



April 15, 2020

Joe LaMariana
Executive Director
SBWMA

Hi Joe,

The City Council has not taken a position on this issue and I am speaking for myself. I am writing this afternoon to express my disappointment with recently hearing that eight of SBR's drivers have been furloughed. As you know I have been talking with you about the possibility of this happening since last week. We were talking because I had heard that there would be furloughs of as many as eight of SBR's drivers due to lack of agreement with the SBWMA to compensate for any time that they may have spent performing alternative work activities at the site. I also did some homework and collected my thoughts before I spoke with the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Jay Benton of Hillsborough, yesterday. In that conversation with Jay yesterday it was my understanding that he agreed that this was an important matter that should be discussed by the full board which is meeting next Thursday April 23rd at 2pm. I also inferred from that conversation that the Chairman agreed with me that these drivers should be kept on the payroll until after the Board makes some decision about direction in which to proceed. The Chairman did express concern that there are of course financial implications related to keeping the drivers on payroll. I agree that of course there could be financial implications however I don't believe that the full range of thoughtful and/or creative ideas available to keep the drivers employed has been exhausted.

Let me explore some of the ideas that could make a big difference and would have, if implemented in a timely manner, been able to protect the livelihoods of these workers and the well-being of their families by keeping them employed. Before going any further I think it's really important to mention that the California Employment Development Department (EDD) which is responsible for unemployment insurance is at this time overwhelmed with millions of claims that it doesn't seem to be able to process in a timely manner. Many people are having serious issues with getting their benefits started. I just looked up some status information on our EDD this morning and found some interesting information along the lines of one of my ideas. Specifically "work sharing", I'm going to send you a link to the Labor and Employment Law blog which was published on April 10 which contains information specific to the idea that an employer could cut payroll by up to 20% (by cutting hours or each driver?) and participate in a program with EDD where the workers would receive part of the difference (between their normal pay and the reduced amount) from EDD. This would cost SBR nothing.

Another idea is one that was brought up during the last board meeting regarding the fact that there is increased waste coming from residences while everybody is at home. Joe, you told me last week that residential pick up has increased by 40%. I have to think that lots of people don't actually have room in their containers for all of this additional waste/recyclables. The idea was

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raised by Boardmember Rak that we could situate some debris boxes in certain central locations where people could bring their overflow. I note that you supported this in your comments and I think I also heard support from staff. This would create essential work by removing excess waste and creating jobs for drivers and possibly even personnel located at the box to help the public place materials in the proper container. I do think that this should be for COVID-19 related excess waste only and not as a replacement for BIC. Since this would collect additional tonnage it would be billable and I believe that, if done well, it may not cost SBR anything.

So here are two good alternatives to furloughs. I believe there are more and I simply have not had time to explore in much depth anything else. I believe the first one offers the most potential. In fact both could be done and it could completely solve the problem. I want to share that during our last board meeting the discussion was about what to do if workers experienced COVID-19 and we had a worker shortage and how to avoid that. Right now it's time to have a discussion that would express some support and caring for our very loyal employees who do extremely physical and difficult hard work, day in and day out, where they may experience pain and injury as a result. Certainly they sweat and at times they even bleed as a result of doing their job. Time for a thoughtful response from the SBWMA in providing support to these hard-working people who provide this very essential service.

I am asking that we institute the ideas I have stated above while searching for other thoughtful and creative ideas. We should **bring these workers back to their jobs**. It is my understanding that the manager of SBR has stated there is "**plenty of work for them to do**" but he has not been able to gain approval for the workers to perform these tasks and have SBWMA reimburse SBR for it. I am sure that we have budget reserves which are meant to be used in extraordinary times. Well, these are those times.

Thanks,



Rick Bonilla
Council Member, City of San Mateo

CC: Jay Benton, City of Hillsborough
Davina Hurt, City of Belmont
Adam Rak, City of San Carlos