artists, small business owners, workers, and tourists that keep us doing what we love. Please do not allow this change to take effect. Please keep parking as it is where we can continue to park in one space all day and pay the meter every 2 hours.

Thank you,  
Alexandra