

Press Release: For Immediate Release

From: Newport Firefighters IAFF Local 45

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Date: August 18, 2009

Subject: Firefighter's Union and City of Newport Reach Contract Agreement

On August 17, 2009, City Manager Tom Fromme and IAFF Local 45 Union President Greg Wuestefeld signed a three-year collective bargaining agreement outlining pay, benefits, and working conditions for the City's firefighters over the next three years effective July 1, 2009. The agreement was approved and authorized by the Newport Board of Commissioners and the Union Membership. The agreement does not provide any cost of living raises for the fourth year in a row, but allows the City and the Union to examine the pay issue annually during the duration of the agreement.

The Union also agreed to a temporary Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in which two firefighter-paramedic vacancies will remain unfilled for an additional year. It also reduces the on-duty staffing by one additional position from the MOU signed last July. For the next year, each 12-member shift will now drop to 10 personnel on duty each day when firefighters are off for vacation, sickness, or injuries. In the past, off-duty firefighters were paid overtime to keep the daily staffing at 12 personnel when the assigned shift personnel were not present due to training requirements or contractual benefits. Under the new MOU that expires on June 30, 2010, overtime will not be used until the shift staffing falls below 10 personnel. The adjustments of how to staff Newport's three fire trucks and two ambulances remains the decision of City Manager Tom Fromme based on recommendations from Fire Chief Paul Uebel.

The Union Executive Board recommended the acceptance of the MOU agreement to the Union Membership on Tuesday, June 30th in an effort to work with the City Administration during a very tough economic climate. Union officials know that all local and county governments are struggling in the face of the economic crisis and state pension fund increases.

The Union membership accepted the daily staffing reductions requested by the City to avoid layoffs of fire personnel. This fall, a Homeland Security firefighter staffing grant may be modified to allow funding of unfilled firefighter vacancies and recall firefighters laid-off across the Nation. The Union hopes this could be used to fill the two vacancies in the Newport Fire Department without significantly impacting the City's current budget.

Prepared by:

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