

GUILD LEADER

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Guild offers to trade pay rollback for job protections

A.H. Belo imposes new benefit cuts

The Guild today offered to trade a one-year rollback of this year's 2 percent wage increase for a no-layoff guarantee, a one year contract extension and additional personal days.

The proposal also called for the company to make the Pension Transition Supplement (PTS) by April 30, and to secure future year's payments with a lien against real property.

In making the proposal the Guild emphasized that any change in the current contract would have to be ratified by Guild members.

However, the company started the meeting by delivering a letter from A.H. Belo (which is being sent to members as well) confirming its announced intention to postpone the 2008 PTS payment until Oct. 15 and that the 2009 payment would be pushed back a year and paid in 2011. This means that an employee who leaves the company during 2010 will forfeit the payment they would have otherwise received.

The Guild believes that A.H. Belo's move is illegal and a violation of the contract.

The Guild informed the company it was prepared to take all legal steps necessary to compel payment of the PTS money in accordance with the contract.

The Guild proposal regarding the pay reductions was in response to a request that the Guild agree to the "voluntary" 2.5 percent reduction imposed on non-union employees throughout the A.H. Belo Company. The Guild

proposal was guided by the responses to a membership survey that was answered by over 60 percent of the membership.

Company representatives said the corporation has asked for a "voluntary" wage cut from the Guild, but that there was no threat of layoffs if the union did not agree.

Company officials said they would review the Guild's proposal and respond at a later date. They pointed out that A.H. Belo's intention was simply to seek a voluntary 2.5 percent wage cut and not to engage in negotiations.

In March the company informed the Guild that it planned to delay the PTS payment, which had been due on March 30. The Guild Executive Committee agreed to a 30-day extension of the payment deadline and said any additional extensions would require a membership vote.

Reception for recently laid off colleagues

The Guild will hold a reception Friday April 17 for employees laid off last month. The event will be at Blake's Tavern at Washington and Mathewson streets beginning at 5 p.m.