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FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

November 25, 2024

To: Mayor and City Council Members

From: Frank Nastasi, City Manager
Robert J. Bruner, Deputy City Manager
Dylan Clark, Management Analyst

Subject: City Council Agenda Questions & Answers – 11.25.2024

The following are communications that City Administration would like Council to be made aware of. In order to ensure that all questions are received and answered, all City Council Questions should be sent to the CITY MANAGER DISTRIBUTION GROUP e-mail address.

From: Councilman Hamilton
Sent: November 24, 2024 at 9:18 PM
Subject: Agenda Questions

1.) J-04B:

I have read some articles on how some firefighter turnout gear can have PFAS or other cancer causing issues:
<https://www.iafc.org/blogs/blog/iafc/2024/01/17/important-nist-findings-on-firefighter-gear-understanding-the-risks-of-pfas#:~:text=This%20research%20has%20discovered%20that,gear%20undergoes%20wear%20and%20tear.>

Can Council get more info on how this choice of turnout gear addresses that issue?

Answer: Pete Hullinger – Fire Chief

As part of our ongoing commitment to firefighter safety, the Fire Department Safety Committee (which is made up of firefighters from each station) has conducted thorough research into new fire gear options to replace our current equipment. A key consideration in our evaluation was addressing PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) concerns in the materials.

Our committee identified several major U.S.-based manufacturers that indicate they do not use PFAS in their production processes. However, they noted that minimal levels of PFAS may still be present in order to meet NFPA standards for fire gear.

Studies conducted by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) have provided valuable insights into PFAS in firefighting gear. The primary findings reveal that PFAS is primarily concentrated in the outer two layers of the gear and not in the layer that makes direct contact with the skin. Additionally, the main pathway for PFAS entry into the body is through oral intake rather than skin absorption.

The fire service industry and gear manufacturers are actively working to develop materials that meet both safety standards and protective requirements while minimizing PFAS content. In our proactive efforts to protect our firefighters:

- In 2023, we replaced all protective hoods issued to our firefighters with PFAS-free versions.
- In 2020, we disposed of all PFAS-containing firefighting foam through the State of Michigan and replaced it with a clean alternative currently in use.
- All firefighters in Michigan are also required to undergo training on PFAS and foam safety protocols.

The safety of our members remains our top priority, both now and in the long term. We will continue to monitor advancements in fire service equipment and industry standards to ensure our firefighters have access to the safest gear available.

For further details, you may review the following resources:

- [Lakeland PFAS Statement](#)
- [NIST Study on PFAS in Turnout Gear](#)

Thank you for your attention and continued support of our safety initiatives. Please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns.
