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## PRESS RELEASE

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The County of Cape May Reaches A Collective Bargaining Agreement with AFSCME Local 3596.

Employees with the County of Cape May and Local 3596, AFSCME Council 63 have agreed to an MOA (Memorandum of Agreement) that enforces the county's investment in its staff, including significant pay raises for all employees. The contract was ratified on May 9, 2023 and the new salary rates will be effective this July with retroactive pay being issued in August after many rounds of negotiations by AFSCME Local 3596 President, Mike Stover and his negotiating team with the County of Cape May.

The planning and preparation process was a crucial part of negotiating our contract in good faith. The process started very early on, giving members plenty of opportunity to voice concerns and provide suggestions. Our negotiating team had plenty of time to strategize as a result.

Highlights of the MOA include, bringing starting salaries up to be more competitive in the current job market, increasing all current members to the new minimum plus additional compensation for longevity, compensation for degrees, licenses, and certifications, higher uniform allowances, and 4.5% raise for 2024 and 2025.

"The goal of this contract was to raise starting salaries, establish a fair compensation system, provide extra days off, recognize employees with years of service and provide compensation for college degrees, specialized licenses and certifications to members that have pursued further education," said Local 3596 Vice President Amie Fairman. "We achieved these goals. For the members of our local union, I believe this contract represents a positive step forward."

AFSCME is the largest union in Cape May County Government, representing nearly 700 employees within the County across many departments, including the Park and Zoo, Crest Haven Nursing Home, Facilities and Services, Emergency Management, the Health Department, the Library System and more.