

CSBA Accepts 'Pattern' Contract Terms For 900 City Attorneys

By MARK TOOR | Posted: Monday, February 9, 2015 5:15 pm

The Civil Service Bar Association, which represents about 900 attorneys assigned to virtually every city agency, has reached a tentative contract, its president, Saul Fishman, said Feb. 6.

The proposed deal follows the pattern set by the city in other union negotiations that provided 10-percent raises over a seven-year period, he said. Members will vote by mail, and the ballots will be counted by the American Arbitration Association on Feb. 24.

Mr. Fishman described his feelings about the contract as "mixed."



Saul Fishman

SAUL FISHMAN: Not thrilled, but members needed money.

A 5-Year Wait

"We're happy to finally have a proposed agreement," he said, "but there were some things we wanted that we didn't get." He added, "Our members need the money. We've been without a contract since February 2010."

Union proposals that went nowhere included city assistance with student-loan debt, which he said can reach \$200,000 per member, and more-aggressive steps to address what he called a "retention crisis" that sees lawyers leaving for better-paying jobs with more reasonable workloads at law firms and other employers.

The union also unsuccessfully sought to waive residency requirements, which are not in effect for attorneys working for the Corporation Counsel, who are mostly non-union, he said.

Gain on Course Leaves

The city did agree to allow CSBA members to take continuing-education legal courses on city time if they are related to an attorney's work, and to cooperate with the union in developing such courses.

It also agreed to changes in increment, or step, payments that would allow lawyers "to stay longer and retire with dignity."