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 ([Examiner file photo](#))

 [SEIUGRAPHIC_NEW0605.jpg](#) Redwood City, which faces a \$2.6 million deficit, has convinced five of six employee labor groups to accept cutbacks in benefits and pensions, but one group is holding out.

Service Employees International Union has yet to agree to cuts that would reduce what the city spends on its employees by 7 percent.

Click the picture to see a chart of the Redwood City employee cutbacks.

“We’re willing to give up so much, but it’s a give and take situation,” said Rich Delvin, chair of SEIU Chapter 521, which represents roughly 265 of the city’s lowest-paid workers, including librarians, park personnel, customer service employees, meter readers, recycled water technicians, secretaries and water, sewer, storm and street maintenance workers.

The proposed cuts follow layoffs and periodic salary freezes, said Delvin, a utilities specialist in the Parks Department who has worked for the city for 44 years.

“This is the worst that it’s been in all those years,” he said.

Delvin also complained that the cuts come at a time when the city is considering spending \$6 million on purchasing the Docktown Marina, and sitting on reserves worth \$17.6 million.

“The city has reserves close to 21 percent,” Delvin said. “Why can’t they use part of that and part we give concessions?”

City spokesman Malcolm Smith said using reserves would leave the city no better off in the long run.

“Those reserves are really being held for an extreme circumstance where they are critically necessary to maintain basic city services,” Smith said. “Using reserves on a one- or two-time basis isn’t going to give us a long-term structural change for the future that will put us on secure financial footing.”

Smith said “structural changes” to employee compensation include reducing city

contribution to pensions and medical premiums while increasing employee contributions, as well as shifting pension benefits and retirement ages for new employees.

The first labor group to strike a deal with the city was the Redwood City Police Officers Association on March 21.

“We felt that it was time for us to step up and help the city reach their goals,” association President Mike Reynolds said.

Although their contract ran through 2012, the city’s 74 police officers unanimously supported tweaking the agreement.

“Another reason we made contract concessions this time is because we don’t want to ever see one of our officers walk out the door and be laid off,” Reynolds said.

“I have a huge amount of respect for the SEIU; there’s no animosity,” Reynolds added. “We’re all in a difficult situation.”

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