



MEA NEWSLETTER – November/December 2008

In this issue...

- City Budget Projections Worsen
- MEA Holiday Event A Success
- SF BOS Election Results Are In
- MEA Budget White Paper Drafted
- State Disability Insurance Broadened
- SFHA Implements Asset Management Plan
- Courts Move to Overhaul Personnel Rules
- EBS Protocol for Reimbursements
- Email: Make Sure We Can Reach You

Budget Situation Worsens Citywide as Economic Downturn Undermines Budget

Projections: As the holidays arrive, so does very bad news about the City's budget situation, including a \$75-90 million dollar shortfall that will necessitate mid-year cuts. At a November 20 meeting with labor organizations that represent the City's employees, the Mayor's Chief of Staff and Budget Director outlined the "revenue problem" the City faces as a result of declines in projected property, sales and hotel room taxes. They asserted the need for 7-8% of ongoing rather than one time cuts by departments and announced that layoff notices will be issued in early December. At this point it is not clear whether or how an expected spike in January 2009 retirements as a result of the passage of Proposition B will impact the number of layoffs.

MEA Holiday Event A Success: Over 100 current and retired MEA managers from the City, Courts and Housing Authority gathered together November 19 at the Great Hall of the San Francisco Zoo to celebrate the holidays over drinks and dinner. The new MEA Board of Directors was sworn in by former Mayor Willie Brown who also shared his thoughts about the recent presidential election and other topics. Executive Director Clare Murphy provided the latest information on the state of the SFERS in the current economic climate and reassured everyone in attendance that the System is in excellent condition to weather the storm. Finally, longtime MEA Officer Carl Friedman was honored on his pending retirement as Director of Animal Care and Control. A plaque presented to him by MEA President Eileen Hirst read:

Presented to Carl Friedman Public Servant for leading us by his excellent example to enhance the quality of life for all San Franciscans and visitors by promoting sound government practices, supporting professional excellence for our City's managers, and maintaining the highest ethical standards in the delivery of service to the public. With deepest respect, affection and gratitude from his colleagues at the Municipal Executives' Association.

SF Board of Supervisors Election Results are In: It is rare that the making of history is obvious as it occurs, but there was no mistaking the significance of what happened on November 4. Massive voter turnout, especially among the young, bodes well for any democracy and a vibrant democracy promises vibrant public discourse on public policy.

On a local level, the 2009 Board of Supervisors will include returning incumbents Sean Elsbernd, Ross Mirkarimi, and Carmen Chu. Although the results are still not certified as of press time, it appears that they will be joined by new members David Chui, Eric Mar, David Campos and John Avalos. We look forward to working with the Board of Supervisors individually and collectively on behalf of the City's services and programs and the people we serve.

MEA Budget White Paper Drafted: The draft of MEA's White Paper on the City's Budget Process is completed and a review panel made up of MEA members who expressed interest in working on this initiative has been convened to vet the document. That feedback is now being integrated into the document and once that process is completed, the report will be finalized and released publicly and posted on the MEA website. MEA will then contact the various stakeholders to brief them on the findings and request their support as we move the resultant recommendations forward.

State Disability Insurance Election Concludes: If you are an MEA represented manager employed by either the City and County of San Francisco (CCSF) or the Municipal Transportation Agency (MTA) you should have received information from your DPO or HR Department regarding electing into State Disability Insurance (SDI). The results are now in and individuals in every MCCC classification except 0964 and 0965 who were not receiving SDI will begin participating on January 1, 2009. For specific information about the timeline for benefit eligibility go to www.edd.ca.gov.

SFHA Implements Asset Management Plan: Multi-union discussions continue regarding the Housing Authorities plans to implement a HUD mandated Asset Management Program. Failure to comply thus far has resulted in millions of dollars of lost funding to SFHA that may never be recovered. A forum for all SFHA employees to get their questions answered was held on Monday, November 24 at the SEIU 1021 Hall featuring SFHA Director Alvarez. Although the roll out is set to happen December 1, the next multi-union meeting is set for December 10.

Court Moves to Overhaul Personnel Rules: After more than two years of work, the Court has presented a comprehensive revision of its Personnel Rules to the unions that represent employees at the Court. MEA, along with SEIU and IFPTE Local 21, has begun the process of reviewing the document and meeting with the Court about issues and concerns. Because the Court previously set out rules and procedures in multiple documents, some of which were conceived prior to passage of SB 2140, the process of combining and conforming those documents was tremendously challenging for the MEA managers involved. MEA did identify a limited number of issues that required further discussion and met with the Court last month to begin that process. Among the areas of concern were specific behavioral standards (e.g. pleasant smile) that we believed would be difficult for managers to enforce due to their subjective and vague nature. The discussions both with the Court and among the unions are ongoing.

EBS Protocol for Reimbursements: As happens each year, MEA members are calling the office because they have missed the annual September 30 deadline for filing their 07-08 Flexible Spending Account claims. Unfortunately MEA is unable to assist in recouping money left in your FSA after the end of the claim filing period. In order to avoid this problem, there is an option to regularly file for reimbursement during the benefit year rather than waiting for the end and risking forfeiture. Specific filing information and forms can be found on the EBS Website at www.ebsbenefits.com.

Email: To ensure that you don't miss time-sensitive notices, updates or information from MEA, we need to be able to reach you via home email. Please provide your home email address to us at staff@sfmea.com. We would prefer to send monthly newsletters by email but if you want to continue to receive your monthly newsletter via regular mail, let us know.

Holiday Greetings: Please accept our wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season for you and your loved ones. It is our pleasure and honor to work with you throughout the year and we look forward to a productive and collaborative New Year.

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