



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**For Release: Tuesday, March 26, 2024**

### **HOUSTON CONTROLLER CHRIS HOLLINS: FIREFIGHTER SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT PAVES WAY FOR FAIR PAY, REQUIRES SUSTAINABLE FUNDING PLAN AMID EXISTING BUDGET SHORTFALL**

**HOUSTON** (March 26, 2024) – In recognizing the agreement between the City of Houston and the Houston Professional Firefighters Association as a milestone toward fair compensation for city workers, City Controller Chris Hollins today emphasized the critical need for fiscal responsibility, transparency, and collaboration to address the financial implications of the settlement.

“This long-awaited settlement ends years of costly legal battles and represents a significant stride in ensuring our hard-working firefighters receive the fair and competitive pay they deserve,” Hollins said. “While we recognize this milestone, it is equally crucial to assess the broader fiscal implications given the City’s existing budget shortfall.”

The \$650 million taxpayer-funded settlement comes after years of negotiations – including breakdowns, a charter amendment election, and litigation – underscoring the complexities of reaching an equitable agreement that rewards the firefighters’ service while bearing the City’s financial landscape in mind.

“A settlement of this magnitude highlights the need for fiscal responsibility, transparency, and collaboration as we work to address its financial impact,” Controller Hollins said. “We must carefully plan how to pay for this obligation to safeguard the financial future of our City and reduce the risk to essential services and residents’ quality of life.”

The Houston City Controller's Office is committed to engaging with stakeholders to develop strategies that protect the City’s fiscal health while continuing to prioritize essential services and the well-being of Houston residents.

“Our office will play a meaningful role in the discussion of which financial strategies the City will need to pursue in order to meet the expense of this settlement. We’re focused on safeguarding Houston’s financial future while delivering services to our residents at the high level they deserve,” Hollins said. “We have a lot of work to do on both fronts.”

“We will address the fiscal aspects of this settlement with a collective responsibility, and we are committed to a unified strategy that engages not only the Mayor’s Office and City Council but also the firefighters’ union and other key stakeholders,” Hollins said. “Our responsibility is to protect tax dollars while considering the needs of all Houstonians.”

The press availability can be viewed by visiting [www.houstontx.gov/htv](http://www.houstontx.gov/htv).

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# OFFICE OF THE CITY CONTROLLER

CHRIS HOLLINS, CITY CONTROLLER

## **ABOUT CITY OF HOUSTON CONTROLLER'S OFFICE:**

Established in 1903, the City of Houston Controller's Office is the cornerstone of financial oversight and accountability for America's fourth-largest city. With a mission to uphold Houston's fiscal integrity and protect resident's tax dollars, the office oversees a broad spectrum of the City's financial operations, including its budget, investments, and debts. Committed to transparency and fiscal responsibility, the Controller's Office is key to maintaining the economic vitality of Houston, contributing to its status as a thriving metropolis for its diverse community.

## **ABOUT CONTROLLER CHRIS HOLLINS:**

Chris Hollins, serving as Houston's City Controller since January 2024, brings a dynamic approach to City governance and financial management. With a rich background in legal practice and management consulting, coupled with innovative leadership as Harris County Clerk, Hollins is dedicated to enhancing the city's fiscal practices and community engagement. Educated at Morehouse College, Yale Law School, and Harvard Business School, Hollins's commitment to accountability and service excellence drives his mission to build a financially resilient Houston. Residing in the Third Ward with his family, his work is deeply informed by his strong community ties.

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