

Professional & Technical Engineers, Local 21



AN ORGANIZATION FOR PROFESSIONAL, TECHNICAL & ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEES

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Contract Enforcement: Exemplary Performance Pay

For the past year, the Assessors' Office and the Department of Building Inspection refused to implement an exemplary pay program as required by our collective bargaining agreement. In their refusal, the departments have cited a "lack of available criteria". In more than a year's time, this obviously talented group was unable to develop criteria to measure exemplary performance in their departments?

Rather than be embarrassed by this lack of effort or disregard for the lost pay suffered by their best staff, they have refused to work with us to resolve this matter. Both cases have been progressing through the grievance procedure and both are at the final step before arbitration.

In September, the Assessor's Office asserted that they could not provide the required list of qualified employees by September 1, as required by paragraph 264 of our MOU, because they had not completed the annual performance evaluations. When evaluations finally were completed in November, they changed their story and refused implementation based on lack of adequate criteria.

As a consequence, we filed a grievance on behalf of all members in the Assessor's Office. Instead of handling the grievance at the last possible step, thus reducing cost and time spent by both parties, the Assessors' Office did nothing – never even responding to our grievance. Now the case is headed for arbitration where both sides will have to commit a great deal of resources.

In the meantime, the department's staff is still waiting. Additionally, they now have to contend with the knowledge that – at least for now - they have been denied an opportunity afforded under our MOU due to their employer's intransigence.

The same goes for the Department of Building Inspection. The initial grievance and subsequent steps have not been recognized by the department.

The only formal communication from both departments to our union has been through the City's Employee Relations Division.

We are committed to ensuring that our contract is implemented and that departments are held accountable when they fail to act. We are hopeful that both of these matters can be resolved before arbitration and that the departments sit down with us to develop a constructive structure for the implementation of this contract provision.

Ammiano Fundraiser a Huge Success

The fundraiser we held for San Francisco Supervisor Tom Ammiano on December 3 was a huge success and a great first step in our union's efforts to strengthen and build a solid and formidable political structure.

Held at Modern Tea restaurant in Hayes Valley, the fundraiser was attended by over 100 people with numerous unions, local elected officials, and labor councils all coming together to celebrate a great leader in his quest for the State Assembly District 13 seat. We had over 180 people donate to the fundraiser, and several members and chapters from outside of San Francisco realized how important it is to support good public leaders no matter in what jurisdiction they may reside.

State Senator Carol Migden attended the event as well as San Francisco Supervisors Sophie Maxwell and Gerardo Sandoval.

We were able to raise over \$8,500, which will enable Tom to run a strong campaign and hit the ground running in Sacramento in 2009.

At the event, Tom was presented with a much coveted Local 21 jacket which he has worn to several events since. Tom spoke about his many years of public service in San Francisco and the long and solid relationship that he has enjoyed with our union. He also spoke about continuing his fight for universal healthcare, a better

[turn over — continues on back]

educational system, and labor protections when he is elected.

The fundraiser had delicious food, good company and was generally thought to be fun, especially by those who have never attended a political fundraiser.

The event was just the beginning for a new political structure and strategy for our union. In the coming months, there will be several new efforts on the political front, including a new endorsement process and an internal organizing effort to increase T.J. Anthony Fund contributions.

Thanks to all those who attended and contributed to the fundraiser!

Retirement Negotiations Heating Up

There are growing tensions between the Mayor's Office and major city employee unions over retiree healthcare and employee pensions, which we expect will escalate even further in January.

Local 21, as part of the newly formed Coalition for Pension Reform, has joined with every major union in the city to insist that any cut backs to new employee retiree health coverage be modest and equitable and, in return, the city agree to a politically realistic and fiscally modest retiree benefit improvement.

Local 21 Executive Director Bob Muscat has called on the Mayor's Office to recognize that "There are two problems, not one. While retiree healthcare costs are escalating and a review is in order, you cannot, at the same time, deny the fact that San Francisco's retiree benefit level (which ranks 28 out of 29 comparable jurisdictions) also needs to be improved." The CPR proposed ballot measure would improve the retiree COLA benefit and the benefit formula from age 60 to 65.

Any change in retiree health or pensions must be in the form of a charter amendment and approved by the City's voters. Both parties have moved to put measures on the June '08 ballot by submitting placeholder measures that will give them until mid-February to try to work out their differences and move forward with a single consensus ballot proposal.

"Our preference is to resolve our differences and develop one ballot measure," Muscat explained.

"But, if we can't, the unions are united and have built a large campaign fund to support our version and to defeat the Mayor's. As long as we are reasonable and remain united, all the union leaders within the CPR feel as though we will prevail."

Mayor Projects Budget Deficit, Once Again Calls for Departmental Cuts

In what seems to be an annual ritual, Mayor Newsom has once again signaled the warning calls of a looming budget deficit. References to a deficit were noticeably absent from his re-election campaign, but the Mayor is now making significant moves to reduce what his Budget Office is projecting to be a \$250 million dollar shortfall for Fiscal Year 2008-2009.

In the budget instructions which went to departments in late November, the Mayor's Office called for a 13 percent reduction, and an immediate hiring freeze. He has also called on departments to prepare for layoffs of 'mid-level' managers.

On December 17, his office also issued an Executive Directive to departments to eliminate overtime and to begin monitoring 'excessive or inappropriate' use of sick leave.

There was supposed to be a meeting between his office and City employee unions in early December but as of the holiday break, two meetings have been canceled and there have been no communications from the Mayor's Office to unions as to what the budget cuts will mean for City employees.

Departmental budgets are due in the Mayor's Office in late February and the Mayor's budget is due to the Board of Supervisors in late Spring. In the meantime, we are working with general fund departments to get a better handle on the fiscal situation.

We will keep you posted.

LOCAL 21 OFFICE NOW IS WIRELESS

Our office in San Francisco now has wireless internet access for staff and visitors. After a major upgrade of our IT systems, the office is now open to wireless connections so members can work and be connected while in the office.



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