



Professional Employees Association, Inc.

PROFESSIONAL VIEW

PEA'S NEWSLETTER FOR APRIL-JUNE, 2006

www.peaonline.org

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Submitted by David Peterson, President

The General Memberships will be on June 7, 2006. It's a great opportunity to network with other PEA members and find out the latest news on what's happening with our union. The meal is free and the food is delicious, and all attendees will receive a door prize. It's a deal you can't refuse!

An addendum (memorandum of understanding, or MOU) to the City-PEA Bargaining Agreement has been posted to the PEA website under the "links" at www.peaonline.org. The addendum clarifies that certain disputes on disciplinary actions may be addressed under the Civil Service procedures or under the grievance policy of the union contract.

(P.S. Thanks to John Larson for organizing and maintaining the website information.)

The Executive Committee has continued its schedule of monthly Tuesday night meetings at the union office. The agenda is dominated by committee reports, city or school district negotiation topics, and the Business Agent/Legal Council Report on current grievances and other issues.

Some of the other current activities and discussion:

Review of the school district contract negotiation status (with a weekly schedule of district negotiation team meetings);

Accepted and discussed the 2005 audit report;

A change in office location at 360 North Robert Street from room 424 to 300. (Moving of course involved a number of issues; including room selection, packing, unpacking, paint selection, carpet selection, key exchange, mailing address change, and temporary disconnection of the office phone answering machine. Thanks again to the Board members who contributed personal time to as part of the moving process.);

Drafting the proposed bylaw change to lower dues and to increase the allowable fund balance;

Further amendments (for record retention and backup) to the five-page Executive Committee job duty listing;

A report on Mike Wilde's attendance of Mayor Coleman's budget address to union representatives;

Discussed a request for donation to the School District levy drive (referred to the General Membership meeting);

Noted that James Lombardi has been appointed as alternative to the Civil Service Commission;

Set the agenda for the General Membership meeting; and tabled additional newsletter improvement discussion.

The Executive Committee and Stewards have continued to be very involved and active. I would like to again thank PEA members for their support.

PEA Calendar of Events

2006

June 7th	General Membership Meeting Joseph's Grill – 5:30 PM
September 5th	Combined Steward-Executive Committee Meeting Joseph's Grill – 5:30 PM
December 6th	General Membership Meeting (with elections) Mancini's – 5:30 PM

Ongoing

The Executive Committee generally meets the first Tuesday of the month at the union office at 5:30
Exceptions: July will be 7/11/05 and November will be 11/14/05.

Change in PEA's Banking Facilities Complete

All of PEA's bank accounts have been transferred from TCF to the City and County Employee's Credit Union. A money market account, checking account, and three certificates of deposits (CDs) have been set up at the City and County Employees Credit Union. The Executive Board voted to change PEA's banking facilities to the City and County Employee's Credit Union at the February 1, 2005 Executive Board meeting. Three CDs at TCF were transferred to the Credit Union when they expired. We now have a local, employee-friendly banking facility that provides friendly and great customer service.

Rhonda Gillquist, Treasurer

A Ton of Money by David Peterson

Have you ever wished you had "a ton of money"?

A ton is 2,000 pounds, and there are 454 grams in a pound.

A dollar bill weighs about one gram. Therefore, \$908,000 in dollar bills is a ton of money.

However, a quarter weighs 5.7 grams. Therefore, it only takes \$40,000 in quarters to have a ton of money.

But, a penny weighs 7.5 grams. Consequently, it takes \$3,632 in pennies to have a ton of money.

Depending upon how you look at it, most of us have more than a ton of money to spend in a lifetime!

Proposed Bylaw Change

The current PEA bylaws are on the PEA website at www.peaonline.org.

The proposed changes to be discussed at the June General Membership meeting are to:

1) Lower regular membership dues to \$16.00 per month and to lower part-time membership dues (twenty hours or less per week) to \$8.00 per month, and

Also, to lower non-member fair share assessment to \$13.60 per month, and lower part-time non-member fair share assessment (twenty hours or less per week) to \$6.80 per month; and

2) Increase the maximum allowable fund balance to \$150,000 in a twelve month period, and increase the overall maximum allowable fund balance to \$200,000 at any time.

Deferred Compensation Match

I've had some questions about the Deferred Compensation Match, Article 24 in the collective bargaining agreement. Effective January 1, 2006, the City will match a \$100.00 employee contribution to Deferred Compensation. Employees must have been employed and been a member of the bargaining unit for at least one calendar year, must be on the payroll as of the date of the City's match, and must make their \$100 contribution to Deferred Compensation by December 31, 2006. The City's match will be paid by April 1, 2007. If you have any questions, please e-mail or call.

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Court of Appeals Decision on health insurance From Mike Wilde

The West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan School District acted illegally when it unilaterally reduced teachers' health insurance benefits without bargaining with the local teachers union, a Minnesota Court of Appeals panel has ruled.

In the ruling that will likely impact all Minnesota school districts and public sector employment in general, the Appeals Court affirmed a 2004 ruling from Dakota County District Court, which ordered the West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan school district to pay its teachers union damages that amount to almost \$300,000.

The Court ruled that, because the district illegally reduced the value of teachers' health insurance benefits, the union should be paid the amount the district saved when it suddenly increased teachers' out-of-pocket costs on one of two health insurance plans it offers.

There are two very important aspects to this ruling. First, the court ruled, for the first time, that non-monetary aspects of a health care plan have value and therefore cannot be unilaterally changed by a public employer. In this case, the district argued that the value of the health care plan was not diminished because it simply changed the provider network. The court disagreed and held that reducing the provider network reduced the benefit to the employees and therefore was illegal without the union's consent. The court stated that the term "'benefit' is not limited to tangible, monetary benefits, but also includes non-monetary benefits that promote or enhance well-being, or constitute an advantage." This portion of the opinion will have broad ramifications for the health insurance arena.

The second large issue is that the court upheld the damages award in the case. The employer had argued that the amount of damages should be limited to the extra out of pocket expenses paid by those due to the change. It was counter argued that minuscule amount would actually reward the employer for its illegal conduct. The court upheld and affirmed the award granting the union the amount of money that the district saved in making the illegal change. The award is sufficiently high that it will send a signal to public employers to refrain from this conduct in the future.

As a result of this case, any change that a public entity makes to a health care plan, without the consent of the unions, should be considered potentially illegal.

General Membership Meeting Agenda

Time & Place:

PEA's general membership meeting will be held Wednesday, June 7, 2006, at Joseph's Grill, 140 South Wabasha in Saint Paul.

Attendees will receive a door prize.

5:30 social time

6:00 sharp – dinner

6:30 meeting

Agenda:

1. Introduction of stewards and executive committee members in attendance
2. Adoption of minutes from the December 7, 2005 General Membership meeting
3. Business Agent/Legal Counsel Update: Mike Wilde (includes City contract grievance MOU)
4. Committee reports:
 - a. President
 - b. Vice President
 - c. Treasurer
 - d. Personnel
 - e. Negotiations (City)
 - f. Negotiations (School District)
5. 2005 Member of the Year Award
6. Vote on \$500 Donation to "Committee for Schools" school district referendum effort
7. Bylaw vote to reduce monthly dues and raise allowable fund balance
8. Old Business
9. New Business
10. Adjourn

Reservations Requested

RSVP to Kay Wittgenstein at 651-266-1285 or kay.wittgenstein@co.ramsey.mn.us

on or before **June 1, 2006**.

Please give your name, department, and dinner choice (chicken, steak, or fish). If you have special dietary needs please let Kay know when making your reservation.

Note:

Only regular members may vote and participate fully in the Association. If you are a "fare share" individual, please consider becoming a regular member today so you can become an active participant in your union.

2006 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT	DAVID PETERSON	SCHOOLS - 360 Colborne, 55102	696-9626
VICE PRES.	KAY WITTGENSTEIN	PHD - 555 Cedar St., 55101	266-1285
TREASURER	RHONDA GILQUIST	SPPD - 367 Grove St., 55101	266-5544
SECRETARY	BRIAN KRAWIECKI	LIEP - 8 E. 4 th St., #200, 55101	266-9134
NEGOTIATIONS			
CITY	SHEILA WINDERLICH	LIBRARY - MMC, 2109 Wilson Ave., 55119	501-6309
SCHOOL	JABER ALSIDDIQUI	SCHOOLS - 360 Colborne, 55102	767-8352
PERSONNEL	KARIN ANDERSON	CAO - 550 City Hall, 15 W. Kellogg, 55102	266-8765

STEWARDS

CAO & OFS	REGINA ETOLL	500 City Hall, 15 W. Kellogg, 55102	266-8726
FIRE	PAULA PETERSON	100 E. 11 th St., 55101	228-6203
LIBRARIES			
CENTRAL	SUSAN HENRY	MMC, 2109 Wilson Ave., 55119	501-6305
PART TIME	SUSAN McMAHON	Highland Pk, 1974 Ford Pkwy., 55116	699-6756
BRANCHES	MARY ANN MILLER	St. Anthony, 2245 Carter Ave., 55101	642-0411
LIEP & HR	FRANK BERG	8 E. 4 th St., #200, 55101	266-9072
PARKS & REC	BRIAN TOURTELOTTE	300 CH Annex, 25 W. 4 th St., 55102	266-6414
P.E.D.	CRAIG O'BRIEN	1100 CH Annex, 25 W. 4 th St., 55102	266-6695
POLICE	MARSHA PANOS	367 Grove St., 55101	292-3781
PUB. HEALTH	SUSAN MYRAN	555 Cedar St., 55101	266-1210
SCHOOL DIST.	LYLA GRIFFIN	360 Colborne, 55102	767-8288
	COLLEEN SHIELDS	360 Colborne, 55102	767-3472
TMS & PW	BRUCE RIEBE	700 CH Annex, 25 W. 4 th St., 55102	266-6091
WATER	ISSAC AFWERKE	1900 N. Rice, 55113	266-6267

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