FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT MARK MAZZAFERRO (707) 649-5462

COUNCIL APPROVES AGREEMENTS WITH PUBLIC SAFETY UNIONS

VALLEJO – The Vallejo City Council on Tuesday night unanimously approved an agreement between the City and its two public safety unions that will save the City some \$1 million this fiscal year.

"This shows the importance of good labor relations between the city and its bargaining units," said City Manager David Martinez. "They came to us with this proposal and we were able to work something out that helps all the parties involved."

Representatives of the City, IAFF and VPOA met and regarding the unions' scheduled salary increases as well as other areas of their current contract and reached a tentative agreement, which the council approved Tuesday night.

This is not the first time the City and its unions have met to fend off a potential fiscal problem. When Martinez first arrived in Vallejo he was faced with a \$1.1 million deficit. Martinez approached the unions about finding a solution that would benefit both the unions and the City. As a result of those negotiations, an agreement was reached, which was one of the factors that helped the City out of a difficult fiscal time.

"I was not surprised when the unions asked to come back and talk to the city about being part of the solution, not part of the problem," said Vallejo Fire Chief Don Parker. "The magnitude of the help was impressive - \$1 million. Other jurisdictions are in huge battles with their public safety labor unions. That's not the case here."

The IAFF and VPOA members agreed to postpone their July 1, 2002 scheduled salary increase of 3 percent until July 1, 2003 without any retroactivity. In exchange for the postponed salary increase, the IAFF and VPOA members will receive an additional 1 percent salary increase in 2005; equal uniform allowance between the two unions; a choice of arbitration or the Civil Service Commission for disciplinary actions; and an extension of current contracts through June 30, 2007.

The City currently has a \$4.2 million General Fund reserve, but is facing increased costs in health care, workers compensation, insurance and other costs. The money saved from this agreement, along with another \$1 million saved by department managers cutting their non-personnel costs by 7 percent will create a \$2 million fund for economic uncertainties.

"I agree with David," Parker said. "It points to the importance of good labor relations, but it didn't just start with this crisis. When David first came to Vallejo the City was bound to a high pay raise coming to firefighters because of deferred raises in the past. Had an unusual formula – average of 14 cities plus 10 percent. At that time David asked them to come in and open negotiations to see what could be done to help city out of tough situation. As a result of those negotiations, the firefighters agreed to a 6 percent raise and to eliminate the 10 percent provision in the salary formula. That clearly illustrated his ability to enlist the public safety unions assistance in helping the city out. Since then he and the unions have maintained an excellent relationship. Based on that,