

San Francisco Chronicle Unit -- California Media Workers Guild

Summary of Hearst Proposals to Guild 2/25/09

Chronicle management representatives today brought a comprehensive package of proposed cost cuts to a committee representing the Chronicle Guild Unit. Changes to the current contract would require ratification by the membership before they could take effect. Here's a summary of the main proposals before us:

1. Preamble: Proposal to amend existing Collective Bargaining Agreement, which runs through June 30, 2010 unless the two sides mutually agree to change anything. The proposal states in part, "The Employer has represented to the Guild that certain changes, deletions, modifications and other revisions to the parties' existing collective bargaining agreement are necessary to cut costs, facilitate operational changes and enhance the ability to increase revenue in order to continue the Employer's publication of the San Francisco Chronicle newspaper..."
2. Subcontracting, freelancing -- expand employer's rights.
3. Exclude from Guild protection all recently hired outside advertising, online advertising, ChronDirect salespersons and sales reps for the Gate.
4. Grievances -- eliminate the right to take new grievances to arbitration without company agreement in each case.
5. Layoffs -- expand employer's right to lay off anyone out of seniority. Higher severance for out-of-seniority layoffs.
6. Pensions -- Discontinue any further contributions to the pension plan.
7. Transfers -- Employer would have the right to transfer employees between work locations whenever the employer deemed it necessary, and no obligation to pay extra commuting cost if the current 65-mile limit is exceeded. Current limits against transfers beyond 75 miles would remain.
8. Hours -- Lengthen the workday from 7.5 hours, the week to 40 hours, without an increase in pay.
9. Work Schedules -- Give employer the right to change schedules at "the employer's sole discretion."
10. Vacations -- Reduce vacations to a maximum of 3 weeks.

11. Sick Leave -- Limit sick leave to 10 days per year, with no accumulation. Eliminate existing sick leave balances to the 10-day limit. Cut back sick leave benefits for pregnancy disabilities to the minimum required by law.
12. Leave of Absence -- When granting leaves, which are completely at the employer's discretion, allow an employee to return only if there is a position available. Otherwise the employee would be considered laid off. Union service leave rights changed to eliminate guarantee that the employee can return to the same job.
13. Reduce maternity/paternity leave rights to the minimum required by law.
14. Allow expanded use of on-call and temporary employees and eliminate pension benefits for present or new hires.
15. Delete the wage increase scheduled for January 2010.
16. Reductions in the work force: Employer intends to make "significant" reductions in force and to subcontract some functions currently done by employees. At least 50 jobs from the Guild jurisdiction will be eliminated through buyouts and/or layoffs.