



The Corner

by Mike Wilde, Legal Counsel

PEA's most recent newsletter this winter included my article about working remotely. It was a nice surprise to find that about six or seven members responded with their experiences. It is helpful to get feedback and input from our members. Suggestions too.

Overall, the comments that I received described remote work situations where the work was completed with little interruption, or inconvenience. As expected, the savings in travel time and expenses are appreciated. But there was also the common sentiment that minor errands, household tasks or a needed break (*psst - nap*) were available to the remote worker without hesitation. There is no guilt in starting dinner early, running to the grocery store or making it to a dentist appointment when your home is your office. There are also very little employee interruptions.

However, the situation is not the same for everyone. One drawback that was raised by a few is that the work is ALWAYS THERE. Supervisors might be more at liberty to contact you during evening hours. Work assignments might also bleed into the weekend hours. So, while the flexibility is beneficial, it seems like boundaries for yourself are more important than ever, or else your office is your home.

By the time you receive this newsletter, at least if you're a City employee, your department director has likely issued a notice about "return to office" plans. However, that is not how we had hoped things would unfold. PEA raised this issue in our first negotiations meeting this spring. We proposed structured meetings between department managers and PEA members, or at least representatives. The negotiations proposal expressed the need to have constructive dialogue and input into all of the variables and new discoveries that impact a return to

the office. We explained that our members did not want a "light switch" mentality that just quickly puts everyone back in the old work schedule without exploring new ways and places of work. The City would not agree to formally be bound by contract language. But the Labor Relations representatives did say there would be no light switch approach and that employees would provide input.

Unfortunately, I've learned of recent developments that don't always involve employee input. The Mayor's office requested each department to submit a "return to office" plan by Friday, May 14th. The Departments are then supposed to update their staff on Monday, May 17th, but I'm betting big that such a notice to staff is delayed in many, or perhaps all, departments. This sounds very much like a "light switch" plan of unilateral action without input.

All hope is not lost. Labor relations responded by notifying PEA of the Mayor's somewhat expedited planning. Knowing that they pledged to allow worker involvement, Labor Relations helped rewrite a template plan that seeks employee input. Will every director be required to get employee feedback? No. And some directors will gladly just draw up an action plan without any concern for the workers' ideas. We won't really know that until the time comes when firm plans are announced. It is encouraging that the Water Department and the City Attorneys Department have both sent out questionnaire or surveys to get their employees' input on remote working.

Meanwhile, I encourage you to open up dialogue with management if you have ideas or requests about this issue. I am optimistic that if enough people put forward good plans tailored for their situation it will become a familiar option for PEA members.

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.

Negotiations Update

by Joe Musolf, City Negotiations Chair



**SAINT PAUL
MINNESOTA**

Dear City PEA Colleagues,

On behalf of the City Negotiations Committee, thank you again for entrusting us with responsibility for our Collective Bargaining Agreement negotiations. We continue to work diligently on your behalf to negotiate the best renewal possible and to keep you all informed of the ongoing process. Please know that the foundation of our negotiations is the information we gathered from you all through our various means of outreach at the end of 2020.

Our current Collective Bargaining Agreement expired on 12/31/20, but, by design, remains in effect until replaced. We've met with City representatives to negotiate terms of renewal three times, on 2/26/21, on 3/15/21, and on 4/15/21.

Here's a quick snapshot of the discussion to-date:

PEA proposed a) no wage increase in 2021; b) 2% wage increase on 1/1/22; c) increase employer match of deferred comp to \$1,250; d) add a 9th step for 20 years; and e) add Juneteenth as an additional paid holiday. We also expressed our desire to be part of management discussions regarding post-pandemic return-to-office planning.

City responded a) no wage increase in 2021; b) no wage increase in 2022; c) no deferred comp increase; d) no additional step. Regarding e) Juneteenth, City responded that there is internal discussion about this possibility citywide at some point in the future. In addition to all the "no's", the City also suggested f) elimination of comp time and/or extra pay for extra hours for employees at grade 12 and above; g) elimination of health insurance benefit for part-time employees (along with a compensatory small change to eligibility requirements for retiree health insurance); h) creating a new requirement that severance-eligible departing employees must give 2-week notice to

receive severance; and i) elimination of a special provision we have regarding advanced notice of library branch manager changes. The City assured us that we would be part of the ongoing return-to-office planning conversations.

PEA then responded that b) 2022 wages, d) 9th step, e) Juneteenth, all still stand as our priorities; c) deferred comp issue could be flexible; f) no elimination of comp and/or extra pay; g) no elimination of part-time health insurance; h) providing notice should earn employee a bonus; and i) we can talk about the library change if City is also willing to consider increasing librarian night differential. So, presently, we're at a critical point of negotiation where we need to push and pull a bit on some issues.

There's another very important variable at play: the potential impact of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) on the City's budget. We feel that in the next few weeks, as ARP rules/programming finalizes, there might be a positive change to the City's budget picture. And knowing that we've already agreed to no wage increase in 2021, we feel that there's not much downside to pausing for a couple more weeks until we have a better understanding of the ARP.

In the meantime, we have been making an effective argument to the City that PEA employees have played critical roles in COVID response programming, civil unrest economic response, implementation of important emergency rent assistance, etc., etc., etc., ... we're carrying on with our work and taking on additional tasks. And many vacancies are left unfilled. We're literally doing more with less!

Again, thank you for trusting us with this important negotiation work. I'm always happy to answer any questions.

peaonline.org

PEA STEWARDS & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

July 14, 2021
5:30 to 7:30 pm

we anticipate this will be a virtual meeting

AGENDA

- Greetings & Introductions
- Legal Counsel Report
- President and/or Vice President's Report
- Committee Reports
 - Treasurer
 - Personnel
 - City Negotiations
 - District Negotiations
- Adjournment of Combined Meeting

Please RSVP to justine.roe@ci.stpaul.mn.us



Meet PEA's Member Outreach & Education Coordinators

Tim Buer, Education Coordinator – City of Saint Paul

For the last four years I have worked at Como Park Zoo and Conservatory as an Education Coordinator. Previously I spent a few years at Scheffer Recreation Center (now Frogtown Community Center) with Parks and Rec. I live in Coon Rapids with my wife and two kids, age 3 years and 10 months. As a member of the Minnesota Army National Guard, I have spent 21 years in various roles all in food service and hoping to do a few more years before retiring. I have been looking for a way to become involved with PEA, and educating new members of the benefits of the union and how to stay involved and informed is a great opportunity! I'm excited for this new role.

Amy Ennen Bertomeu, Project Manager – Saint Paul Public Schools

Personally, I am a mom to two boys, ages six and three. I am married to a man from Spain. I was born and raised in the Twin Cities. I am raising my family in the Twin Cities, as well, but had the chance to live in California for a decade before settling down. I absolutely love to travel and have taken every opportunity to do so. I enjoy walking through, cities primarily, when abroad. I love to taste new foods, hear new sounds, and simply observe people interacting on the street. People and cultures fascinate me. That being said, put me on the North Shore of Lake Superior with my family and I am happy as a clam.



Professionally, I have worn many hats. I attended the University of Minnesota after high school and studied architecture. Life had other plans for me, however, and I ended up working in finance for ten years and obtaining my MBA. During the economic downturn, and after re-evaluating what I wanted to truly do, I found myself back at the University of Minnesota, in a dual graduate program, for architecture and urban design. Upon graduation, I worked for a large architecture firm, as a designer. I decided to work in the K12 market sector while in graduate school. I was inspired while at an event called Political Equator. The message was around providing children with dignity through school design. I knew in that moment that was what I wanted to try and achieve.

After a few years I had an opportunity to blend my education and life experiences and took the position of Planning and Design Manager, Capital Planning and Project Development, at Minneapolis Public Schools. After a couple solid years home with my children, I have returned to the workforce. I started with Saint Paul Public Schools part time and transitioned to full time Spring 2020.

PEA Calendar of Events 2021

add these dates to your calendar!

Wednesday, July 14 Executive Board & Stewards Meeting

Wednesday, October 13.....General Membership Meeting



Professional Employees Association

CITY OF SAINT PAUL & INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 625

www.peaonline.org

Executive Committee

President	Regina Eto <i>regina.etoll@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i> <i>PEAmyunion@gmail.com</i>	CAO – 500 City Hall, 15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102	651-266-8726
Vice President	Justine Roe <i>justine.roe@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	WATER – 1900 Rice St., 55113	651-266-1628
Treasurer	Beth Ulrich <i>beth.ulrich@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	PED – 1400 City Hall Annex, 25 W. 4th St., 55102	651-266-6689
Secretary	Sara Nurmela <i>peanewsletter@gmail.com</i>	HREEO – 280 City Hall, 15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102	651-266-8974
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School Negotiations	Vaughn Kelly <i>vaughn.kelly@spps.org</i> <i>peanegotiations.spps@gmail.com</i>	1930 Como Ave., 55108	651-744-1682
City Negotiations	Joe Musolf <i>joe.musolf@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	PED – 1400 City Hall Annex, 25 W. 4th St., 55102	651-266-6594

Staff & Others

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Newsletter	Sara Nurmela <i>peanewsletter@gmail.com</i>	HREEO – 280 City Hall, 15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102	651-266-8974
Webpage www.peaonline.org	John Larson <i>john.larson@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	Libraries (SPPL) – 90 W 4th St., 55102	651-266-7044
Mailing Address	Professional Employees Association	PO Box 7333 Saint Paul, MN 55107-0333	

Stewards

DSI, Police, Public Health	Brian Balfanz <i>brian.balfanz@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	367 Grove St., 55101	651-266-5531
Fire, Emergency Management, CAO, OFS	Patricia Lammers <i>patricia.lammers@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	367 Grove St., 55101	651-266-5455
Libraries	Peter Borgen <i>peter.borgen@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i> <i>PeterBorgenUnionSteward@gmail.com</i>	Highland Park Library, 1974 Ford Parkway, 55116	651-695-3700
Libraries	Kathleen Conger <i>kathleen.conger@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	George Latimer Central Library 90 W 4th Street, 55102	651-266-7000
Libraries	Therese Scherbel <i>therese.scherbel@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	George Latimer Central Library 90 W 4th Street, 55102	651-266-7048
OTC / HREEO	Luke Vang <i>luke.vang@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	600 City Hall Annex, 25 W. 4th St., 55102	651-266-6789
Parks & Recreation	Mary Henke-Haney <i>mary.henke-haney@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	1100 North Hamline Ave., 55108	651-248-6500
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School District	Brianna Nyquist <i>brianna.nyquist@spps.org</i>	1930 Como Ave., 55108	651-744-1807
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