
Statement From Eagle Council Members Charlie Baun, Melissa Gindlesperger and Helen Russell

September 16, 2023

Dear Eagle Citizens:

As you may know, there was a recent unauthorized email release concerning the funding and officer staffing levels at the Eagle Police Department. This is unfortunate as the email only details one side of the story. Had the request gone through proper records request channels, other information would have come to light, including Mayor Pierce's unequivocal support for additional funding for our police.

For the record, let us be clear, we all strongly support our Eagle officers. Any suggestion that we are attempting to underfund, or even defund the police as some have stated, is 100% false, divisive, and only serves political agendas.

Every year, the City of Eagle engages a contract with the Ada County Sheriff Office (ACSO) to provide police services for the City. While the contract renews each year on October 1, there are a series of lengthy steps that must occur before a contract can be signed. As a result, it is quite normal for the City to finalize and sign a contract during the month of October. In fact, in 10 of the past 13 years, the City has not signed the contract until well into October and even once in November.

The process begins in early summer when the City goes through a rigorous budget planning process that entails up to 10 meetings. Once the details of the budget have been worked out, it can take up to a month to publish the budget and receive final approval by the Eagle City Council. After the budget is approved, the Mayor is then authorized to begin negotiating a contract with ACSO based upon the approved budget. This process can take up to 2 months due to scheduling, negotiations, working with our mutual attorneys and ultimately placing it on a City Council meeting agenda.

During this year's budgeting process, not once did Council President Brad Pike ever request or suggest additional funding for our officers. Since we rely on Mr. Pike to be our liaison for first responder services, we believed the input provided by Ada County Sheriff, Matt Clifford, for the necessary funding was adequate. Sheriff Clifford provided the Council two options: 1) To increase the funding by \$506,000 keeping officer staffing at current levels, or 2) increase the funding by \$506,000 plus adding two additional officers (please refer to public hearing noted below May 18, 2023).ⁱ

Without objection from Council President Pike, we selected option 1 with his support on July 13, 2023.ⁱⁱ However, it was the Mayor who wanted to find a way to add two additional officers following the subsequent staffing objection by our Police Chief. It is our understanding that Mayor Pierce is working directly on negotiating those details with Sheriff Clifford. Since deliberation of a contract is done in private, we are all anxiously awaiting the outcome of those negotiations in coming days.

It is disappointing in recent weeks, Council President Pike has reversed his support on the budget we all worked hard over the summer to pass, then blame the lack of police funding on Mayor Pierce. It is the Council, led by the Council President, to provide the guidance and oversight to the Mayor.

In closing, we ask for your patience during this time and not jump to conclusions based upon misinformation on social media.

Sincerely,

Charlie Baun

Melissa Gindlesperger

Helen Russell

ⁱ May 18, 2023 ACSO Budget Presentation Summary followed by comments begins at 43:24 minute mark https://eagleid.granicus.com/player/clip/1734?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=3f2b6de9c46d342f991460c068bbe01

ⁱⁱ July 13, 2023 Tentative Budget Approval begins at 12:00 minute mark https://eagleid.granicus.com/player/clip/1760?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=18c19351c5fe9f191b69af691b8b32cc