

JACKSON EMPLOYEES PROTEST MULTIPLE LAYOFF NOTICES



In theory layoffs should be a fairly straightforward process. A company decides that it needs to reduce expenses, and that the best way to do that is by putting a portion of their work force out of a job. That company or agency issues WARN notices, or the pink slips themselves, which come replete with a date that will be the employees last day. If severance is being offered the employee has the right to try and negotiate, if it is not then no discussion is needed. The last day comes and the employee is off of the payroll. In the real world however things can be very complicated. We all remember the civil servants in the state of New York who, when the union and state officials could not come to an agreement over the union contract, got layoff notices. After no small amount of negotiation the contract was approved and the workers were able to keep their jobs. While to those of us on the outside a situation like that one has an 'All's well that ends well' feel to it, to the people who are actually experience it the situation can be very tense, as the entirety of your economic future is put into question for long periods of time. That is exactly what is happening to municipal employees in the city of Jackson, New Jersey. In that town 130 workers have received a layoff notice, the rub in this situation is that for a number of them it is not the first time they have gotten a notice from this employer. Workers who are frustrated with the on again, off again nature of their job status took their complains to the townships council. A reporter for the [Asbury Park Press](#) captured the comments of a worker who is identified only as Sherry, "This is the third time I've been on the chopping block. It's exhausting...." "You're giving raises, and you're laying me off. I don't get it." Her words echoed the confusion of many workers caught in a similar situation who wonder exactly how seriously they have to take these notices. Union officials were surprised by the move, according to what Patricia Wood, the president of Local 3304 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees union, told the same reporter. He exact words were, "We were willing to compromise. We were willing to do a lot of things," said Wood. "Then, last week, we got our general notice of layoff." While the union represents only about 45 of the munniciaplities workers it is taking a significant blow from these notices, since about 50% of the workers who are in the union were given layoff notices. The officials for the Township are defending their decision, as a bit of sound fiscal policy. The pointed to changes in the police department and the overall lowering off the salaries of the officers as two non-layoff methods for cutting the budget. At the same time the township is calling the layoff notices a precaution, in case other measures cannot be found to cut down the budget.

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