

EDITORIAL: Parks, FPOA members do their best for Fresno

By The Bee Editorial Board



Fresno Police Officers Association President Jacky Parks brought about a tentative agreement with City Hall that should result in three years of labor peace, better working conditions for officers and a safer Fresno.

FRESNO BEE FILE

Compromise without sacrifice of principles is the lifeblood of democracy. And when stakeholders fulfill this standard, they deserve praise — not just for what they've accomplished, but also in the hope that others will be inspired to find common ground, too.

Thus we cite the leadership of Fresno Police Officers Association President Jacky Parks in bringing about a tentative

agreement with City Hall that should result in three years of labor peace, better working conditions for officers and a safer Fresno.

The Editorial Board also urges the Fresno City Council to unanimously approve the contract at Thursday's meeting.

We weren't privy to the debate inside FPOA headquarters, but we imagine that the proposal blessed by Parks — a savvy and tough negotiator — wasn't an easy sell. After all, the savings to the city's general fund, as reported by The Bee's George Hostetter, will be \$7.1 million over those three years.

Yes, police officers will receive a 2% salary increase, effective July 1, 2015, that had been deferred. They will also get 2% raises in December 2016. But the city is decreasing its share of health-care premiums from 80% to 75%, with future premium increases shared 50-50 by the city and officers. In addition, current employees will contribute 2% more toward pension costs; future hires will contribute 4% more to their pensions.

What are officers getting in return?

Labor security and the knowledge that their ranks will grow. Though the city budget calls for 717 officers, retirements, transfers to other agencies and the challenge of recruiting top-notch candidates have kept the force at about 700, Police Chief Jerry Dyer told the Editorial Board in a phone interview Friday.

"This provides us with stability, the city now knows what it will be paying over the next three years and the officers will have a better quality of life," Dyer said. "With fewer officers on patrol, they have been working harder and they've been working more overtime shifts.

"It is a competitive market for law enforcement in California right now. The contract enables us to retain more of our officers and attract better candidates."

Parks told Hostetter that his members approved the contract Wednesday with nearly 80% support from the rank-and-file and more than 80% support of management.

We tip our cap to FPOA members as well. Thanks for agreeing to a deal that helps our city and spares us a contract battle that figured to be highly divisive.

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