



TRAVERSE CITY PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS

500 W. Front St. • Traverse City, MI • 49684 • Phone (231) 946-0230
www.TraverseCityFirefighters.org

To: TCFD Chief Tuller

From: Local 646 President Steichen

Date: May 1, 2023

Subject: Firefighting service at Cherry Capital Airport

The firefighters association met on April 26, 2023, for our monthly membership meeting. The topic of ARFF firefighting services became a focal point for the better part of an hour. We discussed the history of the agreement between Cherry Capital Airport and the City of Traverse City. During this conversation members voiced their dissatisfaction with the lack of input the firefighters are given. The consensus is that the two parties are apathetic to our opinions, concerns, and priorities. There is a shared perspective that the City must believe we will simply continue business as usual regardless of changes. I can tell you with absolute certainty that this is not a realistic presumption moving forward.

As you may remember, the Local spent considerable time last year attempting to alter pertinent language in our Collective Bargaining Agreement that would increase the incentive for ARFF certification with a tradeoff that the certification would be required. The City chose to maintain the historic language that allowed voluntary certification and withdrawal. This was poor judgment from my perspective and it showed a lack of foresight. Considering there is an uncertain future, Local 646 members are already contemplating their commitment to this certification. I have asked that they all maintain their certifications and training and that they all attend the Hot Drill. That said the Airport's proposed supplemental arrangement for additional ARFF service providers is going to be a catastrophic staffing dilemma. The vast majority of TCFD firefighters will not participate in an arrangement that encroaches on their principles. They will not accept responsibility for all the unknowns and the liability of making ends meet for Cherry Capital Airport.

Local 646



I want to provide you with this clear, formal message in advance of impending changes. Local 646 members do not want to be guilty of blind-siding tactics or anything comparable to that. In the event of a third party supplemental staffing agreement, the members planning to suspend their certificate maintenance and will be subsequently removed from ARFF availability were asked to sign this document. I believe this will allow you and the City to make appropriate decisions moving forward. This memo is intended to be received as if those willing to sign below authored it:

Captain C. Rueckert

Captain L. Mueller

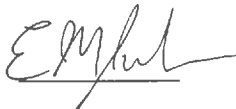


Captain S. Ball




Fire Marshal K. Fritz

Training Lt. J. Smielewski



Lt. E. Jackson



Lt. C. Jackson



Lt. C. Peron




T. Thompson

G. Wojtanowski

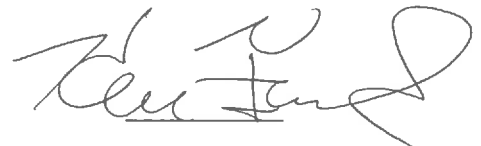


N. McKerchie

T. Taylor

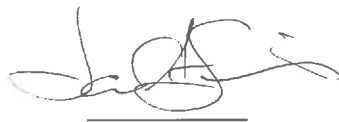


E. Moravcik




K. Funk


C. Chinlund



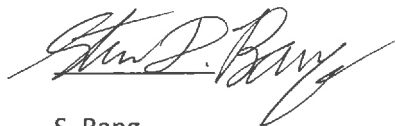
J. Steichen




A. Snay



S. McMahon



S. Rang



R. Hamilton



Katie Miller <millerk@traversecitymi.gov>

Fwd: [city commissioners] Local 646 Stance on Airport Agreement

1 message

Penny Hill <phill@traversecitymi.gov>
To: Katie Miller <millerk@traversecitymi.gov>

Tue, Jun 20, 2023 at 11:58 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jacob Steichen** <presidentlocal646@gmail.com>
Date: Sat, May 6, 2023 at 6:32 PM
Subject: [city commissioners] Local 646 Stance on Airport Agreement
To: <CityCommissioners@traversecitymi.gov>
Cc: <EBoard@tcfirefighterslocal646.org>

Dear Mayor & Commissioners,

I want to encourage you all to consider the Local 646 perspective before voting on a successor service agreement for fire services with Cherry Capital Airport. Local 646 lobbied against the agreement in 2020 for several reasons and it fell on the deaf ears of City Manager Colburn. We then made assertive attempts in the 2021-22 contract negotiations to properly resolve issues and the insufficient incentive paid to my members, again CM Colburn fought back. Now, we are being told that we will be forced into an unsatisfactory relationship with a third party starting in June. Local 646 will not stand silent and many will not tolerate the proposed changes.

The airport contract is problematic for a variety of reasons. I would love to elaborate if you'd care to arrange a call or meeting with me. But the overall issue I see is too much demand on too few of us and the Airport not being considerate enough to include TCFD/L646 as stakeholders in their plans. They made deals with Sun Country several months prior to announcing a need for more firefighters to Fire Chief Tuller and CM Colburn. The lack of due diligence is impossible to ignore and we deserve better.

As it stands going into this summer, we are forecasting a record year of shutting down fire station 2 on the City's Eastside. Our roster remains compromised by sluggish hiring practices for vacancies and overall lack of applicants. Our mandatory overtime assignments are at historical highs and our members' families are very much angered by the added demands. It is unethical to force firefighters twice a month to work days beyond their normal schedule. They don't want to work and their families don't want to deal with it.

The unique situation we sit in right now is that we could lose the Airport contract without layoffs or budget cuts. The "3 positions" covered by the agreement would bring us closer to the 21 suppression positions funded exclusively by the operating budget.

Our Oath of Office is to serve and protect the taxpayers, not an autonomous airport management team that focuses on economic growth and opportunities for expansion. Without the Airport commitment we would go all summer without shutting down Station 2 and my members could enjoy their off-duty days being with their family.

Going forward, we are cautiously optimistic about growing our fire department and providing the EMS services our taxpayers deserve if they vote for the change. It is long overdue and we are ready to work harder within the City. It will be a challenging transition that will require effort and undivided attention.

Help us narrow the focus for TCFD by eliminating our issues with TVC. They have a long history of exploiting our agreements and under-appreciating the importance of what our firefighters do for them. We cannot expect them to change.

I've attached a memorandum that my members co-authored for Fire Chief Tuller. All our members are unhappy with the relationship and 14/20 are willing to remove themselves from having to deal with the improvised solutions TVC is developing to ensure their growth.

Please consider all these suggestions moving forward and please let me know if we can talk more at a later time.

Jacob Steichen - President
Traverse City Firefighters L646
231-245-0445

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Penny Hill
Assistant City Manager
[City of Traverse City](#)
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Traverse City MI 49684
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“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

— **Margaret Mead**

 City of Traverse City

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 **ARFF Staffing Memo.pdf**
97K



Katie Miller <millerk@traversecitymi.gov>

Fwd: [city commissioners] Station 2 Closure

1 message

Penny Hill <phill@traversecitymi.gov>
To: Katie Miller <millerk@traversecitymi.gov>

Tue, Jun 20, 2023 at 11:58 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jacob Steichen** <presidentlocal646@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, May 11, 2023 at 8:47 AM
Subject: [city commissioners] Station 2 Closure
To: <CityCommissioners@traversecitymi.gov>

Mayor and Commissioners,

Local 646 has chosen to not release PSAs related to Station 2 closures this year. It is a difficult set of circumstances for the public to fully understand. That being said, it's important for you all to be aware of these situations. Today's duty crew is short for the full 24 hours and Station 2 is closed. Response times to the Eastside will undoubtedly be delayed. The same situation will occur on Sunday this week. There's been 4 shifts thus far this year that we've had to abandon Station 2 due to staffing issues.

We are forecasting 8 days in the month of June in which the duty crew will be 3 or 4 firefighters on- duty. For context purposes, we should be running 6 firefighters each and every day in the City in addition to the one firefighter at the Airport fire station.

Again, this is for your advisement and consideration. July & August will be worse given the scheduled retirement of our senior-most Captain.

Thanks for your attention to this matter. My phone is always on.

Jacob Steichen - President
Traverse City Firefighters Local 646
231-245-0455

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Penny Hill
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