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September 22, 2008

TO: Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Superivosr Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

REPORT BACK ON DELETION OF SENIOR WELDER POSITION IN THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

This is to report back to your Board on an issue relating to agenda item #43 on the September 9, 2008 Board agenda. This item was an ordinance amending the County Code, Title 6 – Salaries, that was being introduced to implement various classification and compensation actions, including the reclassification of one position in the Fire Department, from Senior Welder to Senior Sheet Metal Worker.

BACKGROUND

To implement this reclassification, the ordinance deleted the one and only Senior Welder position (Section 4) and added one Senior Sheet Metal Worker position (Section 5) in the Fire Department staffing ordinance. This is a common and standard process for implementing position reclassifications.

During the public comments, Luther Medina, Business Representative for the sheet metal workers' Local 105, objected to the "elimination of the title of Senior Welder" (Section 4 of the ordinance in question). He indicated an increasing amount of work for welders in the Fire Department and, mistakenly, understood that it was possible to reclass a budgeted position to a new class and retain the old budgeted position. As a result of his concerns, that day your Board approved item #43, the ordinance for introduction, excluding Section 4 which would have deleted the Senior Welder. You also directed the Chief Executive Office to report back within two weeks on the Senior Welder issue. One week later, on the September 16 agenda your Board approved the revised (Section 4 deleted) ordinance for adoption.

ACTIONS TAKEN

After Mr. Medina spoke at the September 9 Board meeting, CEO staff members met with Mr. Medina to clarify the administrative processes relating to the reclassification of existing positions and the allocation of new positions through the budget process. In this meeting and in several subsequent telephone conversations, the following information was clarified:

- The classification of Senior Welder is not being eliminated in the County Classification Plan. This ordinance was deleting the one Senior Welder position that was allocated to the Fire Department staffing ordinance, in order to reclass or, in effect, add one Senior Sheet Metal Worker position.

- The reclass of an existing budgeted position does not result in the net gain of an additional position in a department budget.

- If the Fire Department has additional work for welders, it may request additional positions through the established budget process and CEO will allocate at the Welder or Senior Welder level as appropriate.

With the clarification of this information for Mr. Medina, the CEO will be including the deletion of one Senior Welder in the Fire Department in an upcoming Board letter of classification and compensation actions.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact me, or your staff may contact Steve Masterson at (213) 974-8481, or at smasterson@lacounty.gov.

WTF:SRH:DL
WGL:SM:ra

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Fire Department