Collective bargaining is the process by which unions representing their members negotiate contracts with the City or other employer to determine terms of employment, including pay, benefits, hours, leave, job health and safety policies, and ways to balance work and family. While it sounds simple, it's anything but.

The reality of the process is that Local 1180 has one goal in mind and the City has another — the Union wants to get the most it can for its members, and the City wants to give the least.

There are so many moving parts to the negotiating process that coming to terms on an agreement takes at a minimum several months, and sometimes even years. Just ask those unions that have been out of contract since 2015 and earlier.

"The contract bargaining process can be long and frustrating for our members, who are rightly anxious to receive their raises and back money," said President Gloria Middleton. "We are keeping everyone informed with whatever information we have, but there just isn't that much to report. We have had four meetings so far, and we are making progress with each one. However, we cannot possibly predict a date when we will be finished as there is so much back and forth in order for us to get the best agreement with the most benefits we can for our members."

Collective bargaining is not as simple as one & done.