

Union news for
**PROFESSIONAL,
TECHNICAL &
ADMINISTRATIVE
EMPLOYEES,**
LOCAL 21, IFPTE | AFL-CIO
San Francisco

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37.5 Hour week,
Mayor's request for
more concessions,
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City Budget Developments

37 1/2 HOUR WORK WEEK

Shortly before a scheduled briefing from Mayor Gavin Newsom regarding the City's financial outlook, the **SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE** ran a front-page story about an idea supposedly under consideration, where the City would layoff thousands of its employees and bring them back in part-time positions.

Local 21 already had our attorneys examine the legality of this tactic last year when the idea was first floated in a departmental management memo.

A shorter work week cannot be imposed unilaterally on any union and bargaining unit covered by a closed contract. The layoff and rehire scenario is someone's misguided out-of-the-box thinking to get around contractual obligations with city unions, and would likely be seen exactly that way by any court of law or arbitrator who would eventually hear the appeals following such a maneuver.

Local 21 wisely insisted on an extension to our contract last year, which does not expire until June 30, 2011. The extension was part of an agreement between the City and Local 21 that included five furlough days this fiscal year and three days in FY 2010-2011.

"Given the protection provided by our contract extension, the serious legal issues around any attempt to side step the contract, and the burdensome logistical issues around laying off and rehiring thousands of city employees, I believe the shortened work week idea is little more than an attempt to get everyone's attention" said **LOCAL 21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BOB MUSCAT**.

At the Mayor's briefing, union representatives took him to task for trying to negotiate in the press and floating an idea with little purpose other than to worry people.

THE BIGGER PROBLEM

The City's claims that its finances are in worse shape than last year is the bigger problem; there are fewer places to cut, fewer positions to eliminate. Between reductions in federal stimulus and state funding, less available in the rainy day fund, and revenue weakness, the City's latest estimate is another \$522.2 million shortfall for FY 2010-2011.

The financial information presented at this week's briefing will be available on our website, www.ifpte21.org, by the end of the week, along with complete news coverage on the issue. Hard copies will also be available at Local 21's San Francisco Council meeting at Noon on Wednesday, February 17, at the Union office, 1182 Market Street, Room 425.

As City staff explained at the briefing, the City is looking for 6% in savings from city employees to minimize the damage and help find a solution to its fiscal problem. In a year when the federal government and others are interested in job development, it seems senseless to layoff thousands of city employees and create more joblessness.

Last year more than 1,500 city employees were laid off. While there is little doubt that the City's financial prospects are bleak, a group of city unions, including Local 21, are currently discussing bringing in a high profile economist to review the City's projections and offer advice on alternatives to further personnel cuts and layoffs.

After the Mayor's briefing, union representatives' reactions varied. Some are angry over existing city inefficiencies and wastefulness and felt their like-minded members will be very unsympathetic to the City's problems. Others expressed complete frustration with the constant, year after year requests from the City for more give backs. Most, including Local 21, listened and

SAVE THE DATE**February 24**

Learn how to reduce stress at this free class; Noon at the SF Public Library, 100 Larkin St., Paley Rm, 3rd flr (no food allowed). No RSVP is required. For more info about this event and free other Work Life Support Services, call the Union office at 415.864.2100.

asked questions, but reserved any comment until the situation could be discussed in larger membership forums.

"While some believe there is an economic reality to the situation and we need to be 'responsible' citizens of the City," Muscat added, "I think our members are tired of the state of affairs. It was a completely energy-depleting experience last year to deal with that budget shortfall and I can't believe our members are going to be anxious to take it up again."

REFLECTING ON LAST YEAR

Last year the City started out by asking Local 21 members to waive a 3.5% raise that was due in December 2008. We turned them down and the raise took effect as scheduled. As an alternative, our members agreed to take eight furlough days off over two years. The first five, taken in FY 2009-2010, were equivalent to a 1.75% decrease in salary. Next fiscal year the 1.75% will be restored and a 1.25% reduction will be implemented in exchange for three days off, resulting in a net 0.5% (half percent) salary increase on July 1, 2010.

NEXT STEPS

The City will continue meeting with city unions at a central table to discuss the overall budget situation and consider cost saving alternatives that do not include give backs or layoffs. The central table will also act as an important place for city unions to coordinate their positioning.

However, the City told union leaders that the Mayor will be requesting separate meetings with each union to request concessionary arrangements, beyond what everyone agreed to last year to help them deal with the budget gap.

Local 21's response to this request will be discussed at next week's San Francisco Council meeting and a series of work location member meetings that will follow.

QUICK RESPONSE

While there won't be a quick decision on the key question, to help or not, it is helpful to hear from members who have ques-

tions, reactions, or advice to offer. Please email Local 21 c/o ANDREA PREBYS, aprebys@ifpte21.org.

An update on San Francisco pension developments will be sent to all members next week.

RSVP Today! "Budget 101," a Workshop on Understanding Public Budgets, February 20

As the economic crisis makes itself felt in cities and counties throughout the Bay Area, policy makers in many jurisdictions are calling for extreme measures ranging from layoffs and mandatory furloughs for public employees, to severe cuts to social service programs. In times like these, it's more important than ever for Local 21 members to understand our city and county budgets, and have the skills to take proactive steps toward protecting jobs and services.

This workshop, led by BOB BROWNSTEIN, will include a discussion of how the public finance system works and how local government budgeting is done, with an emphasis on the practical challenges people face when they're trying to understand a local budget. It will also include hands-on work analyzing your own locality's budget, and tips on starting your chapter's own budget work group.

Guest instructor BOB BROWNSTEIN is the Policy Director of Working Partnerships USA, an organization that brings together community, labor, and faith groups to work for policies that address the needs of working people. Previously, he served as the Budget and Policy Director of the City of San Jose. Bob has addressed our Delegate Assembly and assisted us in budget analysis in Oakland and San Francisco.

Please join us! Saturday, February 20, 9 AM to 1 PM, Clarion Hotel, San Francisco Airport, 401 E. Millbrae Ave., Millbrae Space is limited, to R.S.V.P. please email MANDY BRATT, mbratt@ifpte21.org. For more information and a flyer for the training, visit Local 21's Latest News webpage.

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