



From the President

Joe Musolf, President delivered the following remarks at the October 11 general membership meeting

Last year I stood here as your elected vice president and your interim president. Our previous president Regina received a well-deserved job promotion in July 2022 that moved her to a different bargaining unit, and I stepped in interim to take her place. You elected me as your president here in this room last year. My term runs through the end of this calendar year. As I think most of you know, I am not running for an additional term. Tonight we will elect a new president. But before we do, I'd like to take a few minutes to opine on the state of our organization, to reflect on the past year, and to look ahead a little bit.

Let me start with the state of the organization looking at three variables: people, finances and effectiveness. Regarding people, our membership totals and the percentage of represented members who opt in to support us with dues, continues to hold steady. And, we're lucky to have plenty of members who are able to step into leadership and other active PEA roles. Folks are interested in our elected positions, and in the steward roles, and we have lots of active participation in our negotiations processes. Regarding our finances, PEA runs a tight ship. You'll see evidence of this in our annual independent review of our financial records. There are no wasted resources, every dollar is always accounted for, and we continue to keep our dues much lower than similar bargaining units. And regarding effectiveness, we do 2 fundamental things extraordinarily well:

1. Thanks to the passion and expertise of our legal counsel Mike Wilde, and thanks to the tireless advocacy provided by your executive committee and stewards, we are always all-in on representing our members contractual interests, and when appropriate, we hold our employers accountable through grievance process.
2. We do a heck of a good job negotiating contracts that reflect the expressed interests of our members.

Now to reflect on this past year. I stepped into this role with 2 of our 7 elected positions vacant. I'm proud of the executive committee we've (you've) assembled. These are very competent, caring, committed colleagues, and they represent a diversity of experiences and viewpoints. I'm proud of the contract we negotiated with the City and the way in which it reflects the goals of our city members. And throughout the year, again thanks to Mike and our stewards, we've left no potential contractual concern go by without thorough examination, discussion and support offered to the affected member.

Looking ahead, there are 2 important tasks I hope to help complete in the next month: First, the longtime manager of our website, John Larson, is stepping away from the role. There are 3 members who have expressed interest, and with the help of Bri and John, I plan to select his replacement soon. Second, the executive committee intends to renew our contract with Mike. I'll see to it that this is completed as soon as possible. Beyond those two finite to-do's, the number one priority area of focus now needs to be our schools contract. Thanks Mike Dosedel for your leadership there. There are also a couple larger open issues that should be addressed by the executive committee as soon as possible.

1. I think some sort of steward realignment should be considered, along with some sort of annual or bi-annual mutual recommitment process between the stewards and their represented members.
2. I recognize that there are still valid concerns among some of our membership about access to participate in meetings like this one. I'm glad that conversation is underway.

If you have thoughts about either of these issues, please contact me, (or anyone you're about to elect!)

It has been an honor to serve as your president. I've served you as well as I can and I hope I've been helpful to many of you. Thank you.

The Corner

by Mike Wilde, Legal Counsel

For those of you who still tune into Saturday Night Live, you'll understand the running competition as to who has hosted SNL most often. If you're really on top of such trivia, it won't surprise you that the host with the most appearances is as follows: Alec Baldwin (17), Steve Martin (16), John Goodman (13), Tom Hanks (10) and Buck Henry (10). Well, it isn't nearly as entertaining, but if I were to select a topic that has been the subject matter of my lil ole newsletter article it would be overtime. And it is back headlining today.

Regardless of the fact that we are a union of professionals and never mind that professionals are exempt from overtime under the general rules of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), PEA members have contractual rights to overtime compensation when required to work extra hours. Why is this issue re-appearing again? Because it is the most mis-understood, ignored and probably denied contract provision that we have. This confusion exists in the Schools as well as the City. So, let's recap the important parts in hope that the number of uninformed members is dwindled by half. I would consider that success.

Schools

In PEA's contract with the St. Paul Schools the following language now applies:

5.1. The normal workweek is Monday through Friday. Employees have a normal workday of eight (8) hours and a forty (40) hour workweek. During each workday, employees are provided two fifteen (15) minute paid breaks and a thirty (30) minute unpaid lunch break. Paid breaks may be taken independently, or combined with the unpaid lunch break.

5.4. A supervisor may grant employees who work in excess of those hours described in Section 5.1 either compensatory time at a ratio of 1:1, or pay on an hour-for-hour, straight-time basis for the extra hours worked. The method of this compensation shall be determined solely by the Employer.

The language is now so clear that any member who chooses to work in excess of the normal workweek without compensation is presumably making their own conscious decision to volunteer time. The employer, your union and your negotiations team worked to remove any doubt as to overtime pay. I hope we don't spend a minute on this in our upcoming negotiations.

City

PEA's contract with the City is a tad more complex, but not much. Approximately 40% of the employees in our bargaining unit are at grade 11 or below. These folks have the benefit of a negotiated overtime compensation at 1 and ½ the hourly rates of pay. For over 20 years the calculations have been determined in the same way FLSA is determined. It reads:

6.2 An employee working in a class title which is in Salary Grade 11 or below shall receive overtime compensation in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The method of this compensation shall be determined solely by the Employer. It is understood that the FLSA provides overtime compensation only after forty (40) hours worked (not paid). Hours worked includes all approved paid rest/lunch breaks during the normal day on-duty.

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The remaining 60% of our covered employees are in grade 12 and above. They can earn overtime too, but only at the straight time calculation. Not at 1 and ½ times their rate of pay. However, the pay period that is measured to determine if overtime compensation is earned includes holiday pay; the grade 11 and below cannot include holiday pay under FLSA. It reads as follows:

6.2. An employee working in a class title which is in Grade 12 or above and who, in other than normal circumstances, works more than their assigned normal work day or assigned normal work period shall receive compensatory time or pay on a straight time basis for the extra hours worked. The method of compensation shall be determined solely by the Employer. Employees in Grade 12 or above may agree to work the following work days/periods:

- 6.2(1) 7 ¾-hour work day;*
- 6.2(2) 38 ¾-hour work week;*
- 6.2(3) 77 ½-hour bi-weekly pay period.*

Compensated, non-work hours such as approved sick leave, vacation or compensatory time shall not be considered in the determination of hours worked beyond an employee's specified work period; however, paid holiday time will be counted in the determination. If the number of hours worked is less than the totals in the employee's specified work period, non-working compensable time may be used to the extent they get the employee to the total number of hours in their category.

As a prior PEA President (Karin Anderson) used to say, overtime is paid for anything over 40 hours of "butts in seats." I would add that for grade 12 and above, its measured as butts in seats or home on holiday.

Please call me if you have questions. Overtime should not be a dilemma for us any longer. We've negotiated it. Let's protect and enjoy it.

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.

2024 Executive Committee

As elected at the October general membership meeting:

- President – Beth Ulrich
- Vice President – Sara Nurmela
- Treasurer – Kelsey Curran
- Secretary – Bri Nyquist
- Personnel Chair – Mary Henke-Haney
- City Negotiations Chair – Patty Lammers
- School District Negotiations Chair– Mike Dosedel

These changes will be reflected in the contact info in the last pages of the Q1 2024 newsletter.

PEA Calendar of Events 2024

January, date TBD Board & Stewards Meeting, location TBD
(stewards, special committee members, & executive board only)

April, date TBD General Membership Meeting, TBD

July, date TBD Board & Stewards Meeting, location TBD
(stewards, special committee members, & executive board only)

October, date TBD General Membership Meeting, Mancini's

HELP!

Looking for Suggestions for Meeting Locations

by Sara Nurmela, Vice President

Wow that 2024 meeting list above isn't very helpful, is it? Apologies for that. What happened?

For many years our steward meetings have been held twice a year at Joseph's Grill. When calling to make reservations this year, I learned that their banquet space policies have changed, and it will no longer suit PEA's needs for steward meetings. And at the 2023 spring general membership in April we nearly maxed out the capacity of their banquet space.

Can you help us find a new place for these meetings? Suggestions are appreciated!

Some of the criteria to consider for meeting location 'in the order listed' (as listed in our bylaws – Article IX, 4):

- handicap accessible
- private meeting place available
- within city limits of St. Paul
- meeting cost and location should not be cost prohibitive

Additional considerations:

- That the staff at the establishment are members of a union. (a bonus, but also difficult to find)
- 'Cost prohibitive' has historically been interpreted to mean that the location has free parking. Ideally they would not charge an additional fee for a room rental.
- Ability to accommodate or offer options for those with dietary restrictions if needed. (examples: gluten free, vegetarian, etc.)

Basic accommodation info:

Steward meetings: typically 18-25 people, we would like for everyone to be able to order off of a menu (not buffet style). Meetings twice a year, in January and July.

General membership meetings: typically 70-90 people, but our membership has increased, so it could be more. We had around 95 RSVP for last year's spring membership meeting. We are looking for a location for our April (spring) meeting.

I need suggestions! Please send your suggestions for locations to peanewsletter@gmail.com or sara.nurmela@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Stewards, I will send out an invite for the January meeting as soon as I am able to.



Deferred Compensation Benefits

by Patty Lammers, City Negotiations Chair & Mike Dosedel, School District Negotiations Chair
edited by Sara Nurmela, Newsletter Editor & Vice President

In October, both City and School District employees completed open enrollment, where we chose our benefit elections for 2024. If you haven't already, now is a great time to review your deferred compensation plan contributions, and to make sure you are taking advantage of this benefit.

What is a deferred compensation plan? (often referred to as 'deferred comp')

Deferred comp are funds taken out pre-tax that are withheld and paid at a future date – usually retirement.

Both the City and School District contracts have a dollar-for-dollar match for funds contributed to an eligible deferred comp plan. While you are making decisions about your other benefits, don't forget to factor in deferred comp so you can maximize the match. This benefit is separate from and in addition to your pension, and you must opt in if you have not.

Keep in mind your deferred comp funds are taken out pre-tax. If you have not taken advantage of this benefit in the past, PEA encourages you to get signed up and maximize your benefits in 2024.

City

Can enroll at any time, employer dollar-for-dollar match kicks in after 1 year of service with the city.

Deferred comp employer match amounts in current contract:

- Effective January 1, 2023: \$700/year
- Effective January 1, 2024: \$800/year (approx. \$31/paycheck)
- Effective January 1, 2025: \$900/year (approx. \$35/paycheck)

Contacts for City deferred comp plans:

Mark Isenberg, CFP
Voya Financial Advisors, Inc.
250 Marquette, Suite 900; Minneapolis, MN 55401
T 612 492-0209 ; C 612 802-1988;
misenberg@voyafa.com

Jira Nickie Klosterboer
Retirement Specialist
Minnesota State Retirement System (MSRS)
60 Empire Drive, Suite 300;
St. Paul, MN 55103
Cell: 612-247-6638
Email: jira.klosterboer@msrs.us

School District

Deferred comp employer match amounts in current contract:

- \$1,250/year for employees hired before 2014 (approx. \$48/paycheck)
- \$1,450/year for employees hired during or after 2014 (approx. \$56/paycheck)

The district provides more info at <https://www.spps.org/Page/3506>.

Contacts for School District deferred comp plans:

Fidelity offers a 403(b) plan. (Plan #51224)
You can work directly with Fidelity or contact EFS Advisors to assist you with setting up a Fidelity account. EFS Advisors can be reached at: (952) 466-1665 Email: mattm@efsadvisors.com or you can connect with Fidelity directly at: 1 (800) 343-0860 www.mysavingsatwork.com

VOYA (formerly ING) also offers a 403(b) plan. (Plan #666212) VOYA Portal for SPPS Employees
Capital Street Financial Services assists employees with setting up a VOYA account. They can be reached at: (651) 665-4300 Capital Street Website: www.capitalstreet.biz

MN Deferred Comp offers a 457 plan. They also offer the option for after-tax deductions into a Roth 457 account. Please note that while MNDCP's forms ask you to indicate a percentage of pay or dollar amount that you wish to contribute, the District can only accept dollar amounts. MNDCP can be reached at: 1-877-457-6466 or 651-284-7723 MNDCP General Information www.mndcplan.com

A Negotiated Win for City PEA Members' Safety – But we need your participation!

When the City Negotiations Committee began our work of listening to our members one of the top priorities that emerged among members was workplace safety. We heard from members across departments and locations there were a variety of safety concerns that needed to be discussed. When we entered negotiations, we knew that we had to keep this priority as a must for members. It may not bring members financial gain, but we knew that was affecting members quality of life and work. Some of the safety concerns we heard from members included:

- Safety coming to and from workspaces
- Not feeling safe while at work
- Having to deal with clients/patrons that can be dangerous or items that can be dangerous
- Pest infestations
- Unequal application of policies regarding emergencies (weather, bomb threats, etc)

We raised many of these concerns during our contract talks and let it be known we needed action on these issues. We came to agree that addressing these issues would need a longer-term strategy than just our negotiations, so we agreed to create our new PEA member Safety LMC (Labor Management Committee). This safety LMC is in effect for the duration of our contract. The memorandum of agreement states we have 180 days to create this new committee. However, the sooner we are ready on our end; the sooner we can push the city to begin. We heard from many that issues were urgent, so we need to step up immediately to make this happen.

So what are our next steps and how can you help make this a success?

We need those members who raised concerns to be a part of the LMC. We want members of different backgrounds/skills, departments, and locations so we can ensure we are representing the various concerns raised. The first steps of the LMC will be to determine when it meets, create policy for the committee, and establish pay status for time required to participate. These steps will establish the foundation for how this committee will be driven and what it can accomplish. The committee will focus on facility safety, safety training, hazardous material exposure and crisis intervention, but will not be limited to just those items.

I have committed to seeing this through and am willing to be a part of this committee; **now who among PEA members would like to serve with me?** Please email me your interest in the Safety LMC.

Sincerely,
Patty Lammers
City Negotiations Chair
patricia.lammers@ci.stpaul.mn.us



Professional Employees Association

CITY OF SAINT PAUL & INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 625

www.peaonline.org

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City Negotiations	Patty Lammers <i>patricia.lammers@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	367 Grove St., 55101	651-266-5455

Staff & Others

Legal Counsel	Mike Wilde, Esq. <i>mike.wilde24@gmail.com</i>	545 7th St. W Saint Paul, MN 55102	612-227-8425
Member Outreach & Education Coordinator	Michelle Bergman Aho <i>michelle.bergman-aho@spps.org</i>	1930 Como Ave., 55108	651-744-2226
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Newsletter	Sara Nurmela <i>peanewsletter@gmail.com</i>	HREEO – 280 City Hall, 15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102	651-266-8974
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Mailing Address	Professional Employees Association	PO Box 7333 Saint Paul, MN 55107-0333	

Stewards

Police, Fire, Emergency Management Public Health	Warsame Shirwa <i>warsame.shirwa@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	367 Grove St., 55101	651-266-8593
CAO, OFS, DSI	Jean Filipkowski <i>jean.filipkowski@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	CAO – 500 City Hall, 15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102	651-266-6262
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Libraries			
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