



Loudoun County, Virginia

www.loudoun.gov

NEWS RELEASE

Office of the County Administrator, Public Affairs and Communications
1 Harrison Street SE, P.O. Box 7000, Leesburg, VA 20177-7000
703-777-0113 • Fax 703-771-5841

For Immediate Release
December 8, 2021

Media Contact: Glen Barbour, Public Affairs and Communications Officer
703-771-5086, Glen.Barbour@loudoun.gov

Loudoun Approves Collective Bargaining Ordinance

During its December 7, 2021, meeting, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors approved a collective bargaining ordinance that is effective immediately. The ordinance establishes the authority for Loudoun County to recognize, bargain with, or enter into a collective bargaining agreement with a labor union or employee association as a bargaining agent for eligible Loudoun County Government employees. The change in the structure of Loudoun County's employer-employee relationship is not expected to alter the county's programs and services used by Loudoun residents.

Collective bargaining is a process by which an employer and a group of employees—typically represented by a certified labor union—negotiate over wages, benefits, and terms and conditions of employment. This arrangement can serve to promote collaborative relationships between the county and its employees and help address a defined set of employment issues in a productive, prescribed manner that benefits both the employees and the county.

“I am immensely proud of the hard work by Board of Supervisors and county staff over the last several months to pass a meaningful collective bargaining ordinance,” said Board of Supervisors Chair Phyllis J. Randall. “As a former line staff county employee, and as Chair, it's been a priority of mine to improve the working conditions for our employees. This ordinance allows Loudoun County employees to choose—or to not choose—to collectively bargain for better wages, benefits, working conditions, and grievance processes. I also appreciate the input from the unions who are seeking to represent the best county staff in the country.”

The county's new ordinance—Chapter 259, Labor Relations—establishes three bargaining units: one for employees of the Combined Fire and Rescue System, a second for labor and trade employees, and a third for general county employees. Bargaining units are comprised of groups of employees who have common interests, such as employees who perform similar work or whose jobs require similar qualifications, skills and training. Approving a defined number of bargaining units promotes efficient and effective negotiations with county leadership, on behalf of the employees, in a manner that minimizes any impacts to the county's established budgeting process and county operations.

The Board also voted to establish an independent contracted labor relations administrator (LRA) who will be responsible for implementing the ordinance and making binding decisions over ordinance-compliance issues. The LRA serves as a formal neutral decision-maker with the authority to make binding decisions as allowed in the ordinance.

Additionally, the Board voted in favor of establishing a process for resolving an impasse: fact-finding on financial issues and binding arbitration for non-financial issues. Fact-finding is a form of arbitration that is not binding on the parties but provides a set of recommendations for

resolving an impasse to the Board of Supervisors for a final decision. Binding arbitration allows an arbitrator to make binding decisions involving non-finance-related working conditions.

Not all county employees are eligible to participate in collective bargaining. The ordinance only applies to offices and departments that report to the County Administrator, who serves at the pleasure of the Board of Supervisors. The ordinance outlines eligible employees as well as those who are ineligible for certain reasons, such as being confidential, managerial, and supervisory employees as defined in the ordinance. In addition, employees of Constitutional Officers—which includes the Offices of the Clerk of the Circuit Court, Commissioner of the Revenue, Commonwealth’s Attorney, Sheriff and Treasurer—and employees of the Library Board of Trustees, are not covered by the Board’s collective bargaining ordinance.

A change in Virginia law that became effective earlier this year enables localities to adopt local ordinances granting authority to engage with a labor union or employee association as a bargaining agent for its employees. In July 2021, the majority of the Board of Supervisors voted to pursue establishing a collective bargaining ordinance in Loudoun County.

More information, including the draft ordinance, which was edited by the Board during the December 7 meeting, is posted online in the [December 7, 2021, collective bargaining staff report](#). The final ordinance text as adopted by the Board will be posted online in the coming weeks.

###