

October 13, 2008
2:30 PM

Several months ago, the District and Superior Courts, the Prosecutor's Office, and the Sheriff's Office were told to expect an 8.6% budget cut for 2009. A few weeks later, this budget reduction was raised to 11.4%

One week ago, without any prior discussion or consultation, Executive Ron Sims notified all King County employees via email that his budget was still \$15 million out of balance. Executive Sims now proposes to make up this shortfall in two ways, neither of which is acceptable.

Union employees covered under collective bargaining contracts have the right to receive a 5.5% cost of living (COLA) increase, and now, for the first time in recent history, non-union employees will be treated differently and will get only a 3% COLA and receive no merit pay or step increases. In the past, both union and non-union employees were treated the same.

Executive Sims' proposal turns long-standing county labor policy on its head. His proposed budget now pits one group of employees against another, which is regrettable, unfortunate, and unfair.

The second way the Executive proposes to fund the budget deficit is also unacceptable. Under the County Charter, the County Executive negotiates the wage portion of all union contracts. He has negotiated COLA increases which equal 5.5% for 2009. Given the commitment in labor contracts that Executive Sims negotiated and signed, we now learn he plans to fund those same COLA increases at only 3%. While he hopes that he can recover this differential in some way, the employees covered under those contracts are not required to give any portion of their wages back to King County. So, at the end of the day, the Executive's proposal to not provide sufficient funds to honor the labor contracts he negotiated results in an additional 11th hour reduction to each of our budgets.

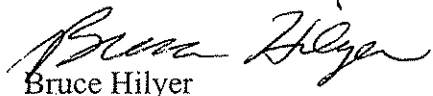
Since the Executive negotiated these contracts and obligated King County to pay the set amounts, including COLA, we do not believe his budget is a "balanced budget."

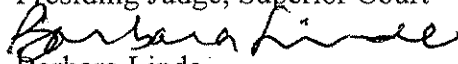
In short:

- Criminal justice agencies are already taking an 11.4% budget cut in 2009;
- Union employees are now pitted against non-union employees because of the fundamental unfairness in Executive Sims' proposal;
- Executive Sims has provided insufficient funds to honor the labor agreements that his office negotiated, thereby resulting in an additional, hidden cut to the budget of each criminal justice agency.


Sue Rahr
Sheriff


Dan Satterberg
King County Prosecutor


Bruce Hilyer
Presiding Judge, Superior Court


Barbara Linde
Presiding Judge, District Court