



## The Corner

by Mike Wilde, Legal Counsel

Every once in awhile organizations, such as PEA, need to remind membership and leaders alike of historical developments from merely a few years ago. Perhaps you are aware that for almost five decades the public sector employees in Minnesota have had the freedom to join unions. A large majority of them have taken up the cause of collective bargaining with the employer. This alone has made public sector employment in Minnesota more stable and appealing than before. Although a majority of employees in a given bargaining unit are required to vote yes to form a union, nobody was ever forced to join the public union.

Minnesota had a fair-share option for public employees who did not want to be a union member. That personal decision did not reduce their wages or benefits that the union negotiated. However, it did allow the union to charge fair-share “beneficiaries” a percentage of monthly dues not to exceed 85% of dues.

Recent politics and Supreme Court developments alerted public unions all across the nation that fair-share dues might be banned as unconstitutional. PEA gave this threat lots of consideration. What would it look like if 20% membership of a small union decided it did not want to pay any dues? And if some could make free-riding look acceptable wouldn't that portion grow? And if this “free-riding” were allowed under law, what is the future of public sector unions and PEA? Here is what PEA did:

*On April 5, 2016 PEA held its spring general membership meeting at Joseph's in St. Paul. There were over 40 members in attendance after a proper notice and invite was issued in the quarterly newsletter. The meeting notice also alerted members to a Constitution & By-Law resolution that proposed to charge non-members a reasonable service fee for PEA representation in grievances, hearings and/or appeals if fair-share dues were ruled to be unconstitutional.*

*The purpose of this amendment was to prepare PEA with procedure for fairness between paying members and nonmembers and to maintain financial solvency to conduct our representational services. The amendment passed unanimously and the new language was added to Article II of PEA's Constitution & By-Laws.*

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### 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.

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Then on June 27, 2018 the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Janus v. AFSCME* that fair share fees violate the First Amendment of the US. Constitution. The following month both the City and the St. Paul Public Schools discontinued the collection of fair-share dues for PEA and all other public sector bargaining units. PEA implemented the Nonmember Service Fee Policy as allowed in our 2016 amendment.

This recent history reminder is to let members, non-members, stewards and officers recall that PEA had a significant amount of communication, held many meetings, given notices, and held votes about this issue before the policy was implemented.

This small labor organization welcomes and invites everyone to become a member. Nonmembers have the rights and benefits under our labor agreement, however if they want representation by PEA on individual matters there will be an hourly charge. This has been applied with great consistency, the membership has determined it is fair, and it seems to be working.

## PEA Calendar of Events 2022

add these dates to your calendar!

Wednesday, April 13 ..... General Membership Meeting, Mancini's

Wednesday, July 13 ..... Board & Stewards Meeting, Joseph's  
(stewards, special committee members, & executive board only)

Wednesday, October 12 ..... General Membership Meeting, Mancini's

### Meet PEA's Newest Member Outreach Coordinator

#### Michelle Bergman Aho

I've been working for St Paul Public Schools in the Facilities Department since spring of 2017. I began as a Project Coordinator, moving into the Project Manager position in the fall of 2021. I have a Bachelor's degree in architecture with a minor in construction management from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. I'm married and have three young kiddos to keep me busy. This year will be the second round of contract negotiations that I have been a member of the negotiations committee. I look forward to having a more active role in reaching out and getting to know new members of PEA!

### Meet Your New Steward

#### Jean Filipkowski

Hello Fellow PEA Members,

I've been a paralegal since 2011. I've been working as a Legal Assistant with the City Attorney's Office since June of 2019. Prior to joining the city I was with the Washington County Attorney's Office.

Working for the city is my 'family business' of sorts, as all my siblings at one point in time have worked for the city in some capacity or another. In fact, my brother Jimmy retired this year under the rule of 90 after 30+ years.

I'm a proud mother to my son who is a maintenance mechanic for the United States Postal Service. I'm recently married this past August to a wonderful man that I've known since I was 5 years old (it's never too late to find 'the one' even if it's 40 years after the fact!) and we're looking forward to our honeymoon cruise to the western Caribbean this April.

I look forward to being a steward and ally to all of you in the union. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have.



# **PEA's Annual Dinner & General Membership Meeting**

**Wednesday April 13, 2022  
Mancini's**

531 West 7<sup>th</sup> Street, St. Paul

5:30 pm – Appetizers/Registration

6:00 pm – Dinner

7:00 pm – Meeting

## **Agenda**

- Introduction of Stewards, Special Committee Chairs and Executive Committee Members
- Approval of previous General Membership meeting minutes
- Board and Committee Reports
- Legal Counsel Update

## **RSVP by Monday April 4<sup>th</sup>**

with your entrée selection (Chicken, Steak, Walleye or Vegetarian) or special dietary needs

to [joe.musolf@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:joe.musolf@ci.stpaul.mn.us)

Dinner is complimentary for members  
\$20 for non-members (cash or check)

## Join the City Contract Negotiations Committee

I know that we are all seeing the benefits of our 2021-2022 contract. It may even feel like it just happened; but believe it or not our contract ends in 11 months, so we need to start to prepare to gather member ideas and create priorities for our next contract. The 1st step is for us to add some new members to the negotiations committee. I would like to see representatives across several departments, so we get a full spectrum of ideas and concerns. Each department can have unique issues and ideas that should be included in our talks with the city. If you are interested, please contact me. We will start with meetings in March/April and develop our members outreach plan for summer/fall. I hope to have a good idea of our priorities by year end so we can be ready in January 2022.

Sincerely,

Patty Lammers  
[patricia.lammers@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:patricia.lammers@ci.stpaul.mn.us)  
City Contract Negotiations Chair



**SAINT PAUL**  
**MINNESOTA**



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## Check Your Check

*Reprint from June 2019, by Mike Wilde*

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.



# Professional Employees Association

CITY OF SAINT PAUL & INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 625

[www.peaonline.org](http://www.peaonline.org)

## Executive Committee

<b>President</b>	<b>Regina Etoll</b> <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
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Joe Musolf</b> <i>joe.musolf@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	PED – 1400 City Hall Annex, 25 W. 4th St., 55102	651-266-6594
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Beth Ulrich</b> <i>beth.ulrich@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	PED – 1400 City Hall Annex, 25 W. 4th St., 55102	651-266-6689
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Sara Nurmela</b> <i>peanewsletter@gmail.com</i>	HREEO – 280 City Hall, 15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102	651-266-8974
<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Julie Kraus</b> <i>julie.kraus@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	CAO – 400 City Hall, 15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102	651-266-8776
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<b>City Negotiations</b>	<b>Patty Lammers</b> <i>patricia.lammers@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	367 Grove St., 55101	651-266-5455

## Staff & Others

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<b>Member Outreach &amp; Education Coordinator</b>	<b>Tim Buer</b> <i>tim.buer@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	1225 Estabrook Dr., 55103	651-487-8271
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<b>Webpage</b> <a href="http://www.peaonline.org">www.peaonline.org</a>	<b>John Larson</b> <i>john.larson@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	Libraries (SPPL) – 90 W 4th St., 55102	651-266-7044
<b>Mailing Address</b>	<b>Professional Employees Association</b>	PO Box 7333 Saint Paul, MN 55107-0333	

## Stewards

<b>Police, Fire, Emergency Management Public Health</b>	<b>Brian Balfanz</b> <i>brian.balfanz@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	367 Grove St., 55101	651-266-5531
<b>CAO, OFS, DSI</b>	<b>Jean Filipkowski</b> <i>jean.filipkowski@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	CAO – 500 City Hall, 15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102	651-266-6262
<b>Libraries</b>	<b>Peter Borgen</b> <i>peter.borgen@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i> <i>PeterBorgenUnionSteward@gmail.com</i>	Highland Park Library, 1974 Ford Parkway, 55116	651-695-3700
<b>Libraries</b>	<b>Kathleen Conger</b> <i>kathleen.conger@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	George Latimer Central Library 90 W 4th Street, 55102	651-266-7000
<b>Libraries</b>	<b>Therese Scherbel</b> <i>therese.scherbel@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	George Latimer Central Library 90 W 4th Street, 55102	651-266-7048
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<b>School District</b>	<b>Brianna Nyquist</b> <i>brianna.nyquist@spps.org</i>	1930 Como Ave., 55108	651-744-1807
<b>School District</b>	<b>Jerry Skelly</b> <i>jerry.skelly@spps.org</i>	360 Colborne St., 55102	763-422-9624
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