



See public meetings schedule on these pages and check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

**City of Lafayette:**  
www.lovelafayette.org  
Phone: (925) 284-1968  
**Chamber of Commerce:**  
www.lafayettechamber.org

**SAVE THE DATE!**

A Community-Wide Celebration for All!

**IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE IN LAFAYETTE**

TREE LIGHTING ★ VISIT FROM SANTA  
CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES ★ FOOD & DRINKS  
MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT

Sunday, December 3 | 4:30 - 6:30PM  
Lafayette Plaza at 3530 Plaza Way  
[LafayetteChamber.org/Holiday](http://LafayetteChamber.org/Holiday)

The Dana Green Team has proudly founded and sponsored this loved event since its inception.

## Lafayette teachers' contract ratified with unprecedented solidarity

By Sharon K. Sobotta

Lafayette Teachers may not have gotten the full 14% raise they asked for, or additional health care coverage, but they did get 13, which was a percentage of a concession on the district's part and recognition of all of their years of service as educators, which many of them say, will be a game changer. Teachers and allies in other districts are crediting the unprecedented amount of coalition building and organizing with the strides they made.

California Teachers Association Staff Representative Rosemary Louissaint, who represents teachers in Pittsburgh, Antioch, Clayton Valley Charter, Contra Costa County and John Swett United, was among the supporters. "I've seen this kind of solidarity in other districts before but this was the first time I've seen something like this in Lafayette," Louissaint said

during a solidarity action ahead of the contract being reached. "We know that the teacher shortage is real. We need to pay teachers the best we can so we can support our families and stay in the profession. We don't want our classrooms to be revolving doors. We want people to stay committed. And in order for that to happen, we need to prioritize our students, and to do that we need to prioritize our teachers."

In the end, 13 proved to be the lucky number for settling the one-year contract. On Nov. 8 after the Lafayette Education Association members voted, the year-old contract was ratified. And while no party got everything they asked for, there's a sentiment among teachers of being relieved that an agreement has been reached and happy to have been made "whole-ish" for now. The new agreed upon

contract recognizes the teachers' collective years of service in the profession, which impacts the pay raise schedule for many of them. The teachers union conceded on their wish for more inclusive healthcare coverage and the district raised their offer from 12 to 13%.

Kristi Gingrich, a third- and fourth-grade teacher and the president of the Lafayette Teachers Association, believes strongly that the community support and educator solidarity had a direct impact on meeting the ultimate goal of reaching a contract.

When the contract was settled, Gingrich said she and many of her colleagues felt incredibly relieved. "We're excited to put the negotiation process behind us and move forward. We [teachers] conceded on our +1 healthcare ask, the district gave us an additional 1% in salary. We feel

like our hard work hasn't gone unnoticed. We think having the community and fellow teacher support, and coordinated plans of action and being so organized as teachers for the first time in many years really helped us," Gingrich said. "Being united with teachers in other districts and with the community is what helped us move the needle a little bit towards a fair contract. We needed to work together to have a voice and be fair and be strong."

Lafayette School District Superintendent Brent Stephens says the district is just as excited as the teachers to move forward. "The 13% raise reflects the district's strong commitment to our teachers and staff. We value and recognize our outstanding Lafayette educators and the many contributions they make to our students' education," Stephens said. "Throughout

the bargaining process the district has appreciated our ongoing engagement with the Lafayette Education Association, the voices of all our teachers, and the active participation of the Lafayette community in our public schools."

The negotiation process for next year's contract begins in March. Many may be watching to see if the needle towards a fair contract moves even a little further to add in the missing ingredient of more healthcare coverage. Till then, teachers from across the Bay have made their position clear. They are sticking together.

"We all stick together. We're here to help our brothers and sisters," Bob Carson, the president of the Antioch Teachers Association, said while standing in solidarity with Lafayette teachers at a board meeting.

## Council recognizes longtime LLLCF Executive Director Needel upon retiring

By Lou Fancher

The city council and members of the Lafayette community at the Oct. 23 council meeting honored Beth Needel, Executive Director of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation, upon her retirement. Mayor Carl Anduri thanked Needel for her contributions over the past 10 years, recalling at the time she was hired a Lafayette Vista headline: "Impossibly, Impressively Qualified." Anduri said because it was in the news publication Vista "it had to be true" and it described the skills she brought to Lafayette. "What you brought was a real spirit to get things done, a real understanding of the community and the desire to serve all ages in the community," Anduri said.

The presentation had begun with Needel introducing a short video created for the foundation over the Labor Day weekend in 2022. On the video, a number of people expressed appreciation for the library, highlighting in their comments that "it is teaming with opportunities and offerings accessible to all people," and suggesting "a thriving library is the key to a healthy community" that "provides a sense of belonging to all" and is "a stress reliever."

Rita Iorfida in public comments made in person at the meeting spoke as a founding board member of the library to Needel's reliability and said, "She's always come through for us."

Iorfida was swiftly sec-

onded by Karen Mulvaney, who said Needel brought "exactly what was needed" to the foundation and was "a tremendous team builder." Needel's relationships within the community, Mulvaney said, were exemplary and had "blossomed" while her focus from day one had remained always about the group, the people who came to the library, more than about Needel herself.

LLLCF president Lisa Speigler first met Needel virtually during the pandemic. "Beth was a person who dug deep to bring us back to what the library really offers: a sense of place, a sense of connection; grounding our community at a time when we needed just that. The programs and events that

Beth and her team spearheaded during the pandemic kept the foundation running and thriving." Speigler specifically mentioned the Virtual Night held at the library that at the time was "groundbreaking, creative, thoughtful, and made people feel like a community." Needel, she suggested, was a visionary who brought programs such as the Swell Center that benefits teens, pre-teens and now, seniors.

Suzu Pak was on the Foundation board's hiring committee 10 years ago when Needel was a candidate for the executive director position. She remembered thinking that while Needel would be coming from a leadership position with Oakland Zoo, the library was a

home for people, not animals. She wondered about possible outcomes, then realized animals and people have in common the same need for care, nurturing, and maximum use of resources. Thanking Needel for her contributions that expanded the vision of what the library could be, she said, "You're a great ambassador of Lafayette."

In a phone interview two weeks later, Needel said her departure from the library is timely. "I've been there 10-and-a-half-years and I think every person has just so much excitement and creativity to put toward any job. I thought fresh leadership would do the organization good.

... continued on Page 5

*Wishing* OUR LAMORINDA COMMUNITY  
A WONDERFUL *Holiday Season!*



We are looking forward to 2024 with enthusiasm! Interest rates look to be stabilizing, buyers and sellers' pent-up needs are building. This all spells a very brisk upcoming Spring market.

I look forward to helping you prepare for the

*New Year!*

melanie@melaniesnow.com | melaniesnow.com  
925.360.0344 cell | CAL BRE #00878893

COLDWELL BANKER

Melanie Snow

**BATTERSBY.**



Helping  
Sellers  
& Buyers

**B.**

Proper preparation is crucial for the best price!  
I can be of great assistance in helping you prepare your home for sale. My 20 years experience as a top producer, team of tradespeople and organizational system provide for seamless results.

Ashley Battersby

Broker/Partner  
(925) 323-9955  
DRE# 01407784  
ashley@ashleybattersby.com  
@ashleybattersbyhome

Village  
ASSOCIATES

It's Village. Of Course.