



## Notes from the President

by Sara Nurmela, President

2025 has been a very busy year!

A list of some of the items can be found to the right. It is not comprehensive but illustrates some of the topics and events in 2025.

In late October, the city proposed extensive changes to the civil service rules (CSR) for city employees. The CSR covers areas such as hiring, promotion, conduct, and discipline. They establish rights and responsibilities of government employees and the agencies they work for. They are designed to ensure fair and impartial treatment of employees and protect against political influence and discrimination. City Council must vote to approve any CSR changes before they are enacted.

It is important to note that our contract comes first, then falls back on the CSR for items not included in our contract. As referenced in Article 2.2 of our contract, there are some rules that do not currently apply to PEA: 6 = examination procedures; 7 = eligible lists; 8.A.3 = re: promotion eligible lists; 14 = promotion requirements.

Mike (Wilde – PEA’s legal counsel) and the executive board are reviewing the proposed changes, will reach a consensus, and provide a response to the city. It is complicated as these changes are happening around the same time the city’s contract negotiations will be starting. Careful consideration will be taken during this process to ensure our contract language is strong.

For reference, the existing civil service rules can be found [here](#).

Due to more pressing issues, the review and update of PEA’s constitution and bylaws has been ‘kicked down the curb’ a bit, but the executive board will continue to work on this in 2026. Changes to the constitution and bylaws are voted by members at a general membership meeting.

Many thanks and eternal gratitude to everyone that keeps PEA running and supporting our membership – our stewards, those that serve on committees, the executive board, legal counsel Mike Wilde, and members that bring issues to our attention. PEA would not be the organization it is without you!

As always, if you have contract-related questions or if something seems strange in your department, reach out to your [PEA steward](#).

### Some 2025 highlights

- Using data from member survey, sent letter to mayor about return to office
- Review of Professional & Respectful Workplace Policy in SPPS
- Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in Libraries for equitable language compensation premium pilot program
- Performance Pay refresher sessions (see [documents](#) at the bottom of page) and answering continued questions
- Library Labor Management Committee
- Clarifications about overtime
- Change in timekeeping software from TASS to Infor WFM
- Digital security incident
- Support of members at disciplinary meetings and in grievances
- SPPS retiree labor management committee
- City negotiations outreach meetings – coffee sessions and meetings by department
- Notification of proposed changes to civil service rules
- Review of Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML) policies for both city and schools
- New mayor elected; SPPS referendum passes
- Upcoming negotiations for city contract (very soon), and SPPS contract in 2026

# The Corner

by Mike Wilde, Legal Counsel

## *A goal without a plan is a daydream.*

One of the most profound lessons of 2025 has been the rapid change, and I would say deterioration, in the government's operation. Hold tight – this is not a political diatribe against any single development in the federal government's handling of prosecutions, tariffs or deportation. However, it is my attempt to disrupt the PEA members' security in the status quo. Yet, I fully realize many don't need a single reminder.

Grade school lessons made me believe that these United States were formed with three equal branches of government. High school civics classes established the standard for decorum that does not include name calling in high office. College economics informed me that tariffs hurt economic prosperity in the long run. And law school assured me that people were entitled to due process in a court of law. For those of us cuddled up in a security blanket of status quo, we are feeling a strong cold draft in 2025.

What about our own status quo? In November, 1999 PEA created our first known database of PEA members, including home addresses. That same year we began solidifying our accretion of the paralegals (formerly known as legal assistants) into our union following a successful hearing against AFSCME. We were also playing a leading role in the St. Paul Works Alliance, which was a mobilized effort actually named by PEA to fight Mayor Norm Coleman's idea to privatize the water department and other City functions. In the following month at PEA's annual holiday meeting, we learned that the City was planning to change the Civil Service Rules. What's important to understand is that back then we had only 317 members in PEA.

Since those seemingly innocent years gone by, PEA has grown by 52%! We are honored, and responsible, to represent at least 482 professional employees in two large public governments. If we accomplished a lot for a small independent union back then, it's much more now.

Members' work lives are fluctuating between remote and fixed, but nearly always 24/7 because of blurred lines. Information floods our inbox faster than humans can digest it. The lifeline of grant funding has been pulled back after years of reliable community investment. Public employees are now facing scrutiny that makes the early 90's seem like a welcoming party. Artificial intelligence creates a surveillance atmosphere for some people just trying to check in while working on the road in the community. Meanwhile, A.I. will likely be coming after our jobs once it devours the private sector workforce. And still... the City is planning to change the Civil Service Rules.

### **Do not let your union get complacent in the status quo. Things will change – dramatically.**

So... what to do? I closed my portion of the monthly Executive Board meeting this Wednesday reminding the Board that this is not the sleepy little bargaining unit that was created in 1978 by a few city engineers, accountants and librarians. This collection of employees must first start with the unwavering recognition that PEA is "We", not they. You have ownership. The terms and conditions of your employment can and will be affected by the contract, rules, policy and advocacy that YOU influence.

Unions are historically reactionary organizations. Labor unions and their entire membership usually believe that they exist behind the power curve. All too often the battle cry is, "What are we going to do about it!?" Start by recognizing your ownership. Then commit to get involved at whatever level you are comfortable with... then follow through.

Know who your steward is and make sure you're signed up as a member. More than 80% of those in the unit are members, but some of the remaining people don't even know. Go to the two general membership meetings every year. Read the newsletter. Volunteer to sit on a committee. Ask current leadership questions and participate in how we face the changes that are uncertain, yet inevitable.

PEA needs a strategic plan that matches the size and ambition of its workload. We will soon grow beyond 500 workers. PEA is already larger than several local unions affiliated with the carpenters, insulators, plumbers, painters and electricians. Yet, each of those organizations have facilities, staff and eyes to the future. This Executive Board will be completely different in five years. The issues will become more complex, the membership larger and the workload more demanding. It's time to create a strategic plan so we don't smother in complacency under the cozy blanket of the status quo.

### **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.

# City Negotiations Update

by Patty Lammers, City Negotiations Chair

The negotiations committee has completed our member outreach work. We held several listening sessions, coffee meetups, and conducted a member survey. We are using the information to focus our member priorities. Our top focuses are increased salaries, flexible scheduling, increased deferred comp, additional holiday/vacation. We noted special department needs such as uniform allowances, and on call payments.

Our next step is to start to create our opening proposal to HR that includes our priorities. We plan on starting our talks with HR in January/February. We will continue to provide you with updates as we go along. Once we reach a tentative agreement, we will present that to all members for final vote.

Finally, we started seeing the results from performance pay increases. While we do not have a full year yet, we have seen positive outcomes for members: 43.6% received 3% raises, 34.5 % received 2%, and 21.8% received 1%. We will be continuing to review these results looking at overall results as well as by department to ensure the process is fair and being followed as outlined in the contract.

## 2026 PEA Executive Committee

As elected at the October general membership meeting:

President – Sara Nurmela

Vice President – Sarah Brown

Treasurer – Kelsey Curran

Secretary – Joe Musolf

Personnel Chair – Mary Henke-Haney

City Negotiations Chair – Patty Lammers

School District Negotiations Chair – Steve Mundt

These changes will be updated online in 2026.

## PEA Calendar of Events 2026

**We'll send out additional info on the meetings below when we have it!**

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

**May, date TBD** ..... **General Membership Meeting, TBD**

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

**November, date TBD** ..... **General Membership Meeting, Mancini's**



# 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>Sara Nurmela</b><br><i>peanewsletter@gmail.com</i><br><i>sara.nurmela@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>    | HREEO – 280 City Hall,<br>15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102 | 651-266-8974 |
| <b>Vice President</b>      | <b>Sarah Brown</b><br><i>sarah.brown@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>  | SPRWS – 1900 Rice St., 55113                         | 651-266-1635 |
| <b>Treasurer</b>           | <b>Kelsey Curran</b><br><i>kelsey.curran@spps.org</i>   | 360 Colborne St., 55102                              | 651-767-8115 |
| <b>Secretary</b>           | <b>Joe Musolf</b><br><i>joemusolf@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>   | 1300 City Hall Annex,<br>25 W. 4th St., 55102 55102  | 651-266-6594 |
| <b>Personnel</b>           | <b>Mary Henke-Haney</b><br><i>mary.henke-haney@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>                              | 1100 North Hamline Ave., 55108                       | 651-632-2427 |
| <b>School Negotiations</b> | <b>Mike Dosedel</b><br><i>michael.dosedel@spps.org</i><br><i>peanegotiations.spps@gmail.com</i> | 360 S. Colborne St., 55102                           |              |
| <b>City Negotiations</b>   | <b>Patty Lammers</b><br><i>patricia.lammers@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>                                 | 367 Grove St., 55101                                 | 651-266-5455 |

## Staff & Others

|  |   |  |              |
|--|---|--|--------------|
| <b>Legal Counsel</b>                               | <b>Mike Wilde, Esq.</b><br><i>mike.wilde24@gmail.com</i>            | 353 7th St. W<br>Saint Paul, MN 55102                | 612-227-8425 |
| <b>Member Outreach &amp; Education Coordinator</b> | <b>Michelle Bergman Aho</b><br><i>michelle.bergman-aho@spps.org</i> | 1930 Como Ave., 55108                                | 651-744-2226 |
| <b>Member Outreach &amp; Education Coordinator</b> | <b>Tim Buer</b><br><i>tim.buer@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>                  | 1225 Estabrook Dr., 55103                            | 651-487-8271 |
| <b>LMCHI (City)</b>                                | <b>Kathleen Conger</b><br><i>kathleen.conger@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>    | Sun Ray Library<br>2105 Wilson Ave, 55119            | 651-266-7000 |
| <b>LMCHC (SPPS)</b>                                | <b>Katie Merten</b><br><i>katie.merten@spps.org</i>                 | 1930 Como Ave., 55108                                | 651-263-1568 |
| <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>Claire Huber</b><br><i>claire.huber@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>          | Libraries (SPPL) –<br>90 W 4th St., 55102            | 651-266-7475 |
| <b>Mailing Address</b>                             | <b>Professional Employees Association</b>                           | PO Box 7333<br>Saint Paul, MN 55107-0333             |              |

## Stewards

|  |  |  |              |
|--|--|--|--------------|
| <b>Police, Fire, Emergency Management, Public Health</b> | <b>Derek Peterson</b><br><i>derek.l.peterson@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>                                       | 367 Grove St., 55101                               | 651-266-5725 |
| <b>CAO, DSI</b>  | <b>Jean Filipkowski</b><br><i>jean.filipkowski@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>                                     | CAO – 500 City Hall,<br>15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102 | 651-266-6262 |
| <b>OFS</b>   | <b>Andrei Hahn</b><br><i>andrei.hahn@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>   | OFE – 700 City Hall,<br>15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102 | 651-266-8874 |
| <b>Libraries</b>   | <b>Peter Borgen</b><br><i>peter.borgen@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i><br><i>PeterBorgenUnionSteward@gmail.com</i> |  | 651-695-3700 |
| <b>Libraries</b>   | <b>Sarah Gerdes</b><br><i>sarah.gerdes@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>   |  | 651-266-7482 |
| <b>OTC, HREEO</b>  | <b>JD Miller</b><br><i>jd.miller@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>   | 1200 City Hall Annex,<br>25 W. 4th St., 55102      | 651-266-6730 |
| <b>Parks &amp; Recreation</b>                            | <b>Adam Strehlow</b><br><i>adam.strehlow@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>   | 1100 Hamline Ave N, 55108                          | 651-632-2432 |
| <b>Parks &amp; Recreation – Zoo &amp; Conservatory</b>   | <b>Anne Ahiers</b><br><i>anne.ahiers@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>   | 1225 Estabrook Dr., 55103                          | 651-487-8274 |
| <b>PED</b>   | <b>Jenn Dull</b><br><i>jennifer.dull@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>   | 1100 City Hall Annex<br>25 W. 4th St., 55102       | 651-266-8498 |
| <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>Annie Ross</b><br><i>annie.ross@spps.org</i>  | 360 Colborne St., 55102                            | 651-632-3777 |
| <b>School District</b>                                   | <b>Pam Bookhout</b><br><i>pamela.bookhout@spps.org</i>   | 1930 Como Ave., 55108                              | 651-744-5475 |
| <b>School District</b>                                   | <b>Alex Miller</b><br><i>alex.miller@spps.org</i>  | 1930 Como Ave., 55108                              | 612-437-2767 |
| <b>School District</b>                                   | <b>Laurie Niblick</b><br><i>laurie.niblick@spps.org</i>  | 360 Colborne St., 55102                            | 651-603-4347 |
| <b>Water</b>   | <b>Blake Castagneri</b><br><i>blake.castagneri@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>                                     | 1900 Rice St., 55113                               | 651-266-6267 |