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August 3, 2017

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Sent by Email & U.S. Mail
sdishion@inyocounty.us

Sue Dishion
Deputy Personnel Director
County of Inyo
P.O. Box 249
Independence, CA 93526

Re: ICEA July 24, 2017 Package Proposal

Dear Ms. Dishion:

I represent the ICEA and I write in response to your letter dated August 1, 2017, responding to ICEA's July 24, 2017 package proposal. The County's response is deeply disappointing and misguided. The County has chosen to respond to further concessions from the Union with threats and a flat refusal to bargain in violation of its statutory duty. This is not the path to labor harmony and peace.

The County fundamentally misunderstands its duty to bargain. Its duty does not "cease" because impasse resolution procedures have been exhausted. Impasse suspends the bargaining obligation only until changed circumstances indicate an agreement may be possible. The County is obligated to continue negotiations in good faith. The refusal even to meet is *per se* bad faith.

Moreover, you misrepresent the Union's offer. The Union's July 24, 2017, offer postpones certain wage increases lowering the amount received by employees upon ratification from 3% to 2%. By pushing that additional 1% back, the County saves money and the employees receive less. More significantly, the offer extends the contract for another full year to expire June 30, 2020, instead of June 30, 2019. The County, therefore, is spreading 6% wage increases over 4 years instead of 3 years, which decreases the average annual COLA from 2% to 1.5%. This is a meaningful change especially given that the County had proposed 4% over 3 years (averaging a 1.33% annual COLA). Further, the offer extends the term of the collective bargaining agreement thereby ensuring a longer period of labor peace.

Sue Dishion
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The County's response to this movement, including its refusal to bargain and its threat to engage in regressive bargaining, betrays that it has no intent to reach an agreement. The Union urges the County to reconsider its position and schedule dates for bargaining. Please contact me to schedule bargaining dates or to discuss this matter further.

Very truly yours,


Susan K. Garea

SKG/tg

cc: Jane McDonald, AFSCME District Council 57 (by email)
Janelle Kent, ICEA (by email)