

**COUNTY OF ERIE**

**STEFAN I. MYCHAJLIW**

**ERIE COUNTY COMPTROLLER**

PRESS RELEASE

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**Cost of Proposed CSEA Contract Calculated**

*Taxpayers will shell out an estimated $21 million over the life of the proposed contract*

(Buffalo) – Erie County Comptroller Stefan I. Mychajliw provided the public with an estimate of how much the tentative contract agreement between Erie County and its largest union, the Civil Service Employee’s Association (CSEA), will cost taxpayers. The proposed contract would represent an estimated net cost of $21 million over the next five years. Workers will receive a total of 11.5% raises over a five-year period:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Years** | Salary Increase % | **Years** | Salary Increase % | |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 2007-2012 | 0% | 1/1/16 | 1.5% |  |
| 1/1/13 | 1% | 7/1/16 | 1% |  |
| 7/1/13 | 1.5% | 1/1/17 | 1.5% |  |
| 1/1/14 | 2% | 7/1/17 | 1% |  |
| 1/1/15 | 2% |  |  |  |

“Taxpayers now have an estimate of how much this proposed contract would cost them. I am also pleased to see the massage and acupuncture benefit has been removed. My office conducted a review of this perk and found taxpayers shelled out $1.4 million for this benefit over the past four years. It is a luxury not found in the private sector. Our hard working taxpayers should not pay for this perk,” added Comptroller Mychajliw.

CSEA Contract Proposals:

* Raises for workers, many of whom have not had an increase in pay since 2006
* Estimated cost of $21 million over five years
* Elimination of massage and acupuncture benefit
* Current workers to pay 7.5% of health care premiums starting in 2017
* Future workers to immediately pay 15% of health care premiums and be placed in “Value Plan”
* All employees to lose “Election Day” as a paid holiday
* Elimination of “Summer Hours” beginning January 1st, 2013
* Converts workers from the “Core Plan” to the less expensive “Value Plan”
* Potential increase of workers who may retire by July 2014 in order to keep receiving health care for life

“We could see an increase in workers retiring rather than giving up free health care for life. Erie County should be pro-active in being prepared for the possibility of having a large number of retirements,” added Comptroller Mychajliw.

Paying 7.5% of health care premiums appears lower than what other public and private sector employees pay for health care premiums. On average, private sector employees contribute 25% and public employees contribute 15% of their health care premiums.

Source: Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, “CADILLAC COVERAGE: The High Cost of Public Employee Health Benefits, No. 65, July 2011

The proposed contract will impact the salaries and benefits for 2,400 county workers and 300 Erie Community College and Buffalo and Erie County Public Library workers. It must first be approved by “rank and file” members and then be approved by the Erie County Legislature. Voting by union members is scheduled to take place May 3rd, 2013.

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