Mr. Ron Bacon  
Mayor, City of East Lansing  
410 Abbot Road  
East Lansing, Michigan 48823

VIA USPS FIRST CLASS MAIL

RE: COVID-19 EMPLOYEE HAZARD PREMIUM PAY

Dear Mayor Bacon,

More than 750,000 Americans have died from the COVID-19 virus; including almost 25,000 here in Michigan. The public health crisis created by the pandemic resulted in unprecedented economic challenges, especially for local municipalities. In response, the State and Federal governments implemented a number of relief programs from which the city has benefitted. Most notable of these is H.R. 1319 of the 117th Congress or what is better known as the American Rescue Plan Act (“ARPA”) of 2021. The $1.9 trillion dollar stimulus bill allocated more than $12 million dollars in direct payments to the city. Included among the four permissible uses of these funds is hazard pay for employees. Specifically, “a ... city shall only use the funds provided under a payment made under this section to cover cost incurred by the ... city, by December 31, 2024—

(A)  ...  
(B) to respond to workers performing essential work during the COVID-19 public health emergency by providing premium pay to eligible workers of the ... county.”¹

(C)  ...  
(D)  ...

“(2) ELIGIBLE WORKERS.— The term ‘eligible workers’ means those workers needed to maintain continuity of operations of essential critical infrastructure and additional sectors ... designated as critical to protect the health and well-being of the residents of their State ...”

“(3) PREMIUM PAY.— The term ‘premium pay’ means an amount of up to $13 per hour that is paid to an eligible worker, in addition to wages or remuneration the eligible worker otherwise receives, for all work performed by the eligible worker during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Such amount may not exceed $25,000 with respect to any single eligible workers.”

¹ Quotations herein taken from: Subtitle M – Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery of Funds
As you’re aware, on October 12, 2021, during a discussion session of City Council, City Manager Lahanas presented a proposal on suggested uses of ARPA funds. Despite the city receiving a once-in-a-lifetime windfall in response to a once-time-a-lifetime event, not a single penny was allocated for employees who incurred once-in-a-lifetime risks. Your employees—our members—risked their lives day-in and day-out to ensure the city continued to provide essential services to those who live in, work in, and visit East Lansing. The lack of consideration for your employees seems inconsistent with City Manager Lahanas’ intention to use the funds to create “long lasting improvements to our community.” Local government cannot function without dedicated civil servants. Unfortunately, they are all too often unappreciated for the services they provide to taxpayers who deserve and depend on them. Public sector employers throughout the State are facing never-before-seen recruitment and retention challenges. These difficulties are due, in some part, to decisions such as this one. While private sector employers provided substantial compensation to recognize the efforts and sacrifices of their employees, the city contemplates the use of funds to improve its phone system, but not what happens when there aren’t enough employees to timely answer the phone. The city intends to use funds to make improvements to fire station #1, but not to attract or retain highly qualified, professional fire fighters. Furthermore, the proposal includes millions of dollars in upgrades to parking infrastructure, but nothing for those who administer, maintain, or repair it. The city should endeavor to invest in its employees as much as intends to invest in infrastructure.

On behalf of the hundreds of City of East Lansing employees we collectively represent, we write to strongly urge City Council to compensate employees for the extreme risk they and their families faced in service to the citizens of our community. There is no doubt employees are deserving of premium pay in recognition of their sacrifices to ensure the safety of the city’s citizens and continuation of essential services. As such, we propose the city adopt the following hazard pay matrix:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential Pay</th>
<th>Work Share</th>
<th>Risk Classification</th>
<th>Work Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Remote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>Very High</td>
<td>High/Very High</td>
<td>On-Site</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar to that which has been adopted by other local governmental entities, the above matrix takes into consideration work share eligibility, overall risk, and the extent to which employees were able to work remotely. Under this proposal, a police officer or fire fighter would be eligible for a one-time, lump sum premium payment in the amount of $9,000 ($6,000 for being excluded from work share participation, $2,000 for high risk, and $1,000 for working entirely on-site). Similarly, a department of public works employee would receive $7,500. Lastly, by way of example, an administrative assistant who participated in work share but worked on-site would receive $1,500.

We encourage City Council to take immediate action to provide city employees compensation for the risk they faced in continuation of essential government services during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Respectfully,

Ryan Kuhn, Division President
CCLP Non-Supervisory Police Officers

Tom Roush, Division President
IAFF Local 1609

Nathan Izydorek, Division President
UAW Local 2256

Ebani Bassage, Division President
CCLP Police Support Services Unit

Eric Horwood, Division President
POAM 54-B District Court

Homer Allen, Division President
ELIEU

Cc: Ms. Jessy Gregg, Mayor Pro Tem
Ms. Dana Watson, City Council Member
Ms. Lisa Babcock, City Council Member
Mr. George Brookover, City Council Member
Mr. George Lahanas, City Manager, City of East Lansing