

Riverside County Bargaining Update November 29, 2016

Yesterday your Bargaining Team met with the County.

The County responded to our proposals. They either outright rejected, or deferred response on, every single item. The items on which they deferred response were items that they might be willing to move provided we agree to concessions. The problem with that is that the items they are possibly willing to move on only benefit a small number of people, while the concessions the County wants in exchange adversely affects 7,500 people. Obviously that math does not work for us. We made it clear that any concession would require something at least equally valuable to us from them. Proposals that offers a benefit that applies to 30 people in exchange for something that harms thousands of people is not an example of good faith bargaining. We were very clear on that point.

The County also brought in someone to give an update on the County's current financial situation. The County's situation is not good, to be sure. This is, in my opinion, largely due to massive lawsuit settlements and questionable decisions on the part of the County (18 million paid to consultants to help them find "efficiencies"?!). However, even acknowledging that the County is in a difficult spot with the budget, we were presented with nothing that to my mind qualifies the wholesale assault on your wages being proposed by the County. There is no reason they couldn't agree, for instance, to a contract with no changes through 2017. However, I don't necessarily believe that the County is interested in what's right or fair. I think we have some politicians who are feeling very encouraged by recent political events in our country and are bringing that same level of mean spiritedness to our bargaining table. Unfortunately, political ideology seems to have displaced concern for the women and men who make this County work.

Our next meeting will be on the 20th of December. At that meeting we will be making our formal responses to their proposals. They are well aware of our positions on most of their proposed items, so our responses shouldn't come as a shock to them. We've also requested more information related to their market studies that should be provided to us at that meeting as well.

Your Bargaining Team remains unified in their resolve to refuse to agree to anything that doesn't make sense for us. There are actually a couple of our team members who would personally benefit from our agreement to some

of these proposals, and they are just as committed as everyone else on our team to rejecting those proposals.

I will post another update after our next meeting. Meanwhile, I hope to see many of you at our holiday party this weekend. There is still time to RSVP online.

In Solidarity,

Stephen Switzer, Business Manager