

Fall 2013

MAINLINE

The Official Publication of AFSCME Local 444

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As we enter the early months of autumn we still seem to be far away from settling a contract; a process that started eight months ago in a specter of doom from budget short falls, pension reform and the lingering resentment of Public Workers who still earn a decent salary and benefits.

Our Negotiations Team knew then that this was going to be a long hard battle to maintain our wages and benefits in this environment. But management successfully petitioned the Board of Directors for substantial rate increases – 19.25% over the next two years – for infrastructure renewal and to pay for capital projects with cash rather than debt. The State also relieved the District of a Pension burden wrought by the collapse (or theft) of the banking industry – by creating a two tiered system in which new hires (after Jan 1, 2013) have substantially lower retirement benefits and higher pension deductions. All of this would seem to make bargaining a fair contract easier, not harder.

But management appear intent to opportunistically use the new pension

law (PEPRA) to increase our payroll deduction from 6.83% to 8.75% - nearly \$1000 a year for a wage earner who takes home just \$50,000, but less than 2% of the District's payroll and less than 0.4% of their FY 2013 budget!

Management also seems intent on capping our COLA around 3%, clearly unwise for a four year contract with inflationary pressure that the Fed is putting on the economy.

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September 10th 2013

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE TO THE BOARD

John Briceno spoke on behalf of Local 444 at eleven a.m. before the members went into closed session to receive a brief update on Negotiations. He voiced our displeasure with the slow pace of Negotiations, commended the Board members and the GM Alex Coate for also foregoing salary increases in 2011 then quickly asked if they were planning to do it again. ".....because I can assure you those of us who earn \$60,000

a year or less cannot afford to with the cost of gas, rent and food continually going up!” He also reminded the Board that all 4 Unions had submitted proposals to Management that included some form of increase to their members’ retirement contribution in spite of this. “What else do we have to do to get treated with the respect that we have more than earned?” “This is EBMUD and not only have we become leaders in this industry we set the standards that others strive to follow and every one of us should be recognized for it!” In closing he urged the Board and GM to “.....direct their Negotiating Teams to stop playing poker at the table and seriously work on reaching a fair and equitable contract that doesn’t hang its employees out to dry.” 444 was joined by members from 2019 and 21 during both the 11am and 1:15pm sessions who also voiced concerns about the direction of our current contract negotiations. IN SOLIDARITY, John Briceno ~ President Local 444

Chief Steward Franklin also spoke:

Good Morning President Katz, Board of Directors, General Manager Cotes, General Council Collins

I come before you today as one of the voices of Local 444, a voice of 650 members strong. We want you to understand that Unionism isn’t just something you have for the sake of having; you have to want, you have to need something else first; and then with a strong voice of 650 members you fight for it. Negotiations is that fight.

We will not crumple in meek surrender to the District’s paltry proposals that strip our members of their confidence

and spirit. We will not be robbed of all we have worked and fought so hard for. We will not allow the District to turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to the needs of our members. We chose public service and we came to EBMUD because we were promised fair and equal treatment; benefits that included excellent health care, a strong retirement, and a better than average holiday package. Many of us took pay cuts to have those kinds of benefits and now the District is trying to steal them away from us.

We are a highly skilled work force that takes our commitment to the environment and communities seriously. We are a fellowship of the Union and with pride and self esteem we stand before you hoping that the Board has the courage to do what is right; send your negotiators back to the table with equitable proposals for wages, health care and retirement.

It is the Union’s belief that our actions represent more than any one individual and that our actions are a source of credit and distinction to EBMUD and we recognize that what happens between the District and the Union over the next few weeks defines all of EBMUD.

We ask for what is fair an equitable, and we ask that you recognize us and all we’ve done for EBMUD.

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