

October 29, 2008

Dear City Councilors,

We as Rochester taxpayers want the City Council to review the details of this and all contracts that come before you to insure all costs are captured and calculated to the best of your ability because the Taxpayers of Rochester have to pay the bills for the future commitments you make on our behalf.

It is our opinion that the 2nd revision of the Paraprofessional Contract still has several provisions that are of a major concern to us and others. The two (2) main concerns deal with the actual raises given over the three years of this contract and the changes in the health insurance premiums offered to part time employees.

The COLA and step information provided to us through an e-mail from Mr. Hopkins show that over the past years they have continued to increase. The increases in this requested contract are even higher than in the past. The rates of 5%, 4.7% and 4.5% are calculated across-the-board. The true increases must be calculated using longevity as well as step increases. Please review the enclosed spread sheet showing the actual raises for the paraprofessionals ranging from a low of 3.0% for the early years of service. After 10 years of service the raises go from 6.6% up to a high of **12.9%**! Can any of you name a company in the private sector that is giving out guaranteed raises in this range? The standard practice of the Unions is to get members increased wages and benefits with no regard for the ability of the Taxpayers to pay. We, the taxpayers, are already over-burdened with property taxes.

With regard to the subject of Health Insurance, premiums and options offered. This has been a moving target over the years. Read over the letter dated 10/07/08 to Mr. Scruton from Mr. Hopkins and then review the benefit pages we've provided showing the detail changes in this contract revision. In past contracts, people working 20-30 hrs had the option for health insurance at the rate of 40% paid by taxpayers with the employee paying 60%. With the changes in this contract it is apparent what road we have embarked on. All part time employees will now be offered health insurance at the 80%/20% with *waiting periods and other stipulations*. In the letter dated 10/07/08, note the remark that "we had to grandfather current employees." So how long will it be before the five and ten year waiting periods vanish? Eventually the taxpayers will be paying 80% of the insurance premiums for all part time employees with no special stipulations. These changes are all spelled out by reading the entire document. Councilors please pay attention to the details. Look where this is going! Are there any other part time city employees without insurance? Who will pay for them?

The attached letter, information and spread sheets are all documented and factual. They will all be placed on www.rochestertaxpayers.com for anyone to view. You all need to be aware of the expensive details in the fine print. Enclosed are 19 pages of material. Lots for you to review but we believe valuable information which is needed to make an educated decision on what will affect the Taxpayers.

Managing the city budget is critical. You must take into consideration the taxpayer's ability to pay. All city departments must be fiscally responsible to the taxpayers, especially the school department. We ask that you review all the information provided and make the decision to deny this contract.

Rochester Taxpayers and very concerned citizens,

Robert & Doris Gates
332-4557