



City of Columbia Wage Opener Summary, FY 2019

January 14th, 2019

The Laborers International Union of North America, Local 773, plans to make proposals for the 2019 wage opener for the City of Columbia. While a more detailed proposal will follow, this document summarizes the Union's overall goals for this year's wages.

Cost of Living Increase

Per the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Consumer Price Index for all items has risen 4.416% between December 2017 and December 2018 in the Midwest region. The Midwest CPI has increased by 8.175% overall since December 2016. Based on this data, the Union proposes a cost of living increase of 4.5% for all eligible employees. The City Council took strong action last year by instituting a \$15 minimum wage for all city employees, but there continues to be pressure on employees from rising costs.

Continuation and Expansion of Midpoint Moves

Last year the City Council approved a move to midpoint for all employees who had served five years or more in their current job title. This was a good move to ensure that experienced employees are being compensated equitably, but it had several unintended side effects: by only looking at time in classification, the move to midpoint meant that employees who had accepted promotions or reclassifications lost out on this raise, and employees who were close to but not at five years in classification missed the raise as well. The Union proposes that the midpoint moves continue this year, but that all employees with five years of service to the City be moved to midpoint rather than five years in classification. In addition, the Union proposes a similar program for employees with ten years of service to the city where they would be moved to the 75th percentile of their wage scale (a "three-quarter point"), to further encourage longevity within the City's employment.

Recalibration of Wage Scales

Due to the decision to implement a \$15 per hour minimum wage, many of the City's pay scales are compressed. The Union would like to work with the City to update the wage scales to simplify and decompress the salary ranges under the new minimum wage.

Continuation of Market Increases

In last year's wage negotiations, the Union argued for a \$2.13 raise for all union-eligible employees, a number we arrived at because raises have been deficient for so long. Last year we

arrived at a \$0.45 across the board raise, the move to midpoint, the \$15 minimum wage, and a \$2.00 per hour raise for the Solid Waste utility. These all demonstrate progress toward the goal of making the City's wages competitive and attractive, but there is still work to be done in regards to making other divisions competitive. The Union proposes a further \$2.00 per hour increase to other union-eligible positions besides the Solid Waste utility to bring those divisions in line with the progress already made within the utility.