

WEST PALM BEACH

FIREFIGHTERS UNION
Local 727

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**WEST PALM BEACH ASSOCIATION OF FIREFIGHTERS FORMALLY
OPPOSES MISUSE OF CITY FIRE FEE**

[WEST PALM BEACH, FL – July 20, 2021] The West Palm Beach Association of Firefighters announced today a formal opposition to the misuse of the recently increased city fire fee. The fire fee was created to stabilize funding for firefighters and paramedics during periods of economic volatility, when emergency call volume tends to be its highest. In 2019 citizens of West Palm Beach were asked to increase the fire assessment fee from \$50 to \$100. The West Palm Beach Association of Firefighters supported the increase under the premise that the City Administration committed to provide:

1. Two new fire trucks to increase the level of service to our community.
2. Additional firefighters to staff these two trucks.
3. \$3 million dollars appropriated directly to these items.
4. Quarterly reporting and an increased level of transparency of where the money is allocated.

To date, only one additional firetruck has been placed in service. That truck has been staffed by existing personnel on overtime hours, which in turn has impacted the fire department's budget. None of the other commitments provided by the City Administration have been kept.

“The misuse of these funds is having a truly detrimental impact on the Fire Department,” commented Jayson French, President of the West Palm Beach Association of Firefighters. “For the first time in history, our fire department is not a coveted place to work. Our staffing for emergency responses has fallen well below Palm Beach County standards. When the fire fee, which amounts to nearly \$8 Million, is not used for the fire department it is merely another tax unknowingly created on the backs of our firefighters.”

The West Palm Beach Association of Firefighters has stated that they feel the city fire fee should either be used appropriately for fire department needs, or else abolished and the money returned to the citizens that paid it. For more information or to contact the West Palm Beach Association of Firefighters please visit www.wpb727.com.

About West Palm Beach Association of Firefighters:

The West Palm Beach Association of Firefighters, Local 727, is the local union for firefighters that have been serving the West Palm Beach community since 1894. The union covers 9 stations and the current president is Jayson E. French. Local 727 is located at 2801 Tuxedo Avenue in West Palm Beach and more information is available at www.wpb727.com.

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