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Doormen in the money: 32BJ gets new contract

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An labor agreement has been reached between 32BJ SEIU and the real estate industry that will keep doormen and other building workers on the job, and in the money, through 2018.

If doormen around town seem happier than usual this afternoon, it's not just because it's Friday.

A tentative agreement has been reached between the Realty Advisory Board and union Local 32BJ SEIU on a labor contract that will keep paying New York's 30,000 residential building service workers the highest salaries for such jobs nationwide. The new four-year pact includes an average annual wage increase of 2.71% or approximately 11.3% over the length of the contract. That boost will take the average doorman's salary to \$49,402 from \$44,389 and continue a wide array of benefits like a defined-benefit pension fund and 401(k) annuities.

"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."

The negotiations came to fruition more than a week before the existing contract's April 20 expiration. A statement from RAB referred to the early agreement as "unprecedented" and pointed to the importance of timely contract settlements for "one of the most heavily unionized job sectors in the city."

Friday's announced agreement must be ratified by votes from 32BJ members and the full RAB board. Members of the 32BJ bargaining committee said in a statement that they plan to vote for ratification and are encouraging other members to follow suit.

If ratified, the contract would continue a string of on-time agreements between the two parties, which have generally avoided public labor strife for decades. The last time 32BJ workers in the city went on strike was 1991.