

LETTER OF AGREEMENT
Between
IBEW, Local 483
and
City of Tacoma
Water Division, Department of Public Utilities

Effective Date: _____

Subject: Water Operator in Training

The City of Tacoma, Tacoma Water and IBEW Local 483 Water Unit, hereby enter into this Letter of Agreement (LOA) which shall be attached to the collective bargaining agreement and incorporated as though fully set forth.

Background

Tacoma Water wishes to provide the opportunity for qualified, skilled, and interested employees to receive the necessary training and development, in combination with their existing education and training, to become certified at the Water Treatment Plant Operator (WTPO) Level 2. This will require a significant investment on the part of Tacoma Water, and a significant commitment from any staff member selected for this opportunity.

Agreement

The Parties agree to the following: Successful Water Treatment Plant Operator-in-Training (WOIT) candidates must be capable of meeting the Education and Experience requirements set forth in Chapter 246-292 WAC and associated guidelines developed by the Washington Department of Health, and pass all required Water Treatment Plant Operator examinations to achieve a Level 2 certification in the prescribed timelines.

Candidates selected for this opportunity will be temporarily placed in the Water Treatment Plant Operator-in-Training (WOIT) position and paid at 90% of the Water Treatment Plant Operator (CSC 5112) rate of pay.

Qualified and interested Tacoma Water employees who have graduated the Tacoma Water apprenticeship program will be requested to place their name on an interest list. Individuals will be selected through a competitive process based on identified knowledge, skills, and qualifications. No more than two (2) WOIT's will be in the program at same time.

Selected candidates will be subject to an eighteen (18) month evaluation period, during which regular evaluations and feedback will be provided. Candidates must take and pass all WTPO certification exams as experience builds and is credited toward meeting minimum treatment plant operating experience requirements:

- WTPO Level 1 (within 12 months)
- WTPO Level 2 (within 18 months)

Employees entering the WOIT program with a previously-acquired WTPO Level 1 may be granted up to six (6) months credit toward the eighteen (18) month program based on previous experience at the exclusive determination of the Source Water & Treatment Manager (or designee), and consistent with state regulations.

Note: The Level 2 certification test may be taken prior to completion of the required treatment plant operating experience, resulting in a WTPO-IT Level 2 certification. Following completion of the required plant operating experience at the end of the WOIT program rotation, it is expected that the candidate will apply for an upgrade to the WTPO Level 2 certification.

Appointment to the WOIT program shall be temporary in nature. Consistent with TMC Section 1.24.710, no position will be filled on a temporary basis or any individual employed on a temporary basis beyond 12 months aggregate time in any two-year period, unless approved by the Civil Service Board. In order to accommodate the 18-month program duration requirement, the City will petition the Civil Service Board for such an exception. The Union hereby expresses support for such exceptions within the program as described in this Agreement.

While in the WOIT program, the employee is considered to be on a leave of absence from their permanent position and shall return to the permanent position (i.e. to the supervising desk at the reporting headquarters for that position) at the end of successful completion of the program. While on leave of absence the employee shall continue to accrue seniority in their permanent classification. Employees shall retain the right to bid (consistent with Article 10.2) while in the WOIT program, which shall change the permanent position to which the employee shall return at the end of the program.

While in the WOIT program, the employee may be required to work night shift as part of their training but will not be considered the Operator in Charge. While in the WOIT program, an employee will not be eligible for set-ups, standby, overtime in the section and classification they held prior to beginning the training program. A WOIT may supplement, but shall not supplant, a Water Treatment Plant Operator for staffing purposes.

An employee may withdraw from the WOIT program by providing written notice to their Supervisor, to be effective at the end of the following pay period. Failure to achieve established timelines or to successfully complete periodic reviews will result in separation from the WOIT program. An employee who previously held permanent Civil Service status prior to beginning the training program shall be returned during their training period to a position in that classification, unless separated under TMC Section 1.24.940, Disciplinary Action. In such a case, standard procedures for disciplinary action will be followed, in accordance with applicable municipal code and Collective Bargaining Agreement requirements.

Employees who successfully complete the training program, secure the WTPO Level 2 Certification, and meet the Education and Experience requirements necessary to obtain a temporary WTPO Level 3 certification as set forth in Chapter 246-292 WAC may compete for any vacant position in the Water Treatment Plant Operator classification, per the Civil Service Rules. Applicants will be required to demonstrate the ability to obtain a temporary WTPO Level 3 certification, or higher, at time of application and pass the WTPO Level 3 exam prior to completion of probation in the Water Treatment Plant Operator classification.

If two (2) or more current employees have successfully completed the WOIT training program and are ranked on a citywide Promotional List as described in TMC Sections 1.24.540 and 1.24.600(B), any permanent Water Treatment Plant Operator vacancies shall be filled from the citywide Promotional List. This citywide promotional recruitment will be open to all City employees who meet the classification's minimum qualifications, without regard to prior participation in the WOIT program. If fewer than two (2) current employees have successfully completed the WOIT training program and are ranked on a citywide Promotional List, permanent Water Treatment Plant Operator vacancies may be filled using an Open Competitive List.

Tacoma Water will reimburse 100% of the testing fees for successfully passed WTPO certification exams, as well as the annual fees from the State of Washington for maintenance of the achieved certification.

This LOA will become effective upon signature by the parties hereto and will remain in effect until terminated by mutual agreement of the Union and the City, or unilaterally by either the Union or the City with 90 calendar days' written notice. This LOA shall not establish precedent with respect to this or any other contract for any other division or department of the City, nor for other employees represented by this Union or any other Union.

Signed by:

Alice A. Phillips, Business Manager
IBEW, Local 483

Elizabeth Pauli
City Manager

Jackie Flowers
Tacoma Public Utilities Director

Scott Dewhirst
Tacoma Water Superintendent

Shelby Fritz
Human Resources Director

Approved as to form

Cheryl Comer
Deputy City Attorney