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Doormen Reach a Tentative Agreement With Landlords

By Kim Velsey

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Agreement would provide 11.3 percent raise over four years



This afternoon, the union representing New York City's 30,000 doormen, superintendents, handypersons and porters announced that it had reached a tentative agreement with landlords that would provide for 11.3 percent raises over the next four years and maintain healthcare and retirement benefits.

The agreement, which still needs to be ratified by members, represents a slight increase over the 10 percent raise that the union, 32BJ SEIU

and city landlords agreed to in 2010, bringing doormen's salaries to about \$44,000.

"Today we are proud to say that we have made it a little easier for 30,000 New Yorkers to make this great city their home," 32BJ president Hector Figueroa said in a statement. "In a city that has become increasingly unequal, this contract will keep 30,000 building workers on a pathway to the middle class, which will also benefit the communities in which they live."

Although today's booming real estate market, which stands in stark contrast to the anemic one of four years ago, suggested the potential for an even larger increase, the fact that the agreement was reached more than a week before the old contract was set to expire suggests that both sides were pleased with the deal.

And New Yorkers fortunate to live in a doorman building can breathe a sigh of relief that they won't be forced to contend with unattended lobbies in the event of a strike. The timing of the agreement is also a boon for doormen, landlords and tenants, given that the previous contract was set to expire in the midst of Passover and Easter.

"I'm pleased this means there will be no disruption of service for the people we serve," REBNY president Steven Spinola wrote in a statement. "This agreement should serve as a model for other labor negotiations, the best evidence of a fair and solid agreement is when both sides make concessions, as happened here."

In a city with growing inequality, the doormen's union has become a rare bulwark of the middle class.

The deal will keep members ahead of inflation and the rising cost of living, according to the union, working out to a wage increase of some \$4,972 for doormen over the next four years that will bring salaries to just under \$50,000 in 2018. Though union members' salary is also supplemented via tips and the deal will protect members' pension and health care plans.

"This contract will allow me to pay my bills and get out of debt," said Manhattan doorman Donald Killings in a statement. "The truth is, it's a matter of respect. It makes me feel like I'm really respected on the job. And I won't have to take on another job, as I have in the past."