

## Council Approves Pay Scale Increase

Friday, 26 April 2013

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

The Kodiak City Council voted last night to restructure its pay scale in an effort to become competitive with other municipalities in the state. City Manager Aimee Kniaziowski explained the need for updating the city's policies.

"It's important to keep our wages and benefits attractive. As I mentioned earlier we've got employees who are retiring or are getting ready to retire. Sometimes employees move on to higher paying jobs with better benefits packages," she said. "So this puts us in a much better position. It's still reasonable and I do believe it is a sustainable increase."

City Councilman John Whiddon agreed that it was important to attract and keep skilled employees.

"Until I came on the council I didn't realize the level of skill and competency required in the key positions, but really throughout the city government," he said. "And it's not just a question of hiring neighbors and friends any more that you would typically think in a small community. You really have to look for skilled people; people who will stay, which is always difficult in Kodiak. So I think this pay and compensation will go a long way to allow us to attract and retain the best possible employees so we can continue to provide the goods and services we need here in Kodiak."

City Councilman Gabriel Saravia said the increases will be money well spent.

"I see the letter in the newspaper today — we're not giving away the money to people because we like it. Services costs money, and people well qualified have a lot of opportunities to go someplace else," Saravia said. "It costs more money to train new people than to keep the people we have. And will Kodiak be a 'ghost town'? I don't think so. The fish we still have to catch and the Coast Guard isn't going no where. We live in wonderful houses in one of the most beautiful cities in the world, with more than \$400-million a year is spent inside of town. I think our city's in good hands."

There were no comments at all during the public hearing in person or on the phone, and the ordinance passed unanimously.