

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Board of County Commissioners

November 1, 2021



Okaloosa County Approves Significant Pay Increase for EMS Team

Shalimar, Fla. –Okaloosa County leaders have approved an immediate increase for all Emergency Medical Services (EMS) new hires at the County, including an approximate \$3 per hour higher rate for EMTs and \$5.50 per hour higher rate for Paramedics. The goal is to incentivize those seeking a rewarding, public service career choice, with a more competitive rate of pay. Additionally, the majority of the County’s current EMS team members will also benefit indirectly, as most will also see substantial and immediate pay increases. Each current team member affected will receive an individual letter explaining what impact this will have on their wages. The new pay rates for both new and current employees are set to take effect Monday, November 1.

“The citizens of Okaloosa County can count on them as an essential service and we want our EMS team to know that they can count on us” said County Commissioner Paul Mixon.

County EMTs and Paramedics support the community with pre-hospital basic and advanced life support emergency care to everyone in the community 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. They have supported our community during the COVID-19 pandemic, including testing and vaccination support with Florida Department of Health Okaloosa.

“We appreciate the Union’s efforts on salary negotiations, but that takes time,” said Patrick Maddox, Public Safety Director. “Our team needs help now and we are glad we can offer these major market adjustments to our local everyday heroes today”.

The starting rate for a Paramedic will go to \$23.69 per hour, up from the current \$18.17 per hour. The starting rate for an EMT will be \$17.50 per hour, up from \$14 per hour. EMT Relief pay is also being increased to \$16.50 per hour and Paramedic Relief pay to \$22.00 per hour, up from \$14 and \$18 per hour respectively. Between the increases for new members and increases being provided to current staff, the County is making a total investment of over \$880,000 in its EMS team, which represents a substantial increase in salary and benefits above the recently approved budget and a large wage increase for most current EMT's and Paramedics.

"EMTs and Paramedics are critical to public safety," said County Commission Chairman Carolyn Ketchel. “We want to attract and retain outstanding professionals for the citizens of Okaloosa County through more competitive wages and benefits”

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