



Budgets Submitted: Union Negotiated the Process

The budget processes for Bureaus are coming to a close at the end of January.

As you know, the Mayor has asked bureaus to project budgets with four, six and eight percent cuts, and with PBOT also balancing a \$16 million deficit.

COPPEA stewards/members, Union Representative Behnaz Nelson, along with PTE Local 17 Research Director Elliot Levin, have been actively participating in various Budget Advisory Committees (BACs). COPPEA representatives have also been working closely with Bureau Directors, including BHR Director Yvonne Deckard, to understand the potential impacts. As you may be aware, seniority lists will not be completed until after January when the budgets are submitted and positions have officially been identified for layoff.

Even then, BHR states the process of identifying seniority is detailed and arduous and has to be done by hand to take into account previous positions held by the affected employee(s). So, it may be a couple more months before we know the bumping impacts.

While COPPEA has vigorously advocated for a heads-up notification on which positions would be identified for elimination, we were blindsided at PBOT. Verbal notifications were given to employees with no notice to stewards or Behnaz. In fact, it was not until after a long weekend that union officials were spoken to by PBOT Director, Tom Miller. During that meeting, Miller STILL did not have the list of affected positions/employees to provide to the unions represented in the Bureau. Labor was infuriated at Miller's lack of respect to the employees, the Unions and the layoff process. Miller tried to insulate himself by saying his hands were tied by BHR, so naturally our next call was to Yvonne Deckard. Thanks to COPPEA's reputation and strong relationship with BHR, our concerns were immediately heard and addressed. Additionally, assurances were given that going forward the City will be more diligent in respecting our presence.

Stay calm, jobs secure until June 30

If you have been notified that your position was identified for elimination, there are a few things you should do: (1) don't panic, your job is secure until the end of the fiscal year (June 30th); (2) COPPEA will meet with management to bargain the impacts of the proposed reduction and you will be involved in helping to save your job; (3) COPPEA will actively lobby Council to find financial savings through efficiencies and

overhead and not through job cuts – again, in attempts to save your job and you will be integral in these discussions; and lastly, (4) you may have bumping rights to another position which will mean you remain employed after your layoff.

Please contact your Steward or Behnaz Nelson (behnaz@pte17.org) if you have been notified of a potential layoff or if you have any questions. Please join us on Feb. 21 at 4:30 p.m. for a training on understanding our contract language related to layoffs and bumping. Location is TBD – more info is forthcoming.

The time for making our voices heard will start in February and continue through May. COPPEA leadership will be reaching out to members to make our presence known at Council and perhaps even in private meetings with Commissioners. Stay tuned for more information and be prepared to pack the house in protest and speak up to save our jobs!!

COPPEA has a reputation as a professional union capable of effecting successful change through collaboration. Solidarity and perseverance will be our greatest strengths for reducing the financial impacts to our members. Be informed and be active in COPPEA!

COPPEA 2012 Executive Board Roster

Officers

President:

Gerry Verhoef (Parks)

Vice-President:

Rachel Whiteside (BDS)

Secretary:

Shannon Rivas (Water)

Treasurer:

Paul Cone (PBOT)

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(Representatives)

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Karyn Hanson

Angie Tomlinson

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Anika Curry

PBOT - Ruthanne Bennett
John Wilson, John Wood

BDS - Kathleen Stokes
Priscilla Partch
Mark Walhood

BPS - Tyler Bump

Water Bureau -
Jamie Wilde
David Argast

Shared - (Fire, Police,
Revenue, BGS,
City Attorney's Office)
Jerry Eckstrom

Parks - Steve Lower

More on the back >

Member Spotlight: Patrick Torres Environmental Technician II - Pollution Prevention Services



I started working at the Water Pollution Control Lab in 2006. Since finishing graduate school last summer I began looking for more opportunities to contribute here at the City and love the diversity it can provide. I enjoy helping others and when it appeared

no one was interested in running for the open steward position, I looked into it.

I am originally from Guam in the western Pacific. After going to school at the University of Washington in Seattle and after several years of work-related moves up and down the West Coast, I think there is a reason I have settled into a sweet spot here in Portland and with the City.

In addition to enjoying the usual Portland-area perks of tasty food, drink and entertainment, I try to keep myself busy playing in volleyball leagues, getting outdoors, photography, snowboarding, cycling, 'Blazer games and more recently, motorcycles.

I can be reached at 503-823-5337 and at Patrick.Torres@portlandoregon.gov.

COPPEA CLIPS - Feb. 2012

Published jointly by COPPEA and Professional and Technical Employees, Local 17

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Your Union Representative is:

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or 1-800-783-0017, ext. 112

COPPEA Officers

Gerry Verhoef, President
Rachel Whiteside, Vice President
Paul Cone, Treasurer
Shannon Rivas, Secretary
Mark Bello, Past President



Don't Leave Education Money on the Table

COPPEA's Professional Development Fund (PDF) still has \$80,000 available. However, this money may be removed at the end of June. Unused PDF moneys will be returned to The City, if the General Fund discretionary budget is reduced 4% or greater than was budgeted for the previous fiscal year. Mayor Adams has requested cut packages of 4%, 6% and 8%. It's likely that the fund will not exist next fiscal year.



Use it or lose it!

Fund dollars are approved for: fees, tuition, seminars, workshops, conferences, books, tapes, videos, software, licenses, certifications, dues, and associated travel expenses. Most commonly, funds are used for attending conferences and college classes. Monies may be used for education related to any City position, not only the one you currently occupy. Still unsure if your education related expense qualifies? Take just 1 minute and fill out a PDF request form. Forms available online: www.coppea.org.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- E-Board meeting: Feb. 7, noon
(Portland Bldg, 2nd floor, room C)
- Officer's Meeting: Feb. 21
- PDF Committee Meeting: TBA
 - LMBC: Feb. 24
- Layoff & Reduction In Force Training -
Feb 23 - Location TBA
- Steward Training 101: March TBA

Feature: What is Seniority?

Seniority, for purposes of layoff and recall, is defined as the length of continuous service from the date of permanent appointment to the classification.

Seniority continues to accrue during layoff, disability retirement and approved leaves of absence. This includes unpaid leaves of absence such as FMLA/OFLA leave or military leave. An employee's service is considered broken, and accrued seniority canceled, by resignation, dismissal, or retirement.

In the COPPEA contract, compensation and vacation are also based on an employee's length of service, with the number of days of vacation increasing with the increase in the years of service. Compensation is based on a salary range, with the employee advancing within the range for each year of service until the top step of the range is reached.

How promotion, specialties, voluntary demotion, and reclassification affect seniority:

Promotion: An employee continues to accrue classification seniority in previously held classifications in which they held permanent status as a result of accepting permanent appointment to another classification.

Example: If you worked as a Tech I and were promoted to a Tech II, you continue to accrue seniority as a Tech I.

Specialties: The specialties within a specialist classification are treated as separate classifications. Employees in a specialty classification shall accrue classification seniority only in specialties in which they hold permanent status.

Example: An Engineer – Geotechnical Specialty is a different job class from an Engineer – Mechanical. One may not bump the other unless the employee holds seniority in both job specialties.

Voluntary Demotion: An employee may not displace another permanent employee by accepting a voluntary demotion. In the event of a voluntary demotion, seniority unless otherwise established, begins upon the date of permanent appointment to the demoted classification. All seniority entitlement

to the higher class is cancelled until reinstatement to the higher classification occurs.

Note: You do NOT retain seniority rights to the higher classification and your seniority does NOT transfer to the lower job class.

Voluntary demotions do not include bumping to a lower job classification due to reductions in workforce.

Seniority upon reinstatement from a voluntary demotion or reinstatement to City employment under the City's Human Resources Administrative Rules is adjusted to include previous permanent time in the classification. **Note:** You are not credited with the time worked in the lower classification, only the previous permanent time in the higher classification.

Reclassification: In the event of a reclassification resulting in permanent appointment in the new classification, seniority for the incumbent unless otherwise established, shall be retroactive to the date the written request for reclassification and all required supporting documentation were filed with the Director of the Bureau of Human Resources.

This provision of the CBA acknowledges that it can take several months for BHR to approve a reclassification and holds our members harmless for any delays in that process.

Seniority in relation to layoffs:

One of most important connections to seniority in the contract is the reduction in workforce or layoff provisions. Using seniority provides for an objective method of layoff with the last employee hired being the first to be let go.

Reduction in workforce procedures based on seniority also provide an orderly method of reducing a workforce without employer partiality or favoritism. Layoffs are an extremely emotional time for employees, so a more structured and understandable procedure to some degree reduces the impact on those affected by a reduction in workforce.

"Seniority protects and secures an employee's rights in relation to the rights of other employees in the seniority group; it does not protect the employee in relation to the existence of the job itself. By use of an objective measure, length of service, the rights of one employee are balanced against other employee rights." (Arbitrator Carter in 79LA 1081)

Seniority for permanently appointed employees in permanent part-time or job share positions is calculated in the same manner as full-time employees. Permanent part-time employees and job share employees have all the same layoff and recall rights as permanent full-time employees.