

# Jersey City gives 3 percent raises to nonunion workers as a measure of appreciation

Published: Friday, December 09, 2011, 10:57 AM Updated: Friday, December 09, 2011, 10:57 AM



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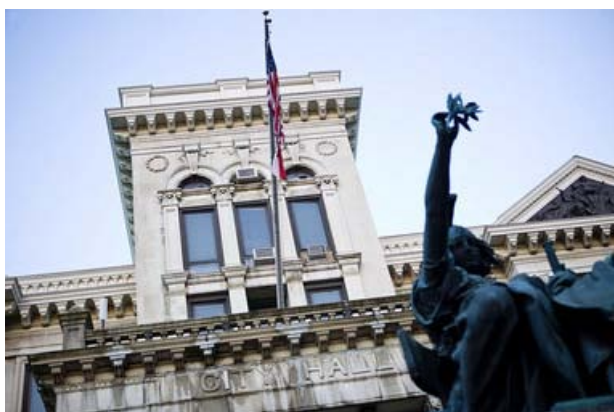
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The City of Jersey City is awarding 170 non-union employees a 3 percent pay raise, the employees' first salary hike in three years.

JERSEY CITY — The City of Jersey City is awarding 170 non-union employees a 3 percent pay raise, the employees' first salary hike in three years.

The total cost of the hike which is retroactive to Jan. 1, 2011 is \$330,000, according to Business Administrator Jack Kelly, who notes that the amount is less than 1/10th of 1 percent of the \$490 million city budget.

But critics of the administration were quick to pounce.

"Giving 3 percent raises and retro pay to the top-tier management of Healy supporters while the rank-and-file were laid off sounds like a holiday movie starring Ebenezer Scrooge," said Downtown Councilman Steven Fulop, a 2013 mayoral candidate. "How many people could we have rehired for that money?"

Chuck Carroll, president of the Jersey City Public Employees Inc. Local 246, also gave the salary-hike plan his thumbs down: "In a word, obscene."

In a Dec. 8 memo to the City Council, Kelly compared the new raises to the pay hikes and benefits awarded to the city's unionized workers in the past three years, saying civilian union members have been awarded nearly \$3.5 million in pay hikes and other financial benefits since 2008.

Mayor Jerramiah Healy, who is permitted to set salaries of non-union management without approval from the City Council, said in a statement that the employees in question have been "called upon to do more with less" in their departments. There have been more than 300 layoffs of city workers this year.

"I felt it was appropriate to acknowledge their hard work and sacrifices over the past several years with a modest increase that is far less than what any of our collective bargaining units have received during the same time frame," Healy said.