



Mountain View Professional Fire Fighters
International Association of Firefighters • Local 1965
P.O. Box 391177, Mountain View, CA 94039-1177

August 12, 2016

Dear Lucas Ramirez,

1. What do you know about the Mountain View Fire Department and it's firefighters?

The City of Mountain View is well served by its first-rate, professional fire department. Fire Chief Juan Diaz oversees approximately 85 personnel and 5 fire stations. The department's primary responsibilities include fire suppression, paramedic and rescue services, inspection and prevention (fire and hazardous materials), emergency preparedness, and community education. The fire department is involved with regional interoperability efforts to consolidate fire dispatch across agencies and improve quality and efficiency. An annual report is published each fiscal year detailing the department's response times and activity along with budgetary information.

2. The Mountain View Fire Department is a level 1 ISO rated fire department. Insurance Services Office believes a community's investment in fire mitigation is a proven and reliable predictor of future losses. Statistically, their insurance loss data correlates the relationship between excellent fire protection, the Public Protection Classification (ISO rating) and fire losses. **Insurance companies utilize ISO's Classification for marketing, underwriting and to help establish insurance premiums for homeowners and commercial fire insurance.** Nationally, there are only 60 agencies [out of 49,000] that have a Class 1 rating. There are significant investments of time and resources from the community, City and fire department personnel in the areas of staffing, training, emergency response and community education. As a future council member what is your position on maintaining our standards in staffing, training, emergency response and community education?

Excellent fire protection and emergency response services are critical to preserving the quality of life of our residents. I am proud to know our City and its residents have invested the resources necessary to maintain an exceptional fire department. As a prospective council member, I strongly support continuing to invest in public safety to ensure that the city can remain competitive, recruit and retain top-notch personnel, maintain superior emergency response time, and provide for public education.

3. What can you tell us about your knowledge of the Mountain View Firefighters community involvement?

In addition to the excellent service MVFD provides to the city, Mountain View Firefighters are highly involved in the community. The Annual Pancake Breakfast hosted by the Firefighters, for

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the benefit of the Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation, is always very well attended and highly successful. Mountain View Firefighters participate in the Leadership Mountain View program, both as members of each class and as organizers of Public Safety Day. The Firefighters teach residents going through the Community Emergency Response Team program. The Firefighters also participate in parades and festivals in the city, and in neighborhood events, like block parties.

4. As you are aware there has been much discussion over the issue of pensions and pension reform. In 2013 the governor instituted statewide pension reform known as the Public Employee Pension Reform Act (PEPRA). PEPRA limited the pensionable income of new government employees, as well as increased their portion of pension costs. Since 2000 the Mountain View Firefighters began contributing pre-existing employee pensionable costs **(\$1,327,742.15 in FY 13/14 and \$1,491,089.89 in FY 15/16)**. As you can see savings to the City and its residents are in the millions of dollars. In 2012 the Mountain View Firefighters also led the way in cost sharing a portion of the City's of retiree health benefits, again reducing the overall liability for the City and our community members. These accomplishments are gained through ongoing salary sacrifices of behalf of your Mountain View Firefighters. In 2015 the firefighters ratified another contract extending and increasing cost sharing through 2017. What is your position on providing future COLAs for employees that have given significantly over the years?

The cost of living in Santa Clara County, and especially in Mountain View, is extremely high. Without reasonable wages and benefits, our dedicated fire and emergency response workforce would be unable to provide exemplary service. They risk their lives to preserve and protect ours. I would support future COLAs for employees who have been paying their fair share over the years.

5. The Mountain View Firefighters have been very successful through collaborative relationships with the City and community. Recently Local 1965 initiated the request to move to the PERS medical system as a cost saving measure. Both staff and Local 1965 successfully negotiated a transition from the City funded health care plan into the PERS medical system. The study showed significant long term savings for the City. We believe strongly in collaboration in order to work through challenges that may arise. What is your position on availability in meeting and working collaboratively with your Mountain View Firefighters'.

As a future council member, collaboration, accessibility, and transparency will be the hallmarks of my approach to governance. In order to provide exceptional fire response services and advance cost saving measures, I am committed to working collaboratively with the Mountain View Firefighters.

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6. Our City has been understaffed for some time and in addition over the past couple of years the City of Mountain View has lost a number highly talented employees to other local agencies. What is your position on recruiting and retaining high quality employees?

Mountain View is very fortunate to have stellar public employees who consistently do great work. In order to recruit and retain high quality employees, we must provide fair and competitive compensation. The cost of living is extremely high, and we cannot expect to retain high quality employees if wages and benefits are inadequate. We need to provide reasonable COLAs that allow valued employees to remain in and continue to serve our community.

7. The City of Mountain View continues to experience unprecedented growth and prosperity. What is your position on the potential increase of public safety services to better serve the Mountain View Community?

I support continuing to invest in public safety personnel and equipment in order to ensure that the quality of service and response times remain excellent.

8. The City of Mountain View City Council recently opened the door for binding arbitration in the resolving of unsettled issues taking place within the City. The Mountain View Firefighters also agree that binding arbitration is the fairest way to resolve contract disputes or disagreements as the process introduces a neutral third party in what otherwise could be considered a stalemate in the negotiations process. As councilmember for the City of Mountain View would you be willing to add this same process to contractual agreements if asked?

While I understand that binding arbitration is intended to bring a neutral third party to facilitate a fair process and a best faith effort to reach an agreement, Mountain View has a long history and commitment to negotiating fair contracts at the bargaining table. I want to continue the tradition of negotiating in good faith and ensuring fair and competitive compensation for our employees. If, for some reason, there were a disagreement at the bargaining table and parties were unable to arrive at a mutually agreed upon arrangement, especially if it could result in a decline in the quality of public safety services, I would consider supporting binding arbitration. However, this is a last resort, and as a future council member, I would encourage all relevant parties to negotiate in good faith.

9. As firefighters we constantly strive to maintain a reputation of honor and integrity within our community. As a candidate seeking the endorsement from the Mountain View Firefighters is there anything we should be made aware of that could cause harm to that reputation if we chose to give you our endorsement?

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I do not believe that, should I earn the endorsement of the Mountain View Firefighters, your reputation would be damaged in any way. If it is helpful, please visit my website to see the endorsements I have earned so far, my positions on a variety of issues, and fundraising information: <https://www.ramirezforcouncil.com/>

Fraternally,

Melton Wong, Political Action Committee Director
Mountain View Professional Firefighters
I.A.F.F. Local 1965