



BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

AB 6952
June 16, 2026
Consent Agenda

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 6952: 2026-2028 AFSCME Collective Bargaining Agreement	☐ Discussion Only ☒ Action Needed: ☒ Motion ☐ Ordinance ☐ Resolution
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Authorize the City Manager to sign the AFSCME Collective Bargaining Agreement for the period of January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2028.	

DEPARTMENT:	Administrative Services
STAFF:	Ali Spietz, Chief of Administration
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a
EXHIBITS:	1. Proposed 2026-2028 AFSCME Collective Bargaining Agreement
CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:	n/a

AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE	\$ n/a
AMOUNT BUDGETED	\$ n/a
APPROPRIATION REQUIRED	\$ n/a

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda item is to authorize the City Manager to sign the Washington State Council of County and City Employees, AFSCME, AFL-CIO, Local #21-M collective bargaining agreement (Exhibit 1) for the period of January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2028.

- The City and AFSCME have negotiated a three-year agreement for 2026-2028.
- Effective January 1, 2026, wage rates for AFSCME employees will include a Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) of 2.3% plus an additional wage increase of 0.4% for 2026 only and a one-time lump sum ratification payment of \$350 per union member.
- 2027 and 2028 wage adjustments remain tied to Seattle/Tacoma/Bellevue CPI-W, maintaining the established 1.5% minimum and 6.0% maximum parameters.
- A new 7-Step pay scale will be implemented that mirrors the structure used for non-represented employees.

BACKGROUND

The AFSCME bargaining unit is comprised of 53 members, working in the departments of Public Works, Community Planning & Development, Parks & Recreation, Administrative Services, and Finance. The City and AFSCME began bargaining in August 2025 and after seven bargaining sessions and additional negotiation by

email, an impasse was reached in January 2026. The parties entered formal mediation on May 26, 2026 and were able to reach a tentative agreement for a new three-year contract (2026-2028).

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

Key changes in the proposed 2026-2028 AFSCME Collective Bargaining Agreement (Exhibit 1) include:

Wage Structure and Compensation

- 2026 wage increase: Wages will be adjusted by a total of 2.7% (2.3% CPI-W plus an additional 0.4%), retroactive to January 1, 2026. In addition, each member will receive \$350 ratification bonus.
- 2027 and 2028 wage adjustments remain tied to Seattle/Tacoma/Bellevue CPI-W, maintaining the established 1.5% minimum and 6.0% maximum parameters.
- Created a 7-Step pay scale that mirrors the structure used for non-represented employees. This structural correction resolves long-standing step percentage inconsistencies (both higher and lower) that persisted for the last 15 years.

Union Rights and Benefits

- Memorialization that the City provides a locked office space for Union use.
- Added 16 hours of annual Union Leave for the Union President, Vice President, and Secretary/Treasurer to use for training.
- Clarifies electronic authorization and revocation procedures for union dues deductions.
- Expands information the City must provide to the Union regarding bargaining unit employees and new hires.

Training and Certifications

- New language that requires the City to pay for certifications required for an employee's position.
- Added process for City review and approval of optional training and certifications.

Seasonal and Temporary Employees

- Clarifies definitions for seasonal, extended seasonal, and temporary employees.
- Establishes that routine overtime must be offered to regular bargaining-unit employees before seasonal or temporary staff.

Overtime and Compensatory Time

- Reorganized and clarified overtime provisions.
- New language defining:
 - Approval of overtime.
 - Routine overtime assignment process.
 - Emergency overtime assignment process.
- Clarifies compensatory time use, accumulation limits, year-end carryover rules, and treatment upon promotion or transfer.

Callback and Telecommuting Response Pay

- Callback language modernized and clarified.
- Adds detailed provisions for:
 - Remote/telecommute response pay for after-hours calls.
 - SCADA call compensation.
 - Callback mileage reimbursement.

On-Call Program

- Weekly on-call compensation increased from \$500 to \$550 per week.

- Voluntary participation incentive increased from \$500 to \$700 annually for qualifying employees (3 or more consecutive years).
- More detailed language governing participation requirements, use of City vehicles, and on-call responsibilities.

Working Conditions

- Added provisions for:
 - Meal periods and compensation for missed meal breaks.
 - Rest periods.
 - Mandatory break periods following extended emergency response work.
 - Pay protections when mandatory rest periods overlap scheduled work hours.

Promotions and Acting Assignments

- Clarifies out-of-class pay for temporary higher-level assignments.
- Promotion language revised to ensure placement at the step closest to a 5% increase, with a minimum 4.5% increase.

Holidays

- Added double time plus holiday pay for New Year's Day, Thanksgiving, Thanksgiving Friday, and Christmas.
- Time-and-one-half plus holiday pay for other holidays.

Sick Leave

- Expanded protected uses of sick leave to include time needed to prepare for or participate in immigration-related judicial or administrative proceedings involving the employee or a family member.
- Sick leave cash-out significantly revised.
 - Employees with 5+ years of service who are eligible to retire may receive 25% of accrued sick leave as cash or 30% deposited into HRA-VEBA (up to \$10,000).
 - Employees with 15+ years of service who resign before retirement eligibility may receive 15% cash or 20% VEBA contribution.
 - Disability or death separation provides a 100% payout of accrued sick leave.
 - Adds annual Union selection of cash vs. VEBA option.

Clothing and Uniforms

- Major change to clothing allowance program: Starting in 2027, City will implement a “quartermaster system” for City-furnished uniforms, coveralls, rain gear, and personal protective equipment and \$400 boot and pant allowance.

NEXT STEPS

Following the tentative agreement reached by the parties during mediation last month, AFSCME bargaining unit employees voted affirmatively to ratify the attached collective bargaining agreement on June 12, 2026. The agreement is now ready to be fully executed.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Authorize the City Manager to sign the AFSCME Collective Bargaining Agreement for the period of January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2028 in substantially the form attached hereto as Exhibit 1.