



Fraternal Order of Police **Melbourne Police Labor Committee**

September 2, 2009



PRESS RELEASE

The Fraternal Order of Police Melbourne Police Labor Committee (Union) has just wrapped up negotiations with the City of Melbourne. Unfortunately the two sides could not agree on concessions whereby a proposed financial urgency was claimed on the City's budget.

For the past few weeks the Union and the City met on three separate occasions to discuss what could be done to alleviate a financial problem within the City's 2009-2010 budget whereby furloughs (or the economic equivalent thereof) were already factored into the budget proposal. The Union was requested to either delay their October 2009 raise to 2010 or agree to up to 48 hours of furlough for its members. This would help the budget shortfall. As has been done in the past, the Union agreed to discuss the financial problem with the City and see what could be done in mid-term of the contract to help out. Previously the Union has assisted with the financial stress of the economic times by negotiating terms that would help the City with its financial shortfalls. For instance, the Union agreed in the 2007-2010 Collective Bargaining Agreement to take a \$750 pay raise only in year two of the contract (2008) instead of the normal STEP (approx 2.5%) and COLA (approx 2 - 2.5%) wage increase. The Union, understanding the economic hardship the City was facing, agreed to the small pay raise to help out and do its part. Additionally, in mid-term of the contract, the Union agreed to exchange two holidays for 24 hours of vacation time to help with financial relief of the budget problems. This created a 6 hour time/money loss to its members, but helped with the overall financial problem.

The Union was informed by City officials that the City Council directed them to meet with the Union to once again negotiate a financial concession. In keeping in good relations with the City, the Union met for the past few weeks to come up with a common ground. This concession could have once again assisted the City and yet provide something for the officers, since they were still within the Collective Bargaining Agreement's term (it does not expire until 2010) and not obligated to discuss any financial issues unless the City claimed a financial urgency with the budget.

The Union's Staff Representative and Chief Negotiator, Tim Goodwin, states, "These officers understand what is happening around them. They know there are economic issues everywhere and they tried to once again help the City with their financial problems." Goodwin continued, "What we weren't expecting in this negotiation session was that we would be blindsided today. After a few sessions of negotiations and presenting what we felt were fair financial options to work from, the City basically said they were not going to offer anything for the officers and the City wants to just impose whatever they wanted on the officers. As far as we were concerned, the negotiations were over and our past assistance was in vein." Goodwin ended with, "In light of these financial problems, one of the recommendations we proposed dealt with freezing vacant positions. We felt this would have solved the problem and created a win-win scenario. Although crime isn't going down, and their workload isn't going down, the officers were willing to accept the increase in work as a result of the frozen positions. All they are saying is that please don't make their families suffer because the city didn't do their math right when they offered them the raise two years ago. It comes down to they were just trying to help out the City's finances, like they have done in the past, and for some reason discussions came to a grinding halt today with the City's blatant disregard for the officer's offer."

Eventually the issue will be presented to the City Council for review.

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