



Public Employees Union, Local One

THE UNION FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
ORGANIZED 1941

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December 4, 2024

Good evening Council:

The following letter has been submitted for public view to tonight's agenda packet.

I am Kelsey Daguerre, and I serve as an Accounting Clerk in the Finance Department of our City. I also serve as a member of our Union's Public Works/Miscellaneous Employees contract negotiations team. Please recognize that our Union, AFSCME Local One, stands with the other Unions in the City in acknowledging the difficulties we have been facing with the current City Manager in contract negotiations and in general.

Unfortunately, not all of you have been informed by the City Manager that our Union-represented public works and miscellaneous employees remain stalled in contract negotiations with the City team. There is the continued possibility, therefore, that we may go on strike, meaning that essential city services would be suspended. These suspended services would include maintenance across the city in parks, upon utilities, streets and a wide variety of services performed by employees in clerical, administrative, accounting services, planning, engineering, information management/technology and custodial services.

It is mandated by the job description of the City Manager that he (quoting) "advise the City Council and community; build and maintain positive working relationships with the City Council and public and with those contacted within the course of work." He has been clearly deficient in the performance of these requirements by not engaging regular closed sessions with the City Council on the status of our contract negotiations. We must be reminded that the City Council is the employer of the City Manager. He is accountable to you, the Council, and like other City Managers and appointing authorities of public agencies in our State, he is expected to keep the full Council regularly informed on whether there is any possibility of a labor stoppage. It is clear that he does not want to be exposed for not offering a fair and competitive contract to our city workers. We do not want to be "stuck" in contract negotiations—without a contract since the end of June of this year. Contract negotiations must include the provision of compensation offers by an employer which provide at least some

possibility that Union members will seek to ratify. Instead, what has been offered is inadequate with respect to the cost of living in our community. The morale of our Union members (approximately 75 in number) is at the lowest point ever due to the City Manager's hostility toward our collective. As you are already aware, there are scores of City employees who have hastily departed from employment in our City--depleting the ranks of critical jobs here to move on to jobs elsewhere with more competitive salaries and civil work environments. In the interest of keeping City Hall open and our city services intact, we need a City Manager who values City staff and has a willingness to provide more a reasonable contract offer to the Union. This will ensure that our City continues to function without interruption and that our employees are able to subsist economically and be retained to deliver services. We have an opportunity to work together here, with the composition of a new and fully seated Council, to provide direction to the incumbent who occupies the classification of City Manager: Offer the Union a contract that we can approve so our City can function effectively. That's what public service is all about.

Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeff Apkarian".

Union Representative Jeff Apkarian
AFSCME/Local One Contract Negotiations Team