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2		BY AUTHORITY	
3	ORDINANCE NO.		COUNCIL BILL NO. 24-0907
4	SERIES OF 2024		COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE:
5			Finance and Governance
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7 A BILL

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For an ordinance submitting to a vote of the qualified and registered electors of the City and County of Denver at a special municipal election to be held in conjunction with the coordinated election of November 5, 2024, a proposed amendment to the Charter of the City and County of Denver to provide for binding arbitration in the event of an impasse between parties in firefighter collective bargaining negotiations and removing references to advisory factfinding.

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BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER:

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Section 1. There is hereby submitted to the properly qualified and registered electors of the city and county of Denver for their approval or rejection at a special municipal election to be conducted at the same time and in conjunction with the coordinated election to be held on November 5, 2024, a proposed amendment to the charter of the city and county of Denver, as follows:

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Effective upon publication and filing with the Secretary of State in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the State of Colorado, the following sections of the Charter of the city and county of Denver are amended to read as follows:

§ 9.7.1 - Declaration Statement of policy.

It is the public policy of the people of the City and County of Denver to promote harmonious, peaceful, and cooperative relationships between the elected officials of the City and County of Denver and certain members of the Classified Service of the Fire Department and to protect the public by assuring, at all times, responsible, orderly, and uninterrupted operation of government services, by providing for such employees the right to bargain collectively with the employer through an exclusive agent, and providing a method of resolving impasses, as hereinafter provided. It is hereby further declared to be the public policy of the City and County of Denver to accord to such members of the Classified Service of the Fire Department, all the rights of labor other than the right to strike or organize in any work stoppage, slowdown or mass absenteeism. In lieu of allowing Fire Fighters to strike to resolve impasses in negotiations, the City hereby adopts a system of binding arbitration to resolve such impasses. To provide for the exercise of these rights, a method of resolving impasses by means of advisory fact-finding and referring to special municipal elections issues not resolved in negotiations for a collective bargaining agreement is hereby established. The establishment of this method of resolving such impasses shall be deemed to be a recognition of the necessity to provide an alternative mode of settling disputes where employees, such as Fire Fighters, as a matter of public policy must be denied the right to strike.

§ 9.7.2 - Definitions.

As used in this Section and its subparts, the following terms shall, unless the context requires a different interpretation, have the following meanings:

- (A) The term "Firefighters" shall mean the members of the Classified Service of the Fire Department of the City and County of Denver except the Chief of the Fire Department or Deputy Chief or the Division Chiefs.
- (B) The terms "Corporate Authorities" or "employer" shall mean the proper officials within the City and County of Denver whose duty it is to establish the wages, salaries, rates of pay, hours, working conditions, and other terms and conditions of employment of firefighters, excluding pensions.
- (C) The term "advisory fact-finding" means investigation of unresolved disputes arising out of the negotiation of a collective bargaining agreement, submitting a report defining the unresolved issues, analyzing and reporting the facts relating thereto, and making nonbinding recommendations for the purpose of resolving the issues in dispute.
- (<u>PC</u>) The term "impasse" means a situation when the employer and the sole and exclusive agent of the Firefighters have reached a point in negotiation over the provisions to be included in a collective bargaining agreement at which time their differences are so substantial that further meetings would be futile, and the time provided for collective bargaining has elapsed.
- (ED) The term "final offer" means the written offer made latest in time by a party authorized to make such offer in negotiation of a collective bargaining agreement, provided that said offer is made not less than seven (7) days prior to the start of <u>a binding arbitrationan advisory fact-finding</u> hearing.

§ 9.7.6 - Unresolved issues submitted to advisory fact-finding binding arbitration.

If an impasse occurs after thirty (30) days have elapsed, from and including the date of the first meeting between representatives of the sole and exclusive agent of the Firefighters and of the Corporate Authorities for collective bargaining, any and all unresolved issues shall be submitted to advisory fact-finding. Submission of unresolved issues to advisory fact-finding shall not prohibit the parties from continuing to bargain in good faith. Any or all such unresolved issues may be agreed to by the parties at any time before the City Council orders publication, pursuant to Subsection 3.3.5(F) of this Charter, of a bill for an ordinance submitting issues remaining unresolved at an election, pursuant to Section 9.7.8 of this Charter. If the parties agree upon any or all issues before receiving the recommendations of the advisory fact-finder, the recommendations on such issue or issues shall have no effect. If the parties agree upon any or all issues before the fact-finder makes recommendations, the fact-finder shall make no recommendation on such issue or issues. If, after receiving the recommendations of the fact-finder, the parties agree upon any or all issues, before the City Council orders publication of a bill for an ordinance submitting unresolved issues at an election, the issue or issues agreed upon shall not be submitted at said election. In the event that the sole and exclusive agent and the Corporate Authorities are unable, within thirty (30) days from and including the date of their first meeting, to reach an agreement on a contract, any and all unresolved issues shall be submitted to binding arbitration. The obligation of the parties to bargain in good faith shall continue after submission of unresolved issues to binding arbitration. Any or all issues which are unresolved between the sole and exclusive agent and the Corporate Authorities may be resolved by the parties until the sixteenth day following receipt of the decision of the arbitrator. Any agreements reached within fifteen (15) days following receipt of the decision of the arbitrator shall supersede the decision of the arbitrator. In the event the sole and exclusive agent and the Corporate Authorities are able to reach agreement upon any or all issues prior to the receipt of the decision of the arbitrator, then the arbitrator shall make no decision on such issue or <u>issues.</u>

§ 9.7.7 - Selection of advisory fact-finder binding arbitrator.

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(A) Within three (3) days after the expiration of the thirty-day time period referred to in Subsection 9.7.6 hereof, the sole and exclusive agent of the Fire Fighters or the Corporate Authorities shall inform the American Arbitration Association, or its successor organization, or a similar organization agreed upon by both parties, that an advisory fact-finder is required. Within ten (10) days thereafter, said association or organization shall submit simultaneously to each party an identical list of five (5) persons. Within seven (7) days from the mailing date of the list, each party

- shall cross off two (2) names from the list, and shall number the remaining names indicating the order of its preference and return the list to said association or organization. If a party does not return the list within the time specified, all persons named therein shall be deemed acceptable. Within ten (10) days after the time the list must be returned by the parties, said association or organization shall do the following:
- (i) From among the persons who have been approved on both lists, it shall appoint one (1) advisory fact-finder to serve.
 - (ii) It shall notify the parties of such appointment.

- (B) The advisory fact-finder shall sit for this fact-finding only, unless the parties mutually agree to a continuance for another fact-finding or fact-findings.
- (C) Two-thirds of the cost of advisory fact-finding shall be borne by the employer, and one-third of such cost shall be borne by the sole and exclusive agent of the Fire Fighters.
- (A) Within thirty (30) days after the adoption of this Section, the City shall, in some reasonable manner, solicit applications from persons who desire to be on a permanent panel of arbitrators to resolve impasses as described in Section 9.7.6 herein.
- (B) In order to be eligible to be on the permanent panel of arbitrators, a person must be impartial and disinterested and must be qualified by experience and training as a neutral hearing officer or arbitrator in labor/management disputes. The dispute experience shall be in impasse negotiations between labor and management, disputes over the meaning or application of contracts between labor and management, or discipline. Any person whose only experience is as a Hearings Officer for any Civil or Career Service System shall not be qualified. Persons who are members of the National Academy of Arbitrators or on the American Arbitration Association panel of labor arbitrators are presumptively qualified.
- those qualified persons who apply. Placement on the permanent panel shall be approved by a resolution or ordinance by the City Council. Any qualified person can be added to the permanent panel at any time. Persons on the panel shall remain on the panel for a term of six (6) years, and may be reappointed, provided that the members of the initial panel shall be appointed to terms of varying lengths not to exceed six (6) years. Any person on the permanent panel may be removed by passage of a resolution or ordinance by the City Council unless that person has been selected to conduct a hearing concerning a particular dispute pursuant to paragraph (E) of this Section, and then that person can only be removed after issuing a decision in that dispute.
 - (D) Each person put on the permanent panel shall sign an oath to uphold the terms of

this Section.

- (E) After expiration of the 30-day time period referred to in Section 9.7.6, the sole and exclusive agent or the Corporate Authorities may request the list of names from the City Clerk, and the City Clerk shall submit a list with the names of all members of the permanent panel to the sole and exclusive agent and the Corporate Authorities within 5 (five) days. Within ten (10) days of receipt of this list, the sole and exclusive agent and the Corporate Authorities shall meet and alternatively strike one name from the list until one name remains (if the panel has an odd number of names) or two names remain (if the panel has an even number of names). If one name remains, that person shall be the arbitrator for that dispute. If two names remain, the Mayor shall select one of those two names to be the arbitrator for that dispute. The Mayor's selection must take place within five (5) days of the completion of the striking process by the sole and exclusive agent and the Corporate Authorities. The determination of whether the sole and exclusive agent or the Corporate Authorities strikes first shall be done by flip of a coin.
- (F) Nothing herein shall be construed to prevent the sole and exclusive agent and the Corporate Authorities from agreeing to an arbitrator from the permanent panel.

§ 9.7.8 – Hearings

- (A) The advisory fact-finder shall call a hearing to be held within twenty-one (21) days after the date of his or her appointment and shall give not less than ten (10) days' notice in writing to the sole and exclusive agent of the Firefighters and the Corporate Authorities of the time and place of such hearing. The hearing shall be informal, and the rules of evidence prevailing in judicial proceedings shall not be binding. Any and all documentary evidence and other data deemed relevant by the advisory fact-finder shall be received in evidence. The advisory fact-finder shall have the power to administer oaths and to require by subpoena the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of books, records and other evidence relating to or pertinent to the issues presented to him or her for determination.
- (B) The hearings conducted by the advisory fact-finder shall be concluded within fourteen (14) days from the time of commencement. Within five (5) days following the conclusion of the hearings, the parties may, if they deem necessary, and have so notified the advisory fact-finder at the conclusion of the hearings, submit written briefs to the advisory fact-finder. Within ten (10) days after receipt of such briefs, or within ten (10) days after the conclusion of the hearings if no post-hearing briefs are filed, the advisory fact-finder shall make written findings and a written opinion and decision on the issues presented, a copy of which shall be mailed or otherwise

delivered to the sole and exclusive agent of the Firefighters and its designated representative and the Corporate Authorities. Said written findings, opinions and decision, and recommendations shall be reached and discussed in accordance with the provisions of subparagraph (C) of this Section 9.7.8.

- (C) The advisory fact-finder shall conduct the hearings and render a decision upon the basis of a prompt, peaceful and just settlement of all unresolved issues between the sole and exclusive agent of the Firefighters and the Corporate Authorities. The factors to be given weight by the advisory fact-finder in arriving at a decision shall include:
- (i) Comparison of wage rates, hours, terms and conditions of employment of the Fire Fighters, and wage rates, hours, terms and conditions of employment of fire departments in comparable cities and towns in the United States.
- (ii) Interest and welfare of the public, and the financial ability of the City to finance the cost items proposed by each party.
- (A) The arbitrator shall call a hearing to begin within twenty-five (25) days of selection and shall give at least ten (10) days' notice in writing to the sole and exclusive agent and the Corporate Authorities of the time and place of such hearing. The hearing shall be informal, and the rules of evidence prevailing in judicial proceedings shall not be binding. Any and all oral or documentary evidence and other data deemed competent and relevant by the arbitrator shall be received in evidence. The arbitrator shall have the power to administer oaths and to require by subpoena the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of books, records and other evidence relating to or pertinent to the issues presented for determination.
- (B) The hearing conducted by the arbitrator shall be concluded within seven (7) days of the time of commencement. Within five (5) days following the conclusion of the hearing, the parties may, if they deem necessary, submit written briefs to the arbitrator. Within ten (10) days of receipt of such briefs, or within ten (10) days after the conclusion of the hearing if no post-hearing briefs are filed, the arbitrator shall make written findings and conclusions setting forth the basis of the arbitrator's decision on the issues presented, a copy of which shall be delivered to the sole and exclusive agent and the Corporate Authorities in the same manner on the same date. The written findings and conclusions shall be reached in accordance with the provisions of Section 9.7.10

§ 9.7.9 – Unresolved issues submitted at special election. Factors to be considered by the arbitrator.

Upon the request of the employer or the sole and exclusive agent of the Fire Fighters, after

publication of the advisory fact-finder's report, and after the employer and the sole and exclusive agent of the Fire Fighters have had five (5) days to further negotiate the disputed issues, the final offers of the employer and of the sole and exclusive agent of the Fire Fighters on the issues remaining unresolved shall each be submitted as alternative single measures to a vote of the qualified electors of the City and County of Denver at a special election. The special election shall be held no later than August 31. The qualified electors shall select either the final offer of the employer or the final offer of the sole and exclusive agent of the Fire Fighters, as presented to the advisory fact finder. Issues agreed to during the five day period shall not be included in the final offer of the employer or of the sole and exclusive agent of the Fire Fighters. The cost of such special election shall be borne by either the employer or the sole and exclusive agent of the Fire Fighters, whichever refuses to accept the recommendations of the advisory fact-finder. If both refuse, the costs shall be borne equally by the employer and the sole and exclusive agent of the Fire Fighters.

The arbitrator shall conduct the hearing and render his or her decision with due consideration of the need for a prompt, peaceful and just settlement of all unresolved issues between the sole and exclusive agent and the Corporate Authorities. The arbitrator may apply the standards commonly used in interest disputes but shall rely predominantly on the following in arriving at a decision:

- (A) The interests and welfare of the public and the financial ability of the City to bear the costs involved;
 - (B) The lawful authority of the City;
 - (C) Stipulations of the parties;

- (D) Comparison of the compensation, fringe benefits, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment of firefighters with other public employees performing comparable services in comparable communities nationally and locally. However, while the arbitrator may consider such comparisons in making a decision, in no event shall the arbitrator make an award that is indexed or otherwise expressed as a relationship to compensation, a fringe benefit, or the number of hours in the work week of any other employee or employees who are not members of the Denver Fire Department; and
 - (E) The cost of living.

§ 9.7.10 – Final offer Procedure.

The Corporate Authorities and the sole and exclusive agent shall submit to the arbitrator final

offers on each issue on which there was not agreement. The award of the arbitrator on each issue shall be the final offer of the Corporate Authorities or the final offer of the sole and exclusive agent. The arbitrator shall state the reasons for the award in writing in accordance with Section 9.7.8(B).

§9.7.11 – Finality of the arbitrator's decision.

- (A) Except as provided in this subdivision, the decision of the arbitrator shall be final and binding on the sole and exclusive agent and the Corporate Authorities; provided that the arbitrator's decision shall be binding only for the term of the contract. Nothing herein shall prohibit the parties from agreeing to terms different from the decision of the arbitrator as long as such agreements are made within fifteen (15) days after receipt of the arbitrator's decision.
- (B) The arbitrator's decision shall be subject to court review only pursuant to the terms of this subdivision. Any party desiring court review must file suit in District Court no later than thirty (30) days after the date of the arbitrator's decision. Failure to file suit within this time frame shall waive the right to appeal the decision. A party may appeal to the District Court only on the following grounds:
 - (i) The award was procured by corruption, fraud or other similar wrongdoing; or
- (ii) The decision on any issue is arbitrary and capricious, to wit, there is no competent evidence in the record to support the decision; or
- (iii) The decision on any issue was reached without considering the factors listed in Section 9.7.9 hereof; or
- Authorities or the final offer of the agent. The court shall not conduct de novo review except to determine whether the award was procured by corruption, fraud or other similar wrongdoing. If the court determines that the award was procured by corruption, fraud or other similar wrongdoing, the entire award shall be vacated and the matter shall be remanded back to a different arbitrator selected pursuant to the terms of 9.7.7(E) hereof. The arbitrator who issued the award determined to be procured by corruption, fraud or other similar wrongdoing shall no longer be deemed qualified to be on the permanent panel of arbitrators, shall cease to be a member of the panel and shall not be eligible for reappointment to the permanent panel. If the court determines that the arbitrator's decision on any issue is arbitrary and capricious, the court shall remand that issue to the arbitrator with instructions to conduct a new hearing on that issue if either the sole and exclusive agent or the Corporate Authorities so desires and, with or without a new hearing, to issue a new decision on that issue which is based on some competent evidence in the record. If

the court determines that the arbitrator's decision on any issue was reached without considering the factors listed in Section 9.7.9 hereof, the court shall remand that issue to the arbitrator with instructions to conduct a new hearing on that issue if either the sole and exclusive agent or the Corporate Authorities so desires and, with or without a new hearing, to issue a decision which considers the factors listed in Section 9.7.9 hereof as the arbitrator deems proper. If the court determines that the arbitrator's decision did not accept the final offer of either the Corporate Authorities or the sole and exclusive agent on an issue, the court shall remand the issue to the arbitrator with instructions to accept the final offer of either the Corporate Authorities or the sole and exclusive agent.

§9.7.12 Fees and expenses of arbitration.

One-half of the necessary fees and necessary expenses of arbitration (excluding all fees and expenses incurred by either party in the preparation or presentation of its case) shall be borne by the City and one-half shall be borne by the sole and exclusive agent.

§ 9.7.1013 - Strikes.

§ 9.7.1114 - Collective bargaining agreement; what constitutes.

Any agreement actually negotiated between the sole and exclusive agent of the Fire Fighters and the Corporate Authorities shall constitute the collective bargaining contract governing the Fire Fighters and the City and County of Denver for the period stated herein. Any collective bargaining agreement negotiated under the terms and provisions of this Part 7 shall specifically provide that the Fire Fighters who are subject to its terms shall have no right to engage in any work stoppage, slowdown, mass absenteeism, or strike, the consideration for such provision being the right to a resolution of disputed questions as provided herein.

(A) The collective bargaining agreement between the City and the sole and exclusive agent shall consist of any and all terms actually agreed to by the parties or awarded by the arbitrator. At the request of either the sole and exclusive agent or the Corporate Authorities, the agreement shall contain a grievance procedure which culminates in final and binding arbitration by a neutral arbitrator. The grievance procedure may be established by voluntary agreement or by the arbitrator. Any collective bargaining agreement negotiated under the terms and provisions of this Part 7 shall specifically provide that the Fire Fighters who are subject to its terms shall have no right to engage in any work stoppage, slowdown, mass absenteeism, or strike, the

consideration for such provision being the right to a resolution of disputed questions as provided herein.

(B) Whenever there is a conflict between the terms of the agreement and a rule, executive order, procedure, policy, or any ordinance of the City, which is applicable only to employees of the City, the provisions of the agreement shall prevail.

§ 9.7.1215 - Duty to Meet and Bargain Collectively.

- (A) Whenever an employee organization has been certified pursuant to the provisions of this Part 7 as the sole and exclusive agent of the Fire Fighters, such employee organization and the employer shall meet at reasonable times and bargain collectively in good faith. Written notice of the intent of the sole and exclusive agent of the Fire Fighters to bargain must be received by the employer no later than March 1 of the year preceding the year in which a contract is to become effective. Any collective bargaining agreement reached shall be reduced to writing and shall become effective only after ratification of the agreement by enactment of resolution or ordinance and ratification by the membership of the employee organization. The obligations of this Subsection (A) shall not compel either party to agree to a proposal or to make a concession.
- (B) Multiyear collective bargaining contracts shall be fully enforceable notwithstanding any other provisions of this Charter. Further, upon a showing that all administrative remedies have been exhausted, the provisions of collective bargaining agreements shall be enforceable in a court of competent jurisdiction in accordance with the Colorado Rules of Civil Procedure as they pertain to review of administrative actions.
- (C) All time limits for action contained in this Part 7, other than the times for requesting bargaining set forth in this subdivision, may be waived by mutual consent of the parties.

§ 9.7.13 - Reserved.

27 § 9.7.4416 - Transition provision.

Section 2. The ballot shall contain the following title and submission clause:

31 REFERRED QUESTION _____

Shall the Charter of the City and County of Denver be amended to allow for binding arbitration in lieu of an advisory fact-finding process when impasse occurs between

the City and the Firefighter	rs during collective bargaining	g?		
relating to the election shall, before publications, give such notices, notices, in connection with the submission and County of Denver at the election and the Charter and order to be section 4. The ballots ascertained, determined, and cereations are shall be submissionally as the section 4.	ore the election, issue such on make such appointments, and n of this Charter amendment to stion as are required by the Co dinances of the City and Coun cast at such election shall rtified in accordance with the	f Denver as are charged with duties calls, make such certifications and do all such other acts and things to the registered electors of the City constitution and laws of the State of anty of Denver. If be canvassed and the results be requirements of the Constitution mances of the City and County of		
Section 5. If any section	paragraph clause or other	portion of this ordinance is held to		
Section 5. If any section, paragraph, clause, or other portion of this ordinance is held to be invalid or unenforceable for any reason, the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance shall not be affected.				
COMMITTEE APPROVAL DATE MAYOR-COUNCIL DATE: July 1 PASSED BY THE COUNCIL July	16, 2024 by Consent			
	PRESI	DENT		
APPROVED:				
ATTEST:	CLERK EX-OF			
NOTICE PUBLISHED IN THE DA	AILY JOURNAL	;		
PREPARED BY: Jonathan Griffin, Assistant City Attorney; DATE: July 18, 2024				
City Attorney. We find no irreg	ularity as to form, and have	nas been reviewed by the office of the e no legal objection to the proposed ity Council for approval pursuant to		
Kerry Tipper, City Attorney				
BV: Anskul Bagga	City Attorney	DATE: Jul 18, 2024		