

Riverside County Bargaining Update (January 26, 2017)

The bargaining session that we had scheduled for earlier this week was postponed by mutual agreement. I did however meet one on one with the County's Chief Negotiator.

It now appears as though the County may be willing to take a somewhat less hard line with us than they have throughout this process. They are still talking concessions, but they may be willing to back off of some, though not all of their more draconian proposals.

During the meeting I reiterated what your bargaining team has said to the County all along: Any concessions to which we agree would need to be offset by something of similar value from the County. Our position on that matter is not going to change.

Frankly, up until now, it has been impossible to mistake the County's proposals and positions at the bargaining table as any sort of example of good faith or fair dealing. Based on my meeting with the County's negotiator, I am cautiously optimistic that the County may now be willing to engage in true negotiations.

Our goal at this point is to emerge from negotiations with a shorter term contract that doesn't harm us in any way. We may still end up at impasse, but for the first time in months I believe that it may be possible to reach an agreement that acknowledges the County's very real fiscal woes while still being fair to us.

Obviously, we are not in a rush. We not only want to get this done, we want it to be done right. The County would like a quick resolution to this, but when the livelihoods of 7,300 hundred people and their families are at stake, we will not be pressured into any agreement that doesn't make sense.

I expect to have more discussions with the County over the next few days to get a better sense of what an agreement that both sides can live with might look like. Based on that information I expect to draft new proposals to present at the table, as well as schedule new bargaining dates.

At our membership meetings we go into much more detail than we can in a public social media post, so please plan on attending our meetings if you are able to do so.

If you have not been receiving meeting notices please contact our office at 951-682-4590 to make sure that we have your current information.

I will post again when we have more dates scheduled as well as if there is any new information prior to our next bargains session.

In Solidarity,
Stephen Switzer, Business Manager