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On June 28, in mediation, negotiators for Orange and O.M.E.B.A., OPEIU Local 32 reached an agreement that could enable 11 of the 22 non-fire and non-police employees laid off in January to return to their jobs.

Under the agreement, the union agreed to givebacks of \$600,000. The agreement also provides no cost of living increase for union members from July 1, 2008 through June 31, 2011. To become effective,

the agreement must be ratified by the union's membership on June 30th and by the City Council this Tuesday, July 5th.

If ratified, four full time Public Works laborers would return to work on July 11th and three additional on August 8th. They would be returned in the order of seniority. Two full-time Court Aides would return on July 11th with an additional two returning on August 8th, also in the order

of seniority.

Union members would receive a salary increase of 2% effective July 1, 2011 and a second increase of 2% on July 1, 2012.

The agreement provides that union members would take four unpaid furlough days in 2011 and an additional four in 2012. To reduce overtime costs, flexible scheduling would be implemented. Also, through the end of 2012, employees who work overtime would

receive compensatory time off instead of payment.

Finally, the duties of crossing guards would be increased to provide the writing of parking tickets.

"This agreement is a breakthrough for the people of Orange and for our union members. I very much hope that it will be ratified by the union tomorrow and by the City Council on Tuesday," said Mayor Eldridge Hawkins, Jr. "It hurt the people of Orange when

state aid cuts forced us to layoff police officers, firefighters, and other municipal employees. It feels good to have welcomed back our firefighters in March, five laid off police officers in May, and to know that we now have the chance to rehire half of our laid off public works and court employees. I want to thank our city negotiators and the union negotiators for persevering in difficult negotiations until this agreement was reached."