

August 18, 2017

To: Members of the Eau Claire City Council

Re: Proposed Living Wage Ordinance

As the voice of business, the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce champions a strong local and regional economy. Our membership includes more than 1,200 organizations who employ over 30,000 individuals. We advocate for policies that promote a good business environment and support efficient and effective government.

The Chamber commends the City Council on the deliberative approach it has taken regarding a potential Living Wage Ordinance, including its multiple work sessions with thorough discussions of its options, costs, benefits and potential consequences.

Should the Council decide to enact the ordinance being considered (applying to City employees who work at least 20 hours per week for at least three months per year) it would be a reasonable exercise of the City's management of its own workforce.

The Chamber does not believe it would be appropriate for the Council to take any further action to apply a wage mandate to service contractors or work funded by City financial assistance. The significant additional cost to the City would not be a prudent use of limited tax dollars and could have a negative impact on other City services. It would impose onerous compliance requirements that could make doing business with the City less attractive, as well as other unintended consequences. With the current low unemployment rate, there are many career-level employment opportunities available in the area at higher wages, some of which are going unfilled. Individuals who need higher-paying jobs can be encouraged to receive the training and experience that will successfully lead to those career opportunities.

Sincerely,



Tim Benedict
Board Chair