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## **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **City of Saginaw Responds to COVID-19 Employee Safety Questions**

**April 29, 2020 SAGINAW, MI** – During these difficult and trying times, the City of Saginaw is taking all recommended steps, and at times, going above and beyond to ensure the safety and protection of its dedicated workforce. The City commends its employees for stepping up and getting the job done on a daily basis.

Under normal circumstances, the City, during ongoing contract negotiations, would not comment on media statements. However, in the last several days, representatives of the City's police patrol union have made unfounded assertions and statements that must be addressed.

#### **Employee Safety:**

\*The Police Department has more than sufficient supplies of PPE equipment, including gloves, face masks, and face shields.

\*Police officers are also supplied with hand sanitizer and cleaning items on a daily basis.

\*The police building is sanitized daily by custodial staff. Additionally, the City has brought in an outside firm to utilize special equipment for intensive sanitation at various times.

\*Patrol vehicles have been sanitized by an outside firm and officers are provided with materials to sanitize the interior of vehicles as well.

**Employee Benefits During the Pandemic:**

\*Unlike most other City employees, police officers who contract COVID-19 are covered under workers compensation, per State of Michigan directive.

\*Police personnel were provided 40 hours of additional paid time off to deal with issues related to COVID-19 - caring for children, loved ones, personal time, etc.

\*Police personnel were given the opportunity to earn an additional 80 hours of leave time simply for working their regular shifts.

**Computers for the Detective Bureau:**

\*It is the city's understanding that the request for laptops was originally proposed so that detectives could work from home. The option of detectives working from home is not in the best interest of the City. Instead, the City believes, and law enforcement best practices dictate that quality policing requires a physical presence in the community, and cannot be done from home or outside City limits.

\*While computers or tablets for the detectives would be a good tool, the City simply cannot afford them at this time. The City is investigating possible grants or other options to pay for computers.

\*Detectives were given the opportunity to move workstations and practice social distancing so they can remain safe and healthy. Working in their vehicles is not the only option for them to stay safe.

**Hazard Pay:**

\*The request for hazard pay is not financially feasible, given the City's limited resources and economic uncertainty resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

\*We recognize the risk and anxiety that is felt by ALL City employees during these tough times. We have many employees besides police officers who interact with the public, sort mail, enter homes to provide services, process payments, and perform other activities on a daily basis.

**Modified Shifts:**

\*The Police Chief has reviewed this request, spoken with command staff and other police chiefs, and determined it is neither safe nor necessary at this time.

Police Chief Robert Ruth stated: *"I have researched alternate work schedules and spoken with several command staff members to determine that our Police Department has not reached a threshold yet where we feel the need to make a drastic change in work hours. Ultimately, the safety of the officers and the community come first. Working 7-12 hour days in a row in a City as busy as Saginaw poses a health and safety issue for the officers and citizens we serve. As Chief, I have to make very tough decisions that are not popular with everyone."*

The City of Saginaw will continue to monitor the situation and will do what it can to continue to support and protect its employees.

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