

SENT VIA EMAIL

September 12, 2011

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RE: Labor Negotiations

Dear Bargaining Unit Representatives:

Several bargaining units have requested a letter regarding public labor negotiations related to retirement reform. This letter is in response to that request.

The City strongly believes that we should provide as much information as possible to the public regarding labor negotiations, particularly given that employee pay and benefits comprise a very substantial portion of the City's costs. Providing information to the public about retirement benefits is particularly important given the significant impact that the cost of City employee retirement benefits is having on the City's budget.

Until recent years, the public had access to very little information regarding labor negotiations, either before or during the negotiations. Typically, the public would receive information about negotiations **after** a tentative agreement was already reached between the City and a bargaining unit. At that point, a summary of the tentative agreement was provided to the public in a memo, often after the union membership had already approved the tentative agreement. This provided the public very little information before negotiations had been concluded.

In recent years, the City has provided an unprecedented level of information to the public not only before negotiations commence, but also during the negotiations. As part of the City's Sunshine Reform efforts, a public presentation is made before negotiations commence. The City has also been making all proposals and correspondence available on the City's website during the negotiations, typically on the same day that the proposals are made. In addition, the City has been making a regular public presentation during City Council meetings regarding proposals received from bargaining units. The City Council is also provided with copies of proposals made by bargaining units. If a Tentative Agreement is reached with a bargaining unit, the entire Tentative Agreement is made available to the public before the City Council takes action to approve it.

We believe all of these steps the City has taken provide the public with significantly more information about labor negotiations compared to prior years and also compared to other public agencies.

Regarding the negotiation sessions themselves, the City believes, and has the right to insist, that the actual negotiations should take place at the bargaining table between the designated representatives from the City and the bargaining unit who have been provided the authority and parameters to negotiate an agreement and that only those team members should be present at the bargaining table. The negotiation process often involves exploration and brainstorming between the bargaining teams. When proposals are presented by either side, they will be posted on the City's website for public review. As mentioned above, the proposals are typically posted on the City's internet site for public review on the day the proposals are made.

We look forward to continuing to work on retirement reform with our bargaining units, while at the same time providing information to the public regarding the progress of our negotiations. The City's retirement reform website can be found here:

<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/employeeRelations/RetirementReform.asp>.

Additional information about labor negotiations can be found here:

<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/employeerelations/labor.asp>

Sincerely,



Alex Gurza
Deputy City Manager