

12/18/09 IFPTE Local 21 Statement to the Golden Gate Board

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. I am Kim Waldron, Labor Representative from the Engineers Union Local 21.

As you know, Local 21 engineering staff are in mediation because of the problem of engineering wages falling behind the Bay area average in several classifications.

Both your Board and our employees' Union want to keep top quality engineering staff but we both also understand that the current budget requires hard realism.

In October we told you we thought a solution that successfully addressed both the wage gap and the deficit required two steps: a salary survey both parties trusted and, if a market wage gap was found to exist, a plan or process to deal with it at a future date, as the current budget made an immediate correction impossible.

We believe you heard us, and we thank you, because there was progress in our last session. There was exploration of a mutually agreed upon salary survey process. But there was no willingness by the District negotiating team to set up a process to correct any wage gap, even in the future, that was found to exist. We then explored whether a "me too" clause was possible – that is, if no money or promise certain to resolve our problem was offered during the term of this MOU, were we ensured that this was the situation for all District employees? If money was somehow found later in the term of our Agreement to provide compensation for any other employees above and beyond what the District has already committed to (that is, 1.75% in January 2011 and the

Transit MOU agreement), would that 'found' money be shared, with something put toward our wage gap? We received a strong no for any assurance of equality. Based on the Board resolutions and what has been expressed at our two side tables, we believe the District bargaining team is telling us that the Board wants to remain free to give more to the District officers in their individual contracts after January 2011. This is astonishing to us, and I expect, to all District employees.

Make no mistake. Our members, and I assume all District employees, understand they have good jobs and a good employer. But they also expect to have a fair employer.

What is the thinking that says in difficult times, the example set by the top leadership is to make sure they are paid first; that is, they receive market based compensation while the employees who keep the bridge, and ferry, and buses operating make do and go without?

The professional engineering staff working on the seismic refit, the steel inspectors of the bridge – we need the best. They are vital to the District. We know we are paid less than market. We can understand in tough times having to wait to get this addressed. We are not asking for anything during the term of our Agreement above what others have so far been promised. But if times improve or somehow money is found to provide others extra compensation, we cannot understand why that money would be reserved for only the top compensated staff.

Treating equally all who make the District operate – expecting all to go without or all to gain together - would likely promptly resolve our two open contracts. Setting

different rules for market pay for only the top compensated staff ensures continued problems.

How is leadership defined at the Golden Gate District Board? We respectfully request your immediate attention to this matter.

The Engineering group and I do again thank you for your time.