



Professional Employees Association

CITY OF SAINT PAUL & INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 625

www.peaonline.org

Professional View

October – December 2013

From the President's Desk – 4th Quarter 2013

by Karin Anderson, President

In the last newsletter I wrote about the benefits of Full Membership vs. Fair Share. One of those benefits is that only Full Members have the opportunity to serve on the PEA Executive Board/Committee as an Officer or Committee Chair. The Executive Committee is the governing body of our Association and thus its custodian. As PEA's custodian we are *dedicated* to PEA and its mission "to bargain, administer and enforce labor agreements in a responsible, prudent and lawful manner for the overall improvement of members' working conditions, with emphasis on general advocacy, education and communication."

Brian Krawiecki and Paul Hogrefe are no longer PEA members and therefore are unable to serve on our Executive Committee. Because of City management decisions, both Brian and Paul have moved on to other unions in the City. As President, I miss their service very, very much. As a person, I miss their camaraderie and spirit.

Brian came on the board before I did, oh so long ago, and served in a couple of different positions, the last being Secretary. It was his job to keep the minutes of all meetings, prepare notices to you the general membership, and maintain and update the by-laws. He was a steadfast member of the board with deep insight and thoughtfulness in his considerations of grievances and the effects of our decisions on others.

Paul had been our City Negotiations Committee Chair for, I believe, the last 3 contracts. He did an outstanding job of securing the best contracts possible at a time when the City's finances were stretched and the economy difficult. He was diligent, organized, and smart. It was his job to

identify negotiation goals, objectives, and, along with Mike Wilde, prepare demands. He always sought ideas and data from the members and kept comprehensive notes from year to year.

The job of the Vice President is to assist the President as needed and shall succeed the President if she is unable to perform the functions of the office. The VP also plans PEA's events – our general membership meetings, board meetings, and any necessary special meetings. The board has also decided that this position would become the Executive Committee's special projects person – spearheading ideas and plans the board would like to implement.

If you recall, last quarter I said: "The opportunity to serve is a way to learn and grow and can be a valuable experience...." The Executive Committee is looking for Full Members who would like to serve their fellow School and City members. Right now the opportunities abound as the board has three positions open: Vice President, Secretary, and City Negotiations Committee Chair.

A sign of a healthy organization is the willingness of all to "pitch in" and help. For PEA to remain a strong advocate for each of us with the School District and the City it needs your talents now on the Executive Committee. Please thoughtfully consider serving your association and fellow members by serving on the board. If you are willing, please call or email Mike Wilde at 651-227-8425 or mike.wilde24@gmail.com. Thank you.

P.S. If you happen to run across Brian or Paul when you are out and about please thank them for their past service to PEA and to you!



ATTENTION: Please consider running for a PEA office!

PEA currently has openings for Executive Committee members: Vice President, Secretary, and City Negotiations Committee Chair.

PEA welcomes all members in good standing to consider running for PEA Officer or Executive Committee positions. Please contact Mike Wilde at 612-227-8425 or by email mike.wilde24@gmail.com if you are interested and would like more information. Thank you!

School District PEA negotiation team meeting

by David Peterson

The School District negotiation team consists of School District Negotiation Chair David Peterson, Legal Counsel Mike Wilde, Annette Evans, George Simon, Jim Langevin, Maia Sierra, Kristin Johnson, and Todd Larson.

The current PEA school district bargaining agreement is for the 2012 and 2013 calendar years. Terms will continue if settlement on a new contract is not completed until after 2013, and continue until a new contract is agreed to by PEA and the School District.

The negotiation team has started meeting in preparation for negotiations with the school district.

Initial discussion topics included:

1. a negotiation process overview, and
2. a negotiation survey.

School District PEA members will hear more from us as the negotiation process progresses.

If you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact me.

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Saint Paul
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Corner – Your Retirement Plan In a Rather Large Nutshell

by Mike Wilde & Tammy Wilde

Coordinated Plan

Most current PEA members are participants in the retirement plan known as the Coordinated Plan in accordance with Minnesota law. There are a few other retirement plans administered by Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA), including the Basic Plan, the Local Government Correctional Plan, the Police & Fire Plan and the Defined Contribution Plan, but these generally will not benefit PEA members in 2013 and beyond.

The Coordinated Plan of PERA was established in 1968 and today serves over 140,000 members who are eligible for retirement benefits. It is a “defined benefit” plan which means that it is a type of pension plan in which an employer promises a specified monthly benefit on retirement based on a formula that takes into account the employee’s earnings history, length of service and age at the time of retirement, rather than depending directly on individual investment returns. Many government entities still provide defined benefit plans.

In contrast, a “defined contribution” retirement plan establishes individual accounts for each employee to collect employer and employee contributions that are defined and known in advance. However, the benefit to be paid out is not known in advance because it depends on individual investment returns over time.

Plan Eligibility

Membership in PERA is automatic for non-elected public employees who meet position eligibility requirements set by Minnesota law. This includes all full-time City and School District positions that fall under the PEA umbrella.

Contributions

You and your employer both make contributions to PERA for your retirement benefits. You currently contribute 6.25 percent of your pre-tax salary. Your employer, either the City of St. Paul or the School District, pays in 7.25 percent of that same gross salary on your behalf.

Taxes on Your Contributions

Federal and State income taxes on PERA contributions are deferred under state and federal law. So, most, if not all, of your PERA benefits will be taxable when you receive them after your retirement date.

Complete copies of the Coordinated Plan member handbooks are available on the PERA website at <http://www.mnpera.org> under the “Member” tab.

If You Leave Before Retirement

If your PERA-covered employment ends after you become vested under the Coordinated Plan terms but before age 55, you may leave your contributions with PERA and qualify for a deferred pension at age 55. Deferred pensions for members leaving PERA-covered employment after December 31, 2011 will be solely based upon benefits earned at the date of termination of employment.

However, if you left public service prior to January 1, 2012, the amount of your monthly retirement benefit will continue to increase the longer it is deferred and can begin any time after age 55. If you were hired before July 1, 1989 and have 30 or more years of PERA-covered employment, you may begin to receive monthly pension benefits at any time. You may also qualify for the Rule of 90 (age plus years of service equal 90 years) as a deferred member. Even though you are no longer in PERA-covered employment, every month your Coordinated Plan contributions remain with PERA, you are a month closer to the Rule of 90.

If you terminate PERA-covered employment but do not want to leave your employee contributions in PERA, you may request a refund, direct rollover or fund transfer of employee contributions with 4% interest because you are always 100% vested in your own contributions to the Coordinated Plan. You may apply for a “refund” immediately upon termination of PERA-covered employment, or you may leave contributions in PERA and apply for a “refund” at any time before a deferred benefit is

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paid. PERA will not release refunds until at least 30 days after your PERA-covered employment ends. When you collect a refund of employee contributions, you forfeit all future benefits from PERA, such as a pension and PERA service credits.

Medical Coverage: Planning For Retirement

Two laws, one federal and the other state, ensure that health insurance coverage is available for many retirees, including public employees, until they reach age 65, when they first qualify for Medicare coverage. For the most part, these laws help extend current health insurance coverage into retirement with the retiree paying the cost of the premiums.

Federal Law

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 (COBRA) allows individuals covered by an employer's health insurance plan to continue that coverage for a period of time after they would not otherwise qualify. This includes employees, their spouses and dependents. The federal law applies to all employers with more than 20 employees, excepting certain nonprofit religious organizations. Length of continuing insurance coverage depends on the circumstances of what the law refers to as "events," but, if you qualify, COBRA generally allows the continuation of health insurance coverage for up to 18 months and, in rare cases, up to 36 months after termination of employment.

State Law

Under the Municipal Rights, Powers and Duties statutes, Minnesota government retirees who qualify for a pension from PERA also qualify generally to continue health insurance coverage under their employer's health insurance program until age 65, provided the retiree pays the health insurance premiums and certain conditions are satisfied.

Retiree Health & Life Insurance Benefits

Both the City of St. Paul and the School District provide contributions to most of their retirees for health insurance coverage, and many early retirees even receive some life insurance contributions for

a limited period of time. *However, employees hired into the School District on or after January 1, 2014, will not be eligible for any district contribution toward health insurance upon retirement.* In an effort to lessen the impact of this change, the School District has instituted additional annual "employer matched" contributions for employees hired on or after January 1, 2014.

Every employee can take his or her Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) balance, solely comprised of employer contributions, into retirement and use it to pay for qualifying medical expenses. By contrast however, an employee cannot carry flexible spending account (FSA) balances forward year-to-year; these pre-tax employee contributions must be used for qualifying expenses annually or they are lost.

Calculating your City or School District retiree health and life insurance contributions, if any, requires targeted analysis of the PEA union contract terms. If you have specific questions regarding your retiree health and life benefits, see Article 15, Section 2 of the PEA School District contract or Article 12, Sections 12.10-12.19 of the PEA City contract, whichever is applicable to you. For assistance interpreting the PEA contracts, contact Tammy Wilde directly.

Your Retirement Preparation

Truly, retirement planning is not something you do the year or two prior to retirement. It requires regular attention throughout your career and long-term goal setting in order to be successful.

PERA provides a valuable retirement planning tool for its members entitled Drafting Your Retirement Plan Workbook at <http://www.mnpera.org> under the "Resources" tab. This guide is helpful for starting the planning process (there's even a checklist), yet it is necessarily vague. As always, with retirement planning, the devil is in the details. So while it's nice to have a checklist and workbook to help you get organized, it's critical to seek out retirement workshops and individualized retirement guidance that is targeted to the unique features of your plan or coverage. Depending on your circumstances, you may want to engage a professional the closer you get to retirement to ensure that you maximize your retirement benefits in every sense.



You Are Invited!

Tuesday, December 10, 2013
**PEA's Annual Dinner &
General Membership Meeting**
Mancini's, 531 West 7th Street, St. Paul

5:30 p.m. Registration with Appetizers
6:00 p.m. Dinner
7:00 p.m. Meeting

Meeting Agenda

Introduction of Stewards and Executive Committee Members
Approval of June 2013 General Membership Minutes
Legal Counsel Update
Reports of Board & Committees
President
Treasurer
Personnel
School District Negotiations Chair
Elections
Member Recognition
Adjournment

RSVP your Entree Selection by Thursday, December 5, 2013

to karin.anderson@ci.stpaul.mn.us

ENTREES

Chicken, Steak, Walleye, or Vegetarian Pasta

Your Dinner includes Salad, Bread, Baked Potato, Cake & Choice of Coffee, Tea, Milk or Pop
Please Let Karin Know If You Have Any Special Dietary Needs

Only Full Members may vote and participate in the Association.
If you are a Fair Share Member, please consider becoming a Full Member today!

June 2013 General Membership Meeting Minutes

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

*Minutes from the June 11, 2013 Summer General Membership Meeting
These minutes will be presented for approval at the Winter 2013
General Membership Meeting.*

PEA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Joseph's
June 11, 2013

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Karin Anderson, President; Annette Evans, Treasurer; Julie Kraus, Personnel Committee Chair; Paul Hogrefe, City Negotiations Chair; David Peterson, School District Negotiations Committee Chair; Brian Krawiecki, Secretary; Tammy Wilde and Mike Wilde, Legal Counsel.

STEWARDS: David Blessing, Kathleen Conger, Regina Etoll, Susan Henry, Jill LaCasse, Jim Langevin, Fong Lor, Charlene McKenzie, Craig O'Brien, Marsha Panos, Paula Peterson, Justine Roe, George Simon and Bill Vos

OTHER PEA MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Issac Afwerke, Tom Bosman, Martha Burckhardt, Cindy Carlson, Karen Edmond, Roseann Foreman, Connie Garrahy, Terry Giinther, Cece Hauge, Ben Hawkins, Barbara Hillesland, Jacqueline Howard, Jim Jeffery, Brian Karschnia, Greg Kelley, Mark Kile, Mike Klobucar, Carol Martinson, Andrew McGlory, Pam Mendez, Kelly Moch, Patrick Murphy, Sara Nurmela, Diane Olson, Dennis Peterson, Jason Reid, Rebecca Ryan, Amy Schwartz, Julia Sobania, Doris Wahl, Laura Wakefield, Jodi Wallin, Diane White and Chin-Ming Yin.

The meeting was called to order by President Karin Anderson.
Stewards and Executive Committee members introduced themselves.

Mike introduced Tony DeAngelis from the Carlson School of Management, University of Minnesota Labor Education Services. Tony has more than 30 years of experience with Labor Education Service. His areas of expertise include collective bargaining, steward training, contract administration, leadership, public speaking and communications, labor history, conflict management and parliamentary procedure. Tony is a member of the Labor and Employment Relations Association and an associate member of the United Steelworkers Union. Tony gave an quick overview of the advantages of professionals belonging to a union with examples of the types of professionals that belong to unions. He gave a brief review of the history of unions in Minnesota and the important events that shaped the labor force in Minnesota. He talked about the most prosperous countries in the world with the highest standard of living and the extremely high percentage of union members in those countries. He asked PEA members to view YouTube documentaries produced by the University of Minnesota Labor Education Services and to look forward to a documentary on public television about the construction of the Minnesota Capitol that focuses on the laborers who built it.
<http://politicsinminnesota.com/2012/11/ex-railroad-man-riehle-digs-deep-to-preserve-minnesotas-labor-history/#ixzz2ZSN5XY1u>

MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 27, 2012 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING: The minutes from the November 27, 2012 General Membership Meeting were presented. MOTION by Craig O'Brien to adopt the November 27, 2012 General Membership Meeting minutes as presented. SECOND by Regina Etol, MOTION CARRIED.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

President: Karin gave an update on the City LMCHI. The City's health insurance coverage has been updated to comply with the new laws to increase coverage for family medical leave up to 160 hours to cover employees' children and close relatives. Health insurance benefits will also be available to provide family health insurance coverage for same sex marriages. PEA will provide information about the sick leave changes in the PEA Newsletter. The City Health Insurance benefits book is online at <http://stpaul.gov/DocumentCenter/View/59949> on the Human Resources page.

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Treasurer: Annette reported that PEA's financial audit has been completed by Jill LaCasse and the Executive Board has addressed the concerns resulting from the audit. IRS form 990 and payroll tax forms have been filed. PEA's fund balance is approximately \$99,000.

Personnel: Julie reported there are 321 members total. There are 247 members in the City to include 57 fair-share members. The School District has 74 members to include 15 fair share members.

School District Negotiations: The School District contract expires December 31st of this year. David will be putting together the School District Negotiations Committee soon. Interested members are encouraged to contact David.

City Negotiations: The City PEA contract was voted on and passed last month. City PEA members will be getting salary increases of 1% retroactive to April 1, 2013; ½% in October 2013; 2% in April 2014, 1% in January 2015, and 2% in April 2015. Members can go online at www.PEAonline.org to view the contract. The new contract was voted in by a two-to-one margin. Paul thanked members for the good turnout at the contract vote. Paul urged members to take advantage of the deferred compensation match of \$250 and the VEBA incentives. To be eligible for the VEBA employees must complete the JourneyWell assessment and program requirements by the specified deadlines. VEBA funds can be used to help offset health insurance deductible costs.

LEGAL COUNSEL UPDATE: Mike reviewed the most recent PEA activities in various City Departments and the School District. He asked School District employees to review their contract and submit specific comments on what needs to be improved in the contract. He stressed the importance of active participation in the contract negotiation process.

Tammy gave an overview on the importance of the VEBA management and the interaction with the LMCHI and other City unions. Tammy encouraged members to call with questions on the VEBA, PERA and pre-retirement planning.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: The City implementation of TASS (Time Tracking and Attendance Scheduling Solution) has resulted in problems with PEA members that have been using a flexible hour work day. TASS has been treating all employees as 8-hour-per-day employees and has not been flexible enough to accommodate varied daily work hours. Paul, Mike and Karin met with Angie Nalezny and Ben Reiber to review options to allow for 40-hour weeks and 80-hour pay periods, in addition to 8-hour days. City PEA members affected by this issue will be kept informed how the TASS program can be used to be more accommodating.

PEA BYLAW VOTE: The proposed change in the PEA Bylaws, Article IX Meetings, Section 3 as published in the PEA newsletter was presented by Karin. MOTION by Karin to accept the proposed changes to Article IX Meetings, Section 3 as published in the PEA newsletter and to make housekeeping changes as presented to the PEA Bylaws. Second by Jodi Wallin, MOTION CARRIED unanimously without dissention.

ADJOURNMENT: MOTION by Karin to adjourn, Second by Julie Kraus, MOTION CARRIED. The June 11, 2013 PEA General Membership Meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

2013 Executive Committee

President	Karin Anderson <i>karin.anderson@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	CAO – 750 City Hall, 15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102	651-266-8765
Vice President	vacant		
Treasurer	Annette Evans <i>annette.evans@spps.org</i>	SCHOOLS – 360 Colborne, 55102	651-767-8265
Secretary	vacant		
Personnel	Julie Kraus <i>julie.kraus@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	CAO – 400 City Hall, 15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102	651-266-8776
School Negotiations	David Peterson <i>david.peterson@spps.org</i>	SCHOOLS – 360 Colborne, 55102	651-744-8112
City Negotiations	vacant		

Staff & Others

Legal Counsel	Mike Wilde, Esq. <i>mwilde8860@comcast.net & mike.wilde24@gmail.com</i>	360 North Robert St., Suite 300, St. Paul, MN 55101	612-227-8425
Legal Counsel	Tammy Wilde, Esq. <i>tammy.wilde@gmail.com</i>	360 North Robert St., Suite 300, St. Paul, MN 55101	
Newsletter	Sara Nurmela <i>peanewsletter@gmail.com</i>	HREEO – 280 City Hall, 15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102	651-266-8974
Webpage <i>www.peaonline.org</i>	John Larson <i>john.larson@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	Libraries (SPPL) – 90 W 4th St., 55102	651-266-7044
Office Address	P.E.A.	360 North Robert St., Suite 300, St. Paul, MN 55101	

Mission Statement

The Professional Employees Association is dedicated to bargain, administer and enforce labor agreements in a responsible, prudent and lawful manner for the overall improvement of members' working conditions, with emphasis on general advocacy, education and communication.

2013 Stewards

CAO / OFS / HREEO / Mayor's Office / Council Res / HR	Regina Etoll <i>regina.etoll@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	500 City Hall, 15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102	651-266-8726
Fire	Jill LaCasse <i>jill.lacasse@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	645 Randolph Ave., 55102	651-228-6257
Libraries Full-Time (Central / MMC)	Susan Henry <i>susan.henry@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	Saint Anthony Park Branch, 2245 Como Ave., 55108	651-642-0411
Libraries Full-Time (Branches)	Kathleen Conger <i>kathleen.conger@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	Rondo Community Outreach Library, 461 Dale St., 55103	651-266-7431
Libraries Part-Time	Charlene McKenzie <i>charlene.mckenzie@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	Rondo Community Outreach Library, 461 Dale St., 55103	651-266-7419
DSI	Connie Sandberg <i>connie.sandberg@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	375 Jackson St., Suite 220, 55101	651-266-1935
OTC	Gale Hawkinson <i>gale.hawkinson@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	600 City Hall Annex, 25 W. 4th St., 55102	651-266-6781
Parks & Recreation	David Blessing <i>david.blessing@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	1225 Estabrook	651-487-8247
PED	Craig O'Brien <i>craig.obrien@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	1300 City Hall Annex, 25 W. 4th St., 55102	651-266-6695
Police	Kelly Hervin <i>kelly.hervin@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	367 Grove St., 55101	651-266-5606
Public Health	Sue Butler <i>sue.butler@co.ramsey.mn.us</i>	555 Cedar St., 55101	651-266-1321
Public Works	Bill Vos <i>bill.vos@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	900 City Hall Annex, 25 W. 4th St., 55102	651-266-6113
School District	Lyla Griffin <i>lyla.griffin@spps.org</i>	Purchasing & Contract Services, 360 Colborne St., 55102	651-767-8288
School District	George Simon <i>george.simon@spps.org</i>	360 Colborne St., 55102	651-767-8328
School District	Jim Langevin <i>jim.langevin@spps.org</i>	360 Colborne St., 55102	651-744-1818
Water	Justine Roe <i>justine.roe@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	1900 Rice St., 55113	651-266-1628