



# Professional View

2nd Quarter

April – June 2019

## The Corner

by Mike Wilde, Legal Counsel

**Check Your Check:** Mistakes happen. If there is one recurring document in your working life that should be reviewed and saved it is your paystub. Trust is a good thing, but mistakes do happen.

Negotiated wage increases, step advancements, vacation accrual, sick time usage, insurance contributions, overtime credits and other economic benefits are all subject to change. But all of these dynamic variables are your personal responsibility. We can only guess at how many PEA members have unknowingly lost flexible spending funds, “comp time” earnings or matching deferred compensation (403(b) plan) contributions because they do not review their paycheck voucher.

Payroll errors are not addressed in PEA’s labor contract with the City. However, our School District contract specifically determines how compensation errors are addressed in article 9.4. That provision references both underpayment and overpayment with consideration as to whether “the employee took reasonable preventative action by routinely reviewing the accuracy of his/her biweekly compensation.” If PEA had to arbitrate a case like this on behalf of a City employee over significant errors, that individual could be held responsible for this same level of personal review.

In any case, these mistakes are easily corrected *if* detected early. Don’t sell yourself short – Check Your Check – and save all your documents. Protect your earnings; they’re worth it.

## PEA CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2019

### add these dates to your calendar!

Wednesday, July 10 ..... Board & Stewards Meeting, Joseph’s  
(stewards & executive board only)

Thursday, October 3 ..... Fall General Membership Meeting, Mancini’s  
**Everyone is welcome!**

## Member Feedback

“What good does my union do?” Does this sound like a question that you may ask yourself? Well I would like to share my story of how PEA helped me.

In 2017, I submitted a JAQ based on the recommendation of my supervisor. He advised me that I was doing the work of multiple people due to unfilled positions. Furthermore, he stated that my job had clearly evolved and that I had been doing all the duties of a much higher job classification. As I submitted the JAQ, I was hopeful. My supervisor and the head of the department both agreed that I was doing all the duties of the higher job classification and wrote letters included with the JAQ stating such. As is the usual case, the process was extremely slow and was seriously delayed by the change of administration at the Mayor’s office. After nine months of waiting I contacted PEA for assistance. With the help of PEA my JAQ started moving forward.

After twelve months, I was notified by my supervisor that the findings of the JAQ had been returned and that the results were disappointing. Even though both my direct supervisor and the head of the department stated that I was doing all the duties of this higher class, human resources felt otherwise. They notified my supervisor that I would be given a small raise, but one that was not near the pay rate of the higher title.

After the findings of the JAQ, I was extremely disappointed. I believed that I was not a valued employee and that my skills meant nothing. I seriously began considering my options elsewhere. My supervisor continued to state that I was a valued member of the team and that the department heads were just as disappointed as I was with the outcome; but that we needed to continue to work through the process. Based on the recommendation of my supervisor and Mike Wilde, the PEA attorney, we filed a grievance stating that I was working out of title in the higher position.

The first step of the grievance process started with a meeting between me, Mike Wilde, and Human Resources. In the meeting, we focused on the fact that I was doing all the work of the higher position. We argued that the supervisors had written letters to Human Resources stating this very fact. Human Resources countered by claiming that we had no case under the civil service rules as we had gone through the JAQ. Fortunately we work under a contract, and the language of the contract supersedes the civil service rules. This is a major benefit of being a part of a union. With the breakdown in the negotiation we agreed to move directly to arbitration.

As PEA worked through the process of choosing an arbitrator, the city contacted Mike Wilde and asked if we would agree to meet with a mediator. This is a non-binding discussion where a third party evaluates the facts and attempts to solve the issue prior to arbitration. We agreed to the mediation, however early in the proceedings it was made clear that the city had little intention of changing their stance. When the mediation broke down, we moved forward with scheduling arbitration.

Over the next few weeks, Mike organized the argument for the arbitration. It was a simple argument; I was doing all the work of the higher position and under the contract, I needed to be compensated as such. He spent countless hours working to organize all the documents identifying witnesses to testify on my behalf. This too is a benefit of being a full member of PEA. We have legal representation in regards to work related issues.

The week prior to the arbitration, the city contacted Mike and asked if there was any way that we were willing to negotiate. I was ecstatic! No one wants to go to arbitration but we had no other choice. I was clearly doing all the work of the higher class without the compensation. We agreed to negotiate and three days prior to the hearing we were able to come to a successful agreement that addressed all issues within the grievance.

In my previous career, I worked in a non-union environment. When I came to Saint Paul I was skeptical about unions. I used to believe that the only job of a union was to defend problem employees. Then at the recommendation of my steward, I attended a membership meeting. I learned that there was so much more to being a part of a union. PEA is a community of employees. They stand up for their members to ensure fair treatment. They negotiate the contract and raises. They ensure that the contract is being enforced. They know that our voices are more powerful as a chorus.

For many people this may sound strange, but I truly love my job. I enjoy what I do and I look forward to the challenges that it presents. I enjoy the people that I work with and helping to make Saint Paul safe. Yet without the help of PEA, I would have needed to look for a different job to do what was best for my family. It is because of Mike Wilde and PEA standing up for their members that I can continue to do the job I love.

## City Negotiations Update

*Joe Musolf, City Negotiations Chair*

Hello PEA members. I just wanted to remind you all that I am happy to answer any questions about the City contract negotiation process. I can be reached at [JosephMusolf@gmail.com](mailto:JosephMusolf@gmail.com), or at my desk at 651-266-6594.

Our current City contract expires on 12/31/20. In early fall of 2020, we will formally begin the negotiation process. I've been through the whole process twice as a volunteer on the City Negotiations Committee (PEA Vice President Justine Roe was City Negotiations Chair through the last two negotiations cycles). Along with Justine, PEA President Regina Etoll and PEA Legal Counsel Mike Wilde both have been "at the table" for numerous contract negotiations. So, there's a lot of experience on our side.

It is valuable for PEA to have some new faces involved in the negotiations process. In early 2020, I, and the rest of the PEA Board, will be actively recruiting volunteers for the Negotiations Committee. It's never too early to contact me if you're interested in getting involved in the process.

Over the next 12 months or so, while not in active negotiations mode, I have two important roles to play as City Negotiations Committee Chair: 1) I am paying close attention to all issues that arise which may warrant consideration of adjustments to our contract; and 2) I take seriously my responsibility as a voting member on the Executive Committee and work to help with efficient and thoughtful governance of the affairs of our Association.

A special note to my PEA School District colleagues: We're in the process of filling the vacant School District Negotiations Committee Chair position. I stand at the ready to help that new person get up to speed on the negotiation process. Even though we are dealing with different employers much of the strategy and process is similar. I'm happy to help across sections of our Association.



# Stewards & Executive Committee Meeting & Dinner

*Wednesday, July 10, 2019*

**Location:** Joseph's Grill  
140 South Wabasha • 651-222-2435

**Meeting:** 5:30-7:00 PM

**Dinner:** 6:00-6:30 PM

**Reservations required:** RSVP to Justine at [justine.roe@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:justine.roe@ci.stpaul.mn.us)

**Please plan to arrive before 5:30PM** so we can order promptly and start eating around 6:00PM. Dinner selections will be made from Joseph's menu; your dinner may include a non-alcoholic beverage of your choice. The meeting will be suspended when dinner is served so we can all enjoy our meal together.

#### AGENDA:

1. Greetings & Introductions
2. Reports
  - a. Legal Counsel
  - b. President and/or Vice President
  - c. Treasurer
  - d. Personnel
  - e. City Negotiations
  - f. District Negotiations
3. Adjournment of Combined Meeting

The Executive Committee will hold a short meeting of the board following the adjournment of the Combined Meeting.



## 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.

## Executive Committee

|                            |  |  |              |
|----------------------------|--|--|--------------|
| <b>President</b>           | <b>Regina Etoll</b><br><i>regina.etoll@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i> | CAO – 500 City Hall,<br>15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102   | 651-266-8726 |
| <b>Vice President</b>      | <b>Justine Roe</b><br><i>justine.roe@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>   | WATER – 1900 Rice St., 55113                         | 651-266-1628 |
| <b>Treasurer</b>           | <b>Beth Ulrich</b><br><i>beth.ulrich@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>   | PED – 1400 City Hall Annex,<br>25 W. 4th St., 55102  | 651-266-6689 |
| <b>Secretary</b>           | <b>Sara Nurmela</b><br><i>peanewsletter@gmail.com</i>      | HREEO – 280 City Hall,<br>15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102 | 651-266-8974 |
| <b>Personnel</b>           | <b>Julie Kraus</b><br><i>julie.kraus@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>   | CAO – 400 City Hall,<br>15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102   | 651-266-8776 |
| <b>School Negotiations</b> | <b>vacant</b><br><i>peanegotiations.spps@gmail.com</i>     |  |              |
| <b>City Negotiations</b>   | <b>Joe Musolf</b><br><i>joe.musolf@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>     | PED – 1400 City Hall Annex,<br>25 W. 4th St., 55102  | 651-266-6594 |

## Staff & Others

|  |  |  |              |
|--|--|--|--------------|
| <b>Legal Counsel</b>                       | <b>Mike Wilde, Esq.</b><br><i>mike.wilde24@gmail.com</i>       | 545 7th St. W<br>Saint Paul, MN 55102                | 612-227-8425 |
| <b>New Member Liaison</b>                  | <b>Jeremy Berger</b><br><i>jeremy.berger@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>   | 645 Randolph Ave., 55102                             | 651-228-6257 |
| <b>LMCHI (City)</b>                        | <b>Karin Anderson</b><br><i>karin.anderson@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i> | CAO – 700 City Hall,<br>15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102   | 651-266-8765 |
| <b>LMCHC (SPPS)</b>                        | <b>Charlie Colvin</b><br><i>charles.colvin@spps.org</i>        | 1930 Como Ave., 55108                                | 651-744-6309 |
| <b>Newsletter</b>                          | <b>Sara Nurmela</b><br><i>peanewsletter@gmail.com</i>          | HREEO – 280 City Hall,<br>15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102 | 651-266-8974 |
| <b>Webpage</b><br><i>www.peaonline.org</i> | <b>John Larson</b><br><i>john.larson@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>       | Libraries (SPPL) –<br>90 W 4th St., 55102            | 651-266-7044 |
| <b>Mailing Address</b>                     | <b>Professional Employees Association</b>                      | PO Box 7333<br>Saint Paul, MN 55107-0333             |              |

## Stewards

|   |  |  |              |
|---|--|--|--------------|
| <b>DSI &amp; Police</b>                     | <b>Brian Balfanz</b><br><i>brian.balfanz@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>   | 367 Grove St., 55101                                     | 651-266-5531 |
| <b>Fire, Emergency Management, CAO, OFS</b> | <b>Jeremy Berger</b><br><i>jeremy.berger@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>   | 645 Randolph Ave., 55102                                 | 651-228-6257 |
| <b>Libraries</b>                            | <b>Peter Borgen</b><br><i>peter.borgen@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i><br><i>PeterBorgenUnionSteward@gmail.com</i> | Highland Park Library,<br>1974 Ford Parkway, 55116       | 651-695-3700 |
| <b>Libraries</b>                            | <b>Kathleen Conger</b><br><i>kathleen.conger@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>                                       | George Latimer Central Library<br>90 W 4th Street, 55102 | 651-266-7000 |
| <b>Libraries</b>                            | <b>Therese Scherbel</b><br><i>therese.scherbel@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>                                     | George Latimer Central Library<br>90 W 4th Street, 55102 | 651-266-7048 |
| <b>OTC / HREEO</b>                          | <b>Luke Vang</b><br><i>luke.vang@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>   | 600 City Hall Annex,<br>25 W. 4th St., 55102             | 651-266-6789 |
| <b>Parks &amp; Recreation</b>               | <b>Mary Henke-Haney</b><br><i>mary.henke-haney@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>                                     | 1100 North Hamline Ave., 55108                           | 651-248-6500 |
| <b>PED</b>                                  | <b>Sarah Zorn</b><br><i>sarah.zorn@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>   | 1100 City Hall Annex<br>25 W. 4th St., 55102             | 651-266-6570 |
| <b>Public Health</b>                        | <b>Sue Butler</b><br><i>sue.butler@co.ramsey.mn.us</i>   | 555 Cedar St., 55101                                     | 651-266-1321 |
| <b>Public Works</b>                         | <b>Bill Vos</b><br><i>bill.vos@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>   | 900 City Hall Annex,<br>25 W. 4th St., 55102             | 651-266-6113 |
| <b>School District</b>                      | <b>Jim Engen</b><br><i>jim.engen@spps.org</i>  | 360 Colborne St., 55102                                  | 651-767-8346 |
| <b>School District</b>                      | <b>Brianna Nyquist</b><br><i>brianna.nyquist@spps.org</i>  | 1930 Como Ave., 55108                                    | 651-744-1807 |
| <b>School District</b>                      | <b>Jerry Skelly</b><br><i>jerry.skelly@spps.org</i>  | 360 Colborne St., 55102                                  | 763-422-9624 |
| <b>Water</b>                                | <b>Sarah Brown</b><br><i>sarah.brown@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>   | 1900 Rice St., 55113                                     | 651-266-1635 |