

Latest Update On Contract Negotiations

On May 2nd 2006, we met with Susan Panepento, Deputy Chairperson, Office of Collective Bargaining. This was our opportunity to explain why we filed for the appointment of an Impasse Panel. At the very least, we are looking to expedite the process and have a third party neutral (mediator) at all future negotiation sessions.

The City also met with Susan Panepento and presented their version of the status of negotiations. In our opinion, the City did not accurately portray the history of negotiations which prompted the CCA to file for impasse.

The most significant outcome of the May 2nd meeting is that a mediator will be present at all future negotiating sessions. We needed to achieve this goal so that the City will have added pressure to bargain in good faith and that we can achieve a fair and equitable contract.

If the City acts in bad faith in the future, at least we will have a third party present to attest to their actions. And if need be, have the Board of Collective Bargaining declare us at impasse.

We however have not waived any of our rights by agreeing to mediation. We expect the mediator to arrange a series of meetings with the City to be held in the next few weeks. We still want a recommendation by Ms. Panepento made to the Board of Collective Bargaining as to whether we should be declared at impasse and appoint an arbitrator. The Board meets on May 28 and Ms. Panepento will be able to render a recommendation to the board based on how she views the meetings are going with the City. This is all a positive for us because if the City continues to stall negotiations, we are better served going to Arbitration.

We have told Ms. Panepento and the City that we are ready to negotiate around the clock with the City if it is serious about reaching an agreement. Their actions to date have not been conducive to reaching a deal. We are hopeful that the presence of the mediator will make the City more focused.

As for the City filing an improper practice against the CCA asserting we failed to bargain in good faith, not only is that a false statement, it is yet another stall tactic of the Office of Labor Relations. The City's misguided action demonstrates it is the one who is not serious about reaching a settlement. The City wants the Wittenberg Stipulation thrown out and the creation of a 48-hour overtime bank. We have told the mediator these two issues are non negotiable, we are not giving them back.

I expect there to be some meetings within the next two weeks. The mediator will be directing the City to do some costings so when we have our next meeting they will be prepared. I am confident that the mediator will insure that the City, the Department of Correction and the Office of Management and Budget will be present and prepared to negotiate.

While I and your Executive Board can understand and appreciate your anxiousness to have us settle a contract, we ask for your continued patience as we push the process along. In the final analysis, I am confident that all of you will achieve the exact pay raises in each of the four years as the unions that have settled before us. Your Executive Board and I are attempting to achieve those raises without selling out the entire rank. As for those that believe contracts have been settled with very little give backs, I ask you to really look again.