

LOS ANGELES CITY EMPLOYEE RELATIONS BOARD



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Robert R. Bergeson
Executive Director

April 22, 2016

The Honorable Budget and Finance Committee
c/o Erika Pulst, City Clerk's Office
200 North Spring Street
City Hall Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Proposed Employee Relations Board Budget for FY 2016-2017
FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

Dear Committee Members:

The Mayor's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2016-2017 does not reduce the budget for our department. However, it does not include funding for an upgrade in the Board position presently classified as Commission Executive Assistant I (CEA I).

For the edification of your honorable committee, the CEA job family has two pay grades, I and II. It is our understanding that with the successor MOU which has recently been agreed to with Engineers & Architects Association, CEA I will top out at \$77,402 annually with the comparable salary for CEA II being \$94,503. Since I became executive director of the ERB nearly 16 years ago, budgetary documentation has increased dramatically and the current incumbent, Lupe Rodarte, who came to the ERB nearly six years ago, now spends significantly more of her time on accounting and budgetary tasks than her long-time predecessor, Vickie Herrera.

In checking, I can find no other CEA I or CEA II with budget-related responsibilities. That is because in all other departments which employ CEA I's and II's, someone else handles such duties full time. As an example, the department most comparable to ours, the Ethics Commission, had in FY 2013-2014, an Auditor I. Reflective of the aforementioned increased budgetary requirements, that position is now an Auditor II. The new highest annual salary for Auditor II is or will be \$92,498.

For a number of months I have been in contact with the Personnel Department and CAO Employee Relations section concerning my belief that Ms. Rodarte's position is in dire need of an upgrade. Specifically, I believe it that in recognition of its uniqueness, a classification new to the City should be created for the position. So doing would be to emulate Executive Director Employee Relations Board, a classification for which there is only one position. Assuming that occurs, it is my belief the salary range for that new class should top out at somewhere between the highest for Auditor II and CEA II, i.e., somewhere between \$92,498 and \$94,503. It is therefore requested that the Employee Relations Board be allotted an additional \$17,101 to cover that anticipated adjustment to Lupe's salary. Assuming a new class is created, if the salary arrived at is less than \$94,503, we will commit not to use the difference for another purpose and it can be returned to the general fund at the end of 2016-2017.

I wish to add this. Ms. Rodarte has become more and more frustrated with performing these budgetary duties without financial recognition and I am accordingly becoming very concerned she may opt to transfer back to a Principal Clerk position from whence she came. That would be a great loss to the ERB as she is not only diligent but her personality is a great fit for a position in a department like ours which is compelled to frequently deal with irate City employees.

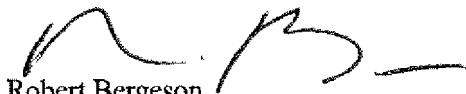
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As the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer is well aware, our department has had considerable difficulty finding qualified individuals to replace those who have left. Among the reasons is that because the Board has a staff of only three, for adequate office coverage we are unable to accommodate the desires of many City employees to work a 9/80 schedule. Thus, if Lupe goes elsewhere because of my inability to get the salary for her position bumped up to an equitable level through what would be an infinitesimally small amount of money for the City, I am going to request that the ERB be authorized a half-time Auditor II to handle budgetary duties. In the absence of authorization of one option or the other, I am highly skeptical of being able to lure a CEA I from another department to fill the position.

Please note that, as mentioned, our department has not had a history of making requests of this nature. However, in my view, upgrading the CEA I position is not only a matter of fairness to the person holding it but absolutely critical to the effective functioning of the Employee Relations Board.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Bergeson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Robert Bergeson
Executive Director

cc: Maritta Aspen
Miguel Santana