



TACOMA POLICE UNION LOCAL NO. 6

PO BOX 11265 • TACOMA, WA 98411-1265 • (253) 272-2119

11/30/2011

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council,

We are writing this letter to ask that you direct the interim City Manager to delay handing out layoff notices until at least February 2012. There are several reasons for this:

First, we want to be good partners in the labor/management process. We have a duty of due diligence to the members of our Union; due diligence is a process and as such it takes time. If you expect the Union to assist in addressing the perceived budget shortfall, you must give us time to vet the issues the City Manager has raised and to conduct our own assessment of the projected state of the City budget. The Union is currently bargaining our successor collective bargaining agreement. We can have productive discussions during bargaining to address budget shortfalls, but the process is circumvented if layoff notices are issued prior to the discussions taking place.

Second, yesterday during the Council study session, you announced that Tuesday December 6th will be the first opportunity for the public to comment on the potential layoffs, impacts to public services and safety, and the perceived budget shortfall. With layoff notices going out Monday December 5th, can you in good conscience issue the notices before you have even considered public comment? Do you know what issues are going to be raised? Moreover, once you've issued a layoff notice, even if you take it back, you've permanently altered the affected employee's perception of how committed the city is to employee welfare. Think about how you would feel if you were treated this way.

Third, as we have discussed before, the City is on the brink of hiring a new City Manager who probably won't take office until February. We are curious as to why you are contemplating layoffs prior to the installation of a permanent City Manager, who in all likelihood is going to bring in his own staff, to include Assistant and Deputy City Managers and other managers like the Finance Director. An interim City Manager and an interim City Manager's staff should not be making these decisions.

Fourth, if you have concerns about "right sizing" police department staffing, then say so. Set aside the rhetoric and hyperbole. Right sizing can be accomplished (as it has in the past) without layoffs. That said, we already have significant staffing shortages and the ratio of officers per citizen is already substantially lower than comparable cities. We are unaware of any other Washington city that has faced as large a cut to public safety. How long do you think it will take to recruit, hire, and train new police officers and how much it will cost once the error of this management proposal is realized?

It is not too late to stop this process. Please contact us if you have questions.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Terry Krause, consisting of several overlapping, horizontal strokes.

Terry Krause
President

A blue ink signature of Chris Tracy, featuring a large, stylized initial 'C' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Chris Tracy
Vice President

Cc: Interim City Manager Ray Arellano, Labor Relations Manager John Dryer