

December 4, 2017

To: Local 21 Oakland Members

Fr: IFPTE Local 21

Re: IFPTE Local 21 Strike FAQs

1. When are we going on strike?

Following up on the Local 21 membership vote from a few weeks back, Local 21 negotiators and Bargaining Team members are preparing for a strike starting on Tuesday December 5 in sympathy with SEIU 1021 and in coordination with IBEW 1245.

2. Did IFPTE Local 21 members authorize a strike?

Yes, a membership strike vote occurred on November 14 and 15, and members voted overwhelmingly to authorize a strike.

3. What's the latest on bargaining?

While progress has been made on a significant number of non-cost and small cost items, the stubborn unwillingness of the City to demonstrate fairness around wages has become the lightning rod issue at the table. Keep in mind that the cost of living has increased significantly over the last year, and most contract settlements in the Bay Area have included 3% to 4% raises. Late last week, the city made a revised offer to SEIU Local 1021 for 4% in year one retro to July 1, 2017, but no raise in year 2 until the last day of the two years term, and only 0%, 1% or 2% depending on a revenue based formula. This offer has just been extended to Local 21, and we have not had a chance to respond yet. The offer has been rejected by SEIU, and countered with a 1 year 4% deal, which the City has in turn rejected.

4. What do I need to do?

- Do not go in to work on any strike day. Do not work from home. A strike is the withholding of your labor, and your employer must feel the consequences of your not working in order for the strike to be effective. You have a legal right to strike, and Local 21 will fight to protect the rights of members to do so.
- Report for picket duty at the appropriate times and locations to ensure that the strike is effective and the picket line is strong! A successful strike requires members to show up and demand a fair contract!

5. Is there any chance a strike won't occur?

There is very little hope that it won't occur at this late hour. Preparations for a strike are proceeding around the clock including picket schedules, communications, press packets, sign making etc. At the same time, Local 21 negotiators are trying their hardest to come to a fair contract settlement with the City.

6. If we go out on strike, how long will it last, and if I honor the picket lines, how long would I be out of work?

There is no way to predict how long a strike will last. There was a joint strike with SEIU and Local 21 in Oakland in 2013 when negotiations collapsed. The strike lasted only one day and was a spirited and successful event. A favorable agreement was reached the day of the strike with City negotiators, and everyone returned to work the next day. It would be a mistake to assume that this strike will be a short one however, given the issues at stake. The last SEIU strike in Contra Costa County lasted two weeks, and their strike in Solano lasted one week.

7. How will we know if we should report to work after the first day of the strike?

As of now, do not go to work on Tuesday unless the union advises you that a settlement has been reached. Notices will be sent to all members informing us of strike status. You can also call the strike hotline for updated information: 415-914-7371

8. What is my assigned picket area?

Your assigned picket area will be your worksite, however if you are not downtown, there will be a different assignment later in the day. Please see the email sent out 12/4 for more information.

9. What about members who are unable to stand or walk? Where should they report?

Please report to Local 21 office. There, you will be able to either sign out a camping chair to have on the picket line (someone can help you with this), or potentially be given other office assignments.

10. What if there is a legally required meeting I'm supposed to attend while we are striking?

Missing essential meetings is part of going on strike, and the City must factor that in when deciding to make unfair proposals across the bargaining table! Other employees will also be striking who are supposed to be at these meetings, and there will be strength in numbers.

11. What if I'm probationary? Should I strike?

Probationary employees' right to strike is the very same as permanent employees. There has never in the past been an issue with probationary employees striking. However, Local 21 will protect your legal rights if any retaliation were to occur.

12. Can the City ask us if we intend to go on strike and honor the picket line or work during the job action?

The City may ask employees whether they intend to cross the picket line, but such an inquiry must be solely for purposes of planning for the action, and must include the assurance that you are free to make your own decision and that no retaliatory actions will be taken against you if you decline to answer or if you say you will honor the picket line. If you are asked whether you are going to honor the picket line, you may say: "Yes," or "I'd rather not discuss it," or "I haven't decided."

It is illegal to attempt to coerce, harass or threaten you in any way. If you feel that you are being harassed or threatened, document the incident and call Local 21.

13. Should I put an auto reply message on my work email or phone letting outside people know what's going on?

No. This is not a vacation, it is a work stoppage!

14. What about events for Oakland citizens that are supposed to happen next week?

Citizens should call the mayor and ask why it's not happening.

15. What is our bottom line with respect to raises?

We don't want to fall further behind the cost of living. If the City changes its offer, we will then give all due consideration to whether it is reasonable.

16. What can I do to help the union prepare for the strike? Come to the Local 21 office and see what needs to be done!

17. How do we know the City of Oakland is in good financial shape and should be settling a contract with fair COL increases?

Local 21 has compiled economic research for bargaining from respected third parties that show the economic health of the City. As such, we do not accept the City's affordability arguments as a justification for a raise below the cost of living. During the summer, we compiled key economic research and included the information in a "summer reader" for the City Council to read right before the Council went on break. The reader is available on the Local 21 website: <http://www.ifpte21.org/content/oakland-2017-economic-reader>

18. What Tentative Agreements (TAs) do we have so far?

Regular bulletins and flash updates have been sent out with news from the bargaining table and campaign. Recent bargaining updates can be found here: <http://www.ifpte21.org/regions/oakland>. Additionally, a list of TA highlights can be found here: <http://www.ifpte21.org/sites/ifpte21/files/pictures/TA%20Hightlights.pdf>

19. Will I lose my job if I go on strike, honor the picket line and don't go in to work?

While our contract is expired, under the law you have a right to honor a picket line or go on strike. If the City tries to discipline you, Local 21 will take legal action to defend you.

20. Can I use sick leave or vacation to go on strike?

No, in the last strike the City made it very clear in a memo to all City employees that all sick leave and vacation use would be denied for the day of the strike. You should expect to lose your wages for the days that you honor or are participating in a strike.

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