

Professional & Technical Engineers, Local 21



AN ORGANIZATION FOR PROFESSIONAL, TECHNICAL & ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEES

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Union Stands Strong on PUC Contracts

Local 21 is in negotiations with management at the Public Utilities Commission over a proposed RFP which contains work that was originally set to be done by City employees.

In late July, we were informed that the department was preparing to move a contract worth between \$26 and \$39 million. We were concerned about several items that the RFP sought, including pipeline engineering and a Recycled Water project. These are projects which the City has resources to complete in house.

A Joint Union/City Committee (JUCC) Steering Committee meeting was convened last week so that PUC management and union leaders could discuss the department's need to make a tight Design Phase timeline which was originally scheduled to be completed by 2009.

The department spoke of the need to supplement some projects which are in danger of falling behind while we strongly pushed the department to honor its original agreement regarding work allocation.

A follow-up meeting was held, during which the JUCC presented a list of demands from the PUC regarding the contract including the removal of the Recycled Water project, the ability for PUC and DPW employees to perform the work before it is available for contracting out, and a list of informational pieces including updated schedules for the individual projects, Task Orders, and a resource loaded schedule.

The Water System Improvement Project is a vital project that the City is currently working on. It is the water system that provides San Francisco and several other communities in the Bay Area with drinking water. Local 21 members have taken a lead on this project, with 60 percent of the WSIP design phase being done by civil servants, a phenomenal accomplishment in this day and age of privatization.

New Grievance Procedure Being Negotiated

We have been negotiating with the City for several months on a new grievance procedure for our Memorandum of Understanding.

The new language is meant to expedite the grievance and arbitration procedure for serious disciplinary actions taken by the employer. A termination or suspension of greater than 15 days can take up to a year to go through the current grievance process. This is not fair to our members who deserve to have their cases heard in an efficient and expedited manner.

Our attorney, Vicky Chin, has been working with staff on crafting language that protects employee rights while creating a structure that allows for timely hearings. Union Secretary Bonnie Bompert has also been participating in our meetings as she has a long history as steward within her department.

We hope to have the new language finalized within the coming month.

MTA Meeting Held on Amendment

A meeting was held at the MTA to bring members up to date on the charter amendment bound for the ballot this November. The meeting focused on the process of how the proposal changed through the recent course of negotiations at City Hall.

A packed room of MTA employees heard a presentation by union officers and staff who participated in the several weeks-long negotiations culminating in a labor supported amendment.

Those negotiations were between Board President Aaron Peskin, Mayor Gavin Newsom, MTA Director Nathaniel Ford, and a coalition of unions. What began as an amendment with language detrimental to labor was turned into a

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proposal which allowed management and the unions more tools to truly improve the MTA.

The amendment now has a diverse group of supporters including labor, transit advocacy groups, and environmentalists. It also has the support of a strong majority of the Board of Supervisors.

In recent news, a possible showdown with downtown interests over the ballot measure has been averted by Peskin who negotiated a settlement of the parking provision that is contained in the legislation. Peskin put the parking language into his transportation amendment to ensure that current City policy stayed in place; a competing ballot measure sought to increase the amount of parking spaces for luxury condominiums in new development in the South of Market area. While the downtown-backed measure cannot be removed from the ballot, sponsors of that measure have indicated that they will not campaign for its passage nor work against the MTA charter amendment.

Union and Mayor's Office Looking to Revamp UCP

Our new Executive Director Bob Muscat is very excited about the successes and future possibilities of our labor/management committees, and is moving forward with plans to improve them.

With the recent work of the JUCC (see PUC story on other side) as a motivator, we met with Mayor Newsom's Senior Advisor to discuss the Union/City Partnership and how it can be reinvigorated.

We are specifically looking to improve the departmental structures for the UCP to ensure that meetings are scheduled and attended by people who wish to participate and also to create a more solid approach to idea sharing.

There are several current projects underway, one of which has been submitted to the Controller's Office for cost savings certification. We are hopeful that this will blaze a trail for other projects to move through the costing models.

Emergency Ride Home Service

Do you want to carpool to work but worry about unexpected emergencies and how you would get

home? The Emergency Ride Home Program could offer relief by allowing those who use alternative transportation a quick option to get home in the event of an emergency.

ERH is a City-run program through the Department of the Environment that provides free to low cost transportation in cases of emergency for employees who get to work via alternative transportation such as carpooling, vanpooling, public transit, bicycling, and walking. ERH eases the worry of being stranded at the office if an unexpected situation arises, so commuters can leave their cars at home.

Valid reasons for using ERH can vary and may include an illness or crisis of the employee or immediate family member; the employee is unexpectedly required to work late; carpool or vanpool ride is unavailable due to unexpected changes in the driver's schedule or vehicle breakdown; bicycle problems including flat tire, mechanical failure, vandalism, theft, or unsafe bicycling weather due to inclement weather. Emergency-related side trips are also allowed if the stop is on the way home. These could include picking up a sick child from school or daycare, or filling a prescription at a pharmacy.

This service is for emergencies only and the employer must first agree to provide the service. Check with your departmental officer or call 355-3734 to see if your department is a participant. If not, ask your employer to see if this is a program that the department wants to support and offer to your colleagues.

For more information on the program, check the website: www2.sfdenvironment.org/aboutus/air/erh/index.htm.

Celebrate Labor Day

Celebrate Labor Day and working class culture with the Labor Archives and Research Center on Monday, September 3, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Renowned folklorist Archie Green will talk about his latest work, *The Big Red Songbook*. This free event will be held at the ILWU Local 34 hall, located at 4 Berry Street (2nd and King) on the Embarcadero next to the Giants' ballpark.



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