



Membership Update March 2021

It is hard to imagine we are approaching the first anniversary of the initial stay-at-home order. While so much has happened in all of our lives during this time, various experiences that each of us has endured, we continue to meet the needs of our members and come together for a common purpose. Feelings of grief, prolonged stress, weariness, and loneliness are all expected and normal. Take care of yourself and be forgiving if you are struggling – you are not alone. Please see below for an update on SCXEA news and a look back at the history of SCXEA as we celebrate our tenth year as an association.

Negotiations Update

Unfortunately, there is no news to share on contract negotiations, which are ongoing. The City's lead negotiator left Labor Relations and the City decided to bring on an outside firm, and the assigned attorney then needed time to prepare. This individual also changed part way through the process. These two changes caused months of delays to set meetings with the City. While we are all aware the City has a \$40 million surplus budget, there appears to be no monies set aside for employee COLA's, and the City continues to take the position that this surplus is the result of one-time monies and its financial position is tenuous. SCXEA will continue to strive to improve the working conditions for our members.

One thing that has not changed are your benefits from the expired agreement, which will remain in place until our new agreement takes effect.

Secretary Opening

Have you considered volunteering for the Sacramento City Exempt Employees Association (SCXEA) Board of Directors? The Secretary position on your Board of Directors is currently vacant. We are looking for someone who is reliable, punctual, and a great team player! This vacancy will be filled by an appointment through September 2022, when the next election for this position will be held.

Any SCXEA member who is eligible to vote as of the date of appointment is eligible to apply for this position. To apply, simply submit a statement of interest to President@SCXEA.org of no more than 300 words no later than Saturday, March 6, 2021, describing why you are interested in the position.

Questions about what roles and responsibilities come with volunteering on your Board? Feel free to reach out to any one of your Board members to learn more.

SCXEA Celebrates 10 Years – A Look Back!

On February 4, 2011, Dee Contreras, a retired city employee, sent a letter to the Interim City Manager letting him know that SCXEA had begun the formal process of gathering signatures in support of efforts to become the recognized employee organization for employees in Units 01, 10, and 14. At that time all 677 employees in these three units were unrepresented.

Before and during the Great Recession of 2007-2009, unrepresented employees had suffered great losses to wages and benefits without a say. In 2002, the salary schedule for unrepresented employees was changed from 5% steps to a minimum and maximum. The stated intent was to move unrepresented employees to a pay-for-performance system, in which “the sky’s the limit,” according to one former Deputy City Manager. Unfortunately, the reality was that regular 5% step increases were eliminated and the pay-for-performance system was slow to be implemented, underfunded, and eventually abandoned. Salaries of unrepresented employees were frozen starting in July 2008, while salaries of all other employee groups increased.

In January 2009, before any other employee group, unrepresented employees were ordered to take one unpaid furlough day each month. When other employee groups faced layoffs, they were able to agree to concessions to reduce the number of layoffs. This option was not available to unrepresented employees and a number lost their jobs.

Under the law, to automatically be the recognized employee organization for a group of employees, at least 50% of the employees in a unit had to sign a card asking for SCXEA to represent them. The identity of those signing cards was known only by the person collecting them, but there was still fear of reprisal.

Unit 14 was the first to reach the 50% threshold, and on June 21, 2011, City Council formally recognized SCXEA as the exclusive representative of Unit 14 employees. Next came Unit 10, which was formally recognized as represented by SCXEA on July 26, 2011.

Unit 01 only had signed cards from 30% of the employees, but that was enough to force an election. On August 17, 2011, more than 50% of Unit 01 employees voted in favor of SCXEA representing them. City Council formally recognized SCXEA as the exclusive representative of Unit 01 on August 23, 2011.

In September 2011 SCXEA adopted bylaws, set membership dues, and had the first Board of Directors election.

As we work through the COVID-19 health and economic crises of 2020-2021, it is important to remember the brave work done ten years ago to form SCXEA and give a voice to all represented employees. Thank you for your voluntary membership and entrusting your Board of Directors to advocate for you every day.

Wellness/Benefit Resources

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) – The City’s EAP program offers a variety of services. Services include coping with grief, anxiety, stress, and depression, solving financial and child/elder care issues, improving health and wellbeing, and handling workplace issues effectively. This is a service provided by the City and we encourage anyone who may benefit to utilize this service. Call 24-hours a day 1-800-227-1060 or go to www.members.mhn.com. Use access code: cityofsacramento

Other Wellness Tools – What is helping you through this isolating and stressful time? We would love to hear any suggestions we can share with our members. Here are some suggestions from your Board:

Yoga with Adrienne – There is no shortage of yoga videos on YouTube, but *Yoga with Adrienne* is particularly accessible for all levels. She has a huge array of videos ranging from relaxing meditation to some serious workouts, and a variety of video lengths, so you can squeeze in some mat time even if you only have 10-20 minutes – as she always says, “a little goes a long way.” She creates a playlist each month and you can follow along with the daily videos or just pick and choose from the catalog. Yoga has helped many people decrease stress levels and improve mood and sleep and is a great way to move your body at home with almost no equipment. Plus, you’ll enjoy your regular dose of her adorable yoga partner, Benji the dog.

Apps – Need help reducing stress? Remembering to be grateful? There’s an app for that! Here are some apps that are helping us survive the stress and isolation of COVID:

Insight Time and *Headspace* – Are you trying to be in the **now** and slow down a racing mind? These are both meditation apps that can help teach you how to take a few moments to center and remain mindful. In addition to a specialized meditation timer, they offer guided meditations, which can be particularly helpful for beginners. When there seem to be 100 new things to worry about each day, this may be helpful to keep you present and grounded. We have found the meditations to help get to sleep particularly helpful.

Presently – Are you trying to focus more on the good things? *Presently* is a simple and elegant gratitude journal app. Regularly cataloging what you are grateful for can really shift your outlook. There are many apps to help you do this. *Presently* is incredibly simple and provides an easy way to look back and remind yourself of all there still is to be grateful for.

Genshin Impact – Need to escape this world entirely? *Genshin Impact* is an epic role-playing game that you can play on your computer or right on your phone. It is free (with optional in-app purchases), contains no ads, and is full of fun characters, heroic quests, and, of course, monsters to battle. Warning – it is addictive!

Retirement Health Savings (RHS) Plan Webinar – March 23, 2021, 10:00-11:00 A.M.

The City’s new ICMA-RC Representative, Amaya Fire, is hosting a webinar about the City’s Retirement Health Savings (RHS) plan. The workshop will go over the basics of the RHS plan, including a demonstration on how to view your account information through the Account Access platform. Register at <https://icmarc.secure.force.com/events?SiteId=a0lj0000003QOCiAAO>.

COVID-19 Exposure and Vaccination Information

Employees who may have been or were exposed to COVID-19 in the workplace should file a Worker’s Compensation claim immediately. If you are sent home to quarantine pending a negative test or for a designated amount of time, this will protect your sick leave. If you are told that you must use your sick leave, contact your SCXEA Unit Director to let him or her know. We are looking at the legality of requiring you to use your leave time, unless it is reimbursed through Worker’s Compensation. In addition, you should know that the City allows employees to use City time for COVID-19 vaccinations, whether it is done at a City site, at your health provider, or at any other available vaccination site. Be safe and stay healthy.

Fee Begins for 457(b) Deferred Comp Plan

Beginning February 15, participants in the City's voluntary 457(b) deferred compensation plan will have \$1.50 deducted from their account every month. The funds will be used by the City's Defined Contribution Plans Committee, which was authorized by City Council in 2018 to provide guidance and oversight to all the City's defined contribution plans – the 457(b) and 401(a) plans administered by Nationwide, and the Health Reimbursement Arrangement plans administered by ICMA-RC.

SCXEA appoints one of the seven Defined Contribution Plans Committee members, other labor unions appoint two members, the retiree association appoints one member, and City management appoints three members.

The idea of such a fee was reported in several prior member updates. The fee of \$18 per year was agreed to by all the City's labor unions and by City Council. The fee will raise approximately \$85,000 per year, which, in accordance with State law, must be used by the Defined Contribution Plans Committee "solely in the interest of, and for the exclusive purposes of providing benefits to, participants and their beneficiaries."

The funds will be used by the Committee to pay for an independent investment consultant to advise the committee; training and education for the Committee and participants; a Request for Proposals (RFP) process about every five years to select a company to administer the 457(b), 401(a) and Retiree Health Arrangement plans and to select an investment consultant; miscellaneous expenses; and a fund balance for unanticipated expenses, such as audit or legal fees.

The fee will be debited from the voluntary 457(b) plan accounts of participants (current, former, and future employees), but not from any of the City's mandatory 401(a) plans or Health Reimbursement Arrangement plans.

If you have questions about the work of the Committee, you may view the Committee agendas and meetings, and listen to the meeting audio or video recordings at: www.cityofsacramento.org/Clerk/Legislative-Bodies/Boards-and-Commissions/Defined-Contribution-Plans-Committee

Questions?

Do you have questions or suggestions you would like to see addressed in a membership update? Interested in getting involved? Please email Tessa St. John at DirectorA@SCXEA.org.

Board of Directors 2020-2021

- President – Heather Hoekstra, Administrative Analyst, Youth, Parks, & Community Enrichment, President@SCXEA.org, 808-5691
- Vice-President – Kateshia Knox, Senior Personnel Analyst, Human Resources, VicePresident@SCXEA.org, 808-7660
- Secretary – vacant
- Treasurer – Melissa Bickel, Senior Deputy City Attorney, City Attorney, Treasurer@SCXEA.org, 808-8802
- At-Large Director A – Tessa St. John, Program Manager, Finance, DirectorA@SCXEA.org, 808-4847
- At-Large Director B – Sage Millar, Program Specialist, Utilities, DirectorB@SCXEA.org, 808-5977
- Unit 01 Director – Jennifer Gore, Senior Deputy City Attorney, City Attorney, Unit01@SCXEA.org, 808-7765
- Unit 10 Director – Josh Bartholomew, Administrative Analyst, Youth, Parks, & Community Enrichment, Unit10@SCXEA.org, 808-1042
- Unit 14 Director – Khyra Blackman, Administrative Analyst, Human Resources, Unit14@SCXEA.org, 808-8840