

The Oregonian

Portland police commanding officers union reaches tentative contract with city

By Maxine Bernstein

Portland police commanding officers would receive up to 4 percent increases in their wages after working one to two years in their supervisory ranks, but their longevity pay would be phased out under a tentative contract agreement reached with the city.

The pact goes before the City Council for approval Wednesday.

"It was a relatively straightforward contract negotiation. There were no burning issues other than the city's desire to do away with longevity pay. The association accommodated the city's wishes," said Hank Kaplan, the attorney representing the Portland Police Commanding Officers Association.

The union has about 50 members made up of lieutenants, captains and commanders.

The proposed two-year contract would cover July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2015.

All commanding officers will receive a 0.9 percent increase in their salary for the first year of the contract, equal to 50 percent of the cost of living adjustment. The second year of the contract, commanding officers will receive 100 percent of the annual cost-of-living increase, or between a 1 and 5 percent increase, the collective bargaining agreement says.

The contract would eliminate longevity premium pay for commanding officers, with the exception that commanding officers who have worked for the bureau for 25 years before June 30, 2015, will receive a 2 percent longevity premium.

Instead of longevity pay, lieutenants and captains will get an extra 4 percent pay increase after they've worked in those ranks for two years. Commanders will get an extra 4 percent of pay once they've worked in that classification for a year.

By the end of the contract, the current 6 percent premium pay for officers who have worked at least 25 years will be eliminated.

"The commanding officers aren't terribly happy about it. A bare majority ratified the contract," Kaplan said.

Portland police fiscal managers estimated the one-year cost of replacing longevity pay with the new step increases for each commanding officers' rank at \$68,000. The overall increases to the general fund above the wage changes is estimated at \$97,000 over the two-year contract.

The proposed contract is scheduled to be presented to City Council members at 10 a.m. Wednesday.

The new contract comes as the city is seeking to eliminate the union. Last May, the city attorney asked the state Employment Relations Board to clarify the "public employee status" of all members of the commanding officers union.

The city contends that the lieutenants, captains and commanders are "supervisory employees" under the Oregon Public Employee Collective Bargaining Act's definition and therefore should be excluded from

union representation. The union's lawyer has argued that lieutenants, captains and commanders may be managers, but they have little discretion to make significant decisions, and little authority in hiring, transfers, promotions or discipline.

Both sides are awaiting a recommendation by an administrative law judge to the state labor board. The judge heard four days of testimony from both sides last year.

Southwest Portland neighborhood agrees to mediation regarding Freeman Tank property with city, Renaissance Homes

By Melissa Binder

Southwest Portland's Multnomah neighborhood has agreed to mediation with the city and Renaissance Homes regarding the sale of the Freeman Tank property.

The neighborhood recently threatened to sue the city if the water bureau completed the sale of the site, 0.7-acres of wooded land that houses a defunct water tank, to Renaissance Homes. The neighborhood's attorney argued the city violated state and local laws with the sale.

Commissioner Nick Fish, who runs the bureau, maintained that the city was bound by its sales contract with Renaissance, which the city signed more than a year ago.

Fish said the city faced the possibility of a lawsuit from the developer if he canceled the sale -- or from neighbors if he completed it. So he requested mediation.

The Multnomah neighborhood agreed to participate in mediation as long as it was done quickly and the sale was not completed until mediation had been tried.

"Our willingness to mediate does not change our fundamental position that the contract for the proposed sale of the Freeman Water Tank property is illegal," attorney Kristian Roggendorf said in a statement on behalf of the neighborhood.

Though the neighborhood would like to see the property remain undeveloped, their "dispute is with the process the city used to attempt to dispose of this public land," Roggendorf said in the statement.

The attorney representing Renaissance Homes has not yet responded to a request for comment.

Jeremy Solomon, one of the leading neighbors behind the neighborhood's legal effort, said he's curious to see what creative idea Fish has for compromise. Ideally, he said, the neighborhood wants the property to be "open and green."

But the neighbors aren't against private enterprise or development, he said. He would be happy if the city agreed to re-do the sale process, he said, if it was clearly sold on the open market with plenty of public notice.

"We'd go back to where we should have been before," he said. "Then we'd have democracy and a political process.

"If we can have an open process, we would welcome that."

The Portland Tribune

City contract talks progress, others stall

By Jim Redden

While TriMet and Portland Public Schools are still struggling to negotiate new contracts with their employees, the Portland City Council is scheduled to ratify two new contract with different union on Wednesday.

The contacts were negotiated with Laborers Local 183 and the Portland Police Commanding Officers Association. They cover a wide range of labor relation issues, including salary increases, benefit payments, ongoing training and position classifications.

The additional costs beyond budget levels are relatively small. Fiscal impact statements submitted to the council says the Laborers Local 183 contract will cost an additional \$169,000 a year and the Portland Police Commanding Officers Association will cost an additional \$116,000 a year.

Mayor Charlie Hales' office has announced the city has also reached a tentative agreement on a new four-year contract with the District Council of Trade Unions. The agreement still requires a vote of the membership and a vote of the City Council.

The council, or DCTU, is a coalition of seven unions that operate jointly in bargaining with the city. Affiliate unions are AFSCME Local 189, Laborers' Local 483, IBEW Local 48, Machinists Lodge 24, Operating Engineers 701, Plumbers and Pipefitters 290, and Painters and Allied Trades Council 5.

In the meantime, employees at TriMet and PPS continue working without contracts because negotiation are either dragging on or broken down.

Amalgamated Transit Union 757, which represents most TriMet employees, has yet to submit its complete response to TriMet's most recent contract offer. ATU 757 officials says TriMet has not provided them with all the financial information necessary to finalize the offer.

Negotiates between PPS and the Portland Association of Teachers ended Thursday evening without an agreement on a new contract for the district's 2,900 educators. District officials say key stumbling blocks in the talks include a longer school year for students, salary increases for teachers, and early retirement benefits.

Officials with the PAT say teachers could strike if PPS imposes its most recent contract offer, as allowed by state collective bargaining laws.