

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CITY EMPLOYEES

An Affiliate of the National Association of Government Employees, SEIU



PACE Presentation

Atlanta City Council
May 6, 2022

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PACE Overview & Disclaimer



PACE was birthed in the year 2005 and is affiliated with NAGE (National Association of Government Employees). We are a diverse group of employees who have joined forces in membership as a union to seek the well being and protection of their tenure while working within the City of Atlanta. The central idea of **PACE** is to build City employment relationships between our members, The Administration, City Council, Human Resources, and Labor/Management for the better, and not for worse. **PACE** is one of many resources for the City of Atlanta to encourage City employees to abide by the fair and reasonable expectations of their employment. It is only when unfair labor practices, unspoken or spoken expectations, workplace bullying, harassment, intimidations, threats, whistleblowing, and unsettled disputes arise, that **PACE** becomes involved, to negotiate settlements of disputes before they escalate to terminations, lawsuits, and arduous legal litigation.

We receive and listen to evidence provided by our members of what they perceive to be unlawful employment actions, unfair labor treatment, and unethical practices.

City employees often feel they have no recourse for their claims to be properly vetted and secured. Employees believe that if they report any unlawful activity or mistreatment asserted on them from their management, it will result in the demise of their job, even if their assertions were proven true. That is why **PACE** exists...To be their **VOICE only!**

E911 Communications



- ▶ Restructure Current Leadership Tier
- ▶ Low Morale – High Turnover
- ▶ Quarterly Labor/Management meetings with E911 Executive Leadership Team
- ▶ Legislation to be approved and passed for E911 Dispatchers and Call Takers to be considered “First Responders”
- ▶ **Currently:** PACE has been working diligently with Department of Human Resources, Commissioner Norman and his staff in finding solutions in the best ways possible to resolve the issues surrounding complaints and concerns from its employees. We have formulated working sessions (meetings) to find ways to accommodate the needs of the center while focusing on the morale of its employees that provide the services to the citizens. PACE is requesting for Council to complete the legislative piece needed to recognize those employees as “First Responders.”

E911 Communications are the first line of the City's defense

This is not what we do



This is what we do



**Help us get the recognition we deserve...
Classify and Legislate us as First Responders!**

Department of Human Resources



- **Sick Leave Policy 114-416 – requesting re-vamp for clarity**
- *Under the following circumstances, a medical certificate executed by a licensed physician or chiropractor may be required by the employee's office director or department head in order to substantiate a request for sick leave:*
- *Any period of absence due to illness consisting of three or more consecutive working days, except that the fire chief shall adopt a policy requiring a doctor or chiropractor certificate in the department of fire. The policy shall be consistent with the intent of this article.*
- *Any employee who is absent from work due to illness for a period of five or more consecutive days shall, prior to being allowed to return to work, obtain a medical certificate executed by a licensed physician or chiropractor.*

Unclassified Employees

“The History”



- In 1996, when Zell Miller was Governor, the state of Georgia instituted legislation creating an "unclassified" workforce that were exempt from Civil Service rights. Many municipalities and Cities, including the City of Atlanta, followed this example. This "unclassified" workforce was supposed to be confidential employees, high level managers with the power to hire and fire, and political appointees. That was always the intention. And that was how Grades 19 and above became "unclassified." However, there have been no major changes in this grading/classification status in almost 30 years. So, as a result of pay increases and Cost of Living Adjustments, we have seen salary hikes that have caused front line supervisors to be bumped into that "unclassified" workforce and have their Civil Service appeal rights taken away. Some unclassified are considered Exempt with no opportunity to receive overtime because they are salaried, while others are unclassified but can receive overtime pay pending on their job duties, not their classification.
- This needs to be changed as soon as possible.

Unclassified Employees

“The Issue”



- ▶ Unclassified employees who stay long enough to be vested should have the ability for a rebuttal session with DHR/Labor Relations before separations to offset wrongful terminations.
- ▶ Some employees have been moved from being classified to unclassified without their knowledge or consent (job duties not changed nor job titles) and have been separated not for misdeeds or actions done wrong, but for personal reasons by supervisors/management.
- ▶ Unclassified employees throughout the city are constantly threatened that they are unclassified employees, and should they report any questionable actions of others and or complain of pertinent issues they would be walked out the door. (PACE has seen this happen even recently with our E-board Officers).
- ▶ **Suggestion:** Once unclassified employees becomes vested with the city, they should be allowed to have rebuttal sessions through DHR\Labor Relations before terminations and have the right to accept or not accept the change, with the ability to remain at their current function even if they choose to not accept the pay increase.
- ▶ **Currently,** PACE is working with Department of Human Resources on this issue, and we are collaboratively discussing how the City can fulfill this request with or without legislation, however, we would like a dialogue with the Mayor and City Council about reexamining who is classified and who is unclassified so that we can establish appeal rights for employees who should have never had those rights taken away.

Civil Service Hearings

Code of Ordinance 114-550



- (1) *Notice of hearing.* The hearing shall be held within 60 days after receipt of the notice of appeal by the commissioner of human resources....
- Currently, CSB hearings have been extremely behind almost two years or more.
- At times it has been noted that hearing officers are unable to attend. Which also causes delays in CSB hearings.
- **Suggestion:** Labor Relations and its EEOC staff should conduct pre-hearings to see if some of the cases can be resolved without having CSB hearings. If not, then it moves forward to the CSB. This will help eliminate some of the backlog. Pace is willing to mediate with Labor Relations beforehand.
- **Currently:** Councilperson Lilliana Bakhtiari has presented legislation on this issue and PACE is pleased to know this issue is going to be resolved. We do suggest that an amendment be placed back into legislation to say if the CSB hearing is dropped, then the employee should be made hold by restoring their job and back pay for time lost. PACE requested this on May 8, 2019 – Thank you Councilperson Lilliana for bringing this issue forward)

PACE Requests for FY2023/2024



- Cost of Living Salary Increase of 2% for all city employees.
- No increase of health benefit costs to employees and the City will absorb the health benefit costs for all employees for retention and recruitment strategy during the years of FY2023 and FY2024.
- Extension of premium pay (\$500 monthly = average to \$3.12 per hour) supplement through full fiscal year (FY23) for mission critical staff to now include essential staff who have returned to work but now on hybrid schedules.
- The Administration and Council to review any updates from the Federal Agency of this funding to find any new laws and updates since the onset that will allow the City flexibility in continuing to provide these funds to its essential employees while converting it into a permanent salary increase of \$3.12 per hour for employees who makes \$15.00 per hour.
- With that permanent increase there will need to be a Pay in Class study for all classifications to align with employees' current duties (due to pandemic, some staff took on additional duties) and to minimize any salary compression from that increase.
- As a part of the new payroll system, employees should have a choice to opt in or out of weekly pay versus bi-weekly.

PACE Requests for FY2023/2024 (cont'd)



- ▶ Employee Garden Growth Project (DPW to pilot) aligning with the neighborhood growth projects. (city employees will assist the neighborhoods by participating in their growth projects).
- ▶ Child Care partnering for city discounts to employees to offset hardships.
- ▶ Incremental Retention Bonuses: every 5 years up to retirement.

(This is a retention bonus and must not be construed as salary increase for raises given)

Open forum and dialogue for City of Atlanta employees

Every Tuesday from 1:00 – 2:00PM

- <https://youtu.be/Vw76rU-v26U>
- blogtalkradio.com/radiconnections
- [Home | PACE ATLANTA \(wixsite.com\)](http://www.wixsite.com/paceatlanta)



Kudos to the Following Leadership



- Mayor Andre Dickens and his Administration for his employee commitments to ensure our employees are made whole, safe, and equitable, by engaging with PACE to find resolves to employee issues and pay.
- Department of Human Resources Commissioner Jeff Norman and his team to whom PACE constantly call upon, on daily basis, to get answers and collaborates with us during many working sessions for resolves.
- Department of Public Works Commissioner Al Wiggins and his team for their continuous efforts of collaboration with PACE by having bi-weekly scheduled meetings to discuss employee positive engagements for sanitation and fleet enhancements.
- Department of Watershed Management Commissioner Mikita Browning and HR Director Jennifer Hicks for their quick responding time to PACE questions, meetings, and getting issues resolved.
- ATL311 Call Center Commissioner Myesha Good for her continued acceptance of PACE stepping in to assist with surveys in suggesting ways to improve her center by way of employee engagement.
- And special “shout outs” to DHR Deputy Commissioner Danielle Nichols, Deputy Division Chief Candace Kollis, Labor Relations Director Tamika Spirling-Brooks, E911 HR Director Patrick Pendleton, and HR Director Paula Magee for their extended support in listening to our employee voices through PACE.



THANK YOU



On behalf of our membership and colleagues we would like to thank you all for your Partnership with PACE and allowing us this opportunity to make our presentation.

In Solidarity,

Gina Pagnotta Murphy

PACE President

NAGE National Vice President Local R5-50



Questions?