

Riverside County Bargaining Update (May 10, 2017)

Yesterday during their closed session, the Board of Supervisors (BoS) directed their staff to prepare a "last, best, and final offer." This is usually the final step prior to a declaration of impasse. While we don't yet have their "take it or we'll shove it down your throat" proposal, we are presuming that it will contain most of the things we found so objectionable in the proposal they gave us at the bargaining table. We are in the process of scheduling our next bargaining meeting with the County, which is when we expect them to deliver their final offer.

This was an interesting decision on the part of the Board. I'm truly not sure what it does for them. The law requires that they resume bargaining prior to the adoption of their next budget, so once we exhaust our rights related to impasse, we will be right back in bargaining. I can only presume that the intent behind this action is to declare their commitment to pursuing a course of antagonism in their dealings with LIUNA. This is unfortunate but, given the absence of good faith demonstrated by the County throughout this process, it is not entirely unexpected.

We have a number of rights that will kick in with the declaration of impasse, all of which we will exhaust. So, there is still a fair bit of time before the County would be able to impose their final terms and conditions upon us.

As I said, we have yet to receive their final offer, and we will give it a fair review when we do receive it. However, given statements made by County personnel, and the fact that they have not changed their position throughout the bargaining process, we'd be foolish to expect to receive anything with which we can work.

At our quarterly meeting, (5/23/17 in Riverside), Victor Gordo, our General Council, will walk us through the impasse process, timelines, and any law relevant to our situation. We will also be discussing our plans for action. We will also look forward to your input on possible actions designed to get us to our goal of a fair contract.

We will provide updates as new information comes in. And when we do receive the County's final offer, we will post that as well. We want everyone to understand how they will be specifically affected by the County's actions.

We're a long way from being done, and I still believe that there is opportunity for true bargaining if the County should decide that is something in which they are willing to engage. But right now, that does not appear to be the case.

I hope to see you on the 23rd. This meeting will be members only, with the only exception being minor children. No other non members will be admitted.

We've been in sticky spots before, and I'm sure we'll demonstrate, as we always have, the sort of resolve that gets us to our objective.

In Solidarity,
Stephen Switzer, Business Manager