

County Administrator

County Administration Building
1025 Escobar Street, 4th Floor
Martinez, California 94553-1229
(925) 655-2075

David J. Twa
County Administrator

Contra Costa County



Board of Supervisors

John M. Gioia
1st District

Candace Andersen
2nd District

Diane Burgis
3rd District

Karen Mitchoff
4th District

Federal D. Glover
5th District

August 28, 2020

COVID 19 Update to Union Leadership

The following information is provided as an update from our virtual meeting of August 27th:

1. Budget Hearings were held on August 4th and completed on August 11th. The budget was adopted with no further layoffs (limited to Library and Child Support revenue reductions), no furloughs, no take-aways, and the previously negotiated July 1, 2020 cost-of-livings adjustments. The final stage in adopting the budget is an action on September 15th to adopt the Budget as Finally Determined. This annual action includes close-out of the prior year, adjustments necessary to balance, carryforwards, etc.
2. We will bring contract renewals to the Board of Supervisors on September 8th with the NonPERS Medical, Dental, Vision, Computer Vision Care Program and Life Insurance Plan carriers, for the period of January 1, 2021 - December 31, 2021. The 2021 projected active employee total premium cost is \$100.5 million (\$95.7 million for current year), the cost to the County is \$85.6 million (\$80.7 million in current year), and the total employee cost is \$14.9 million (\$15.0 million in current year). 2021 County healthcare subsidies increased, and the majority of plans had either a reduction in premium or a relatively small increase; therefore, the majority of employees will see a decrease in their premiums in 2021.
3. Open enrollment for the 2021 healthcare plan year for CalPERS plans will be September 21st through October 16th and NonPERS plan will be October 19th through November 6th.
4. As the year begins to wind down, employees are reminded that they have the ability to update W-4 (Federal) and DE-4 (State) tax withholding forms through Employee Self Service. The new online withholding forms in PeopleSoft enable Contra Costa County employees to update their federal and state tax withholding status online; using a simple intuitive process, optimizing efficiency, as well as significantly reducing the printing and mailing of paper forms, and data entry by administrators. Employees should login to Employee Self-Service to view the changes and access step by step instructions on how to update tax withholdings.
5. We have been asked about deferring certain payroll tax obligations during the period of September 1, 2020, through December 31, 2020, an action which was authorized by a Presidential Executive Memoranda issued August 8th. Eligible employees are those whose wages are less than \$4,000 (or equivalent amount depending on the employer's pay period) per biweekly period. Unfortunately, as of today, the Secretary of the Treasury has not provided employers the necessary guidance to implement the proposed change. Without the Secretary of the Treasury's official guidance, we are unable to provide information at this time on how to respond to employee questions on the matter. We will continue to monitor the situation and look to provide information following a review of the Secretary of the Treasury guidelines when they become available.

6. We have been asked if employees quarantined under our hotel contracts would be reimbursed for meals. They can be reimbursed using the same meal amounts as allowed in Administrative Bulletin 111.
7. We have reviewed the County's position regarding integrating the 64 hours of extra County sick leave during an absence covered by SDI. Employees may integrate the 64 hours of County sick leave.
8. We reviewed the Exposure and the Workplace Guidelines document and discussed the changes from the August 11, 2020 update. We discussed how the processes in the Guidelines should be carried out at the worksites and the Labor Partners provided valuable feedback. The County will continue to solicit feedback from its Labor Partners for future updates to the Guidelines.
9. We discussed the County's plans to provide a remote training on the Exposure and the Workplace Guidelines document. We anticipate that this training will be available in September. This training will be an important step in ensuring that all staff have a thorough understanding of the County's policies and protocols related to workplace safety in the wake of the pandemic. After receiving input from our Labor Partners, the County plans on notifying all staff that they are expected to receive this training. We are strongly recommending that Department Heads encourage all employees to take the training and mandating that all supervisors take the training.
10. We continue to work on the Remote Work Policy and expect to distribute to our labor partners for input in early September. Meanwhile, with most schools in session, we are restating our message to Department Heads regarding remote work/non-traditional work hours for childcare.
11. During recent fires and continuing through fire season, Public Works has been directed to transition HVAC systems in County facilities to "recirculate" to mitigate potential smoke exposure. We understand that some employees have questions about closing County facilities due to the heavy smoke from the fires and how that relates to the provisions of Administrative Bulletin No. 316.1. Please find direction from our office provided to Department Heads below:
 - If work locations remain open, but some employees choose to stay home from work or leave work early because they are personally uncomfortable or have an underlying medical condition that is exacerbated by the poor air quality, they should be allowed to leave and are required to use their accruals (including sick leave) to cover the absence.
 - If a department chooses to close a County facility due to staffing shortages or the building becomes unsafe, the department should endeavor to provide an alternative work location for the employees to report to for the duration of the closure. Employees unable to work at alternative work locations must use their accruals (including sick leave).
 - If a department determines that a particular County building is unsafe and is unable to provide an alternative work location, employees should be released and shall be paid on County time for their full shift.
12. The only County facility closures that have taken place recently are within the County library system and due to increased Air Quality Index (AQI). Most locations were open at some point during the day during that time frame but closed when the AQI reached unhealthy levels. We continue to monitor facility closures on a day to day basis.

13. We have authorized Public Works to procure 9,800 additional N95 respirator masks immediately to have on hand for our employees working outdoors and outside of office settings, if needed. To not disrupt our N95 reserves for COVID-19 response, and to the extent that we have unused masks from the 9,800 unit procurement, those masks would be added to our COVID-19 N95 mask reserve. Many departments have a cache of N95 respirator masks; however, Cal/OSHA regulations implemented last year proscribe the usage by employees on a day to day basis during wildfire smoke events.
14. To ensure that Measure X moves forward to the November 3, 2020 General Election ballot, on August 21, the Board of Supervisors held a Special Meeting and adopted an urgency ordinance amending the effective date of the ordinance establishing a general Countywide 0.5% sales tax. This will result in Measure X being listed on the ballot regardless of the final disposition of SB 1349; however, SB 1349 must still pass through the Legislature by August 31st and be enacted to be able to collect the sales tax if Measure X is successful in November. If SB 1349 does not pass through the Legislature by August 31st or is not enacted and Measure X is successful in November, then the sales tax cannot be collected.

The next conference call is scheduled for Thursday, September 10th at 10:00 with David Sanford, Labor Relations Manager and Karen Caoile, Director of Risk Management to continue to specifically address concerns regarding facility safety and noticing. Thank you for all you do, and for continuing to work with us to support our employees and our community through these challenging times.

Sincerely,



David J. Twa,
County Administrator