



INSIDE

Negotiations Updates

Upcoming meetings

EAP Resources

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.

The Corner

By Mike Wilde, Legal Counsel

Members frequently contact PEA regarding a question about whether management has the right to carry out a certain practice that rankles our sensibilities. I always appreciate the questions because they arise out of a natural desire to be treated in a just and fair manner. Just as important is the belief among these individuals that a union should act as a unified voice for workers and provide a strong check on management overreach. So, they contact PEA.

This doesn't mean that the answers are always satisfying. But the very existence of employees having a collective voice is something that should never be taken for granted. Only approximately 11.2% of the entire American workforce operate under a formal labor agreement. So nearly 90% of working people don't even have a voice or an opportunity to shape their working lives. In contrast, about 36% of public-sector employees are represented by a union. So, despite the U.S. Supreme Court's Janus decision in 2018 (a topic for another newsletter), union representation remains significantly stronger in government workplaces than in the private sector. Even so, only a little more than one-third of public employees have the collective voice and protections that union representation can provide. The starting point for understanding management rights, as compared to workers' rights, in Minnesota's public landscape is the Public Employment Labor Relations Act (PELRA). This law was modeled after the National Labor Relations Act and came into existence about 40 years later. Nevertheless, I would argue that our state law has proven more effective than its federal predecessor in practicality and application.

The statutory language that goes to the heart of managerial rights is set forth in the following:

Minnesota Statute 179A.07, subd. 1. **Inherent managerial policy.** A public employer is not required to meet and negotiate on matters of inherent managerial policy. Matters of inherent managerial policy include, but are not limited to, such areas of discretion or policy as the functions and programs of the employer, its overall budget, utilization of technology, the organizational structure, selection of personnel, and direction of personnel....

This language seems overwhelming to most employees at first reading. Especially the "direction of personnel" which you might recognize as "duties as assigned", that is included in job descriptions. But don't despair. With union representation the employees are provided many legal rights that the vast number of employees never have, including just a few as established in 179A.06:

- **Expressing views** – any public employee or the employee's representative [can] express or communicate a view, grievance, complaint, or opinion on any matter related to the conditions or compensation of public employment or their betterment....

- **The right to organize** – Public employees have the right to form and join labor or employee organizations, and have the right not to form and join such organizations. Public employees in an appropriate unit have the right by secret ballot to designate an exclusive representative to negotiate grievance procedures and the terms and conditions of employment with their employer....
- **Negotiating** – Public employees, through their certified exclusive representative, have the right and obligation to meet and negotiate in good faith with their employer regarding grievance procedures and the terms and conditions of employment....

And my favorite, occasionally relied upon by PEA when other unions might not have access to employer's decision making, is specific to professional employees. It allows us the following: *Professional employees have the right to meet and confer ... with public employers regarding policies and matters other than terms and conditions of employment.* (emphasis added).

This brief article merely shares with you the basis upon which PEA can confront managerial practices that offend our sensibilities or undermines a healthy working environment. Much more follows and builds upon these legal rights. It is admittedly overstated to say that the laws or even our contract totally balances the power dynamic between employer and employees. Engaged membership, internal communication and zealous advocacy however all work to make our position stronger and our working lives better.

The work doesn't stop or start with just the PEA Executive Board or the stewards. No – it's the members that ultimately vote on the contracts, elect their leaders and voice their ideas. Please consider this when you're asked to attend, participate or speak up. Workers are either at the table ... or on the menu.

Stewards, Staff, & Executive Committee Meeting

Tuesday August 11, 2026

@ The Gnome Craft Pub - upstairs room
498 Selby Ave, Saint Paul

Meeting: 5:30 - 7:30pm

Invitation with full meeting details will be sent out soon to stewards and staff.

In the meantime, please contact VP Sarah Brown with questions
or to RSVP: sarah.brown@ci.stpaul.mn.us

SPPS Negotiations Update

By Steve Mundt, School District Negotiations Chair

The Schools Negotiations Committee has been hard at work, meeting weekly to prepare for the upcoming contract negotiations. Our opening proposal is 95% drafted and will be ready shortly. Negotiations are expected to commence soon after our contract expires on June 30, 2026.

Upcoming Meetings 2026

August 11 (Tuesday) –
Executive Board, Stewards +
Other Staff Meeting
@ Gnome Craft Pub

November 4 (Wednesday) –
General Membership Meeting,
@ Mancini's

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Resources

Both SPPS and the City of Saint Paul have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) available as a resource for employees.

SPPS offers an Employee Assistance Program provided by ComPsych® GuidanceResources®, which provides counseling (up to 5 sessions), legal and financial consultations, work-life assistance and crisis intervention services. This is a free, confidential resource available to all SPPS employees and anyone living in their household. Additional information is available on the District HR website:

<https://www.spps.org/about/departments/human-resources/benefits/employee-assistance>

City of Saint Paul Employee Assistance Program (EAP) - Offers five **free** sessions for all City of Saint Paul employees and their dependents.

Whether you're looking for professional counseling, financial advice, or stress management tools, the EAP is a free, confidential resource available 24/7 for you and your family. Go to <https://www.liveandworkwell.com> (access code: Medica) or call 1-800-626-7944. You do not need to be on the City's health insurance to access this free resource.

A flyer with additional resources for city employees can be found on the next page.



Mental Health Support

Options for ALL City employees, not just those on the Medica medical plan.



Mental Health Screening

Available to all

Take a quick, free, anonymous screening at mhascreening.org. Then receive supportive resources to enhance your resilience.



Well Space HSS Digital Calming Room

Open to all employees

healthsource-solutions.com/wellspace or use the QR code.



Optum Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Open to all employees

Visit: LiveAndWorkWell.com /// Access Code: medica



CALM Health App

Open to employees on the Medica insurance plan

Use the extensive library of meditations, stories, and soundscapes for help coping with stress or help falling asleep.

Use the QR code /// Access Code: medica



MeQ Resiliency Support

Open to employees on the Medica insurance plan

Build resilience, manage stress, and find moments of calm when you need it the most.

Start Here: medica.com/wellness/healthy-saint-paul



National Support Resources

Available to all



- **NAMI: Text NAMI to 741-741 /// Find group support at HeyPeers.com**
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration:** samhsa.gov/find-help
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)**
24/7 crisis line not just for suicide; for anyone who feels sad or hopeless, family and friends who are concerned about a loved one, those interested in treatment referral –the Lifeline connects you with a professional nearby.



In a Mental Health Emergency, Call 988



Maximize the New City Contract

By Patty Lammers, City Negotiations Chair

We have a new city contract, and PEA wants to ensure you are taking full advantage of your benefits.

- **Deferred Compensation** - Are you taking advantage of the deferred compensation match? Our match for 2026 is \$900 but will increase to \$1100 (\$42 per pay period) in 2027 and \$1200 (\$46 per pay period) in 2028. If you have not signed up, you are reducing your negotiated benefits each year. The money is taken out of your paycheck pre-tax.
- **Floating Holiday** - A new floating holiday will start in 2027. This is used like vacation time but does not carry over from year to year. Ensure you use this new holiday benefit yearly.
- **Performance Pay 2027** - For those members who are in or will be entering performance pay we encourage you to participate in the process. There are some key changes happening. 1) You must be evaluated on duties/activities that are part of your normal work duties. 2) SMART goals are no longer required but can be used if you and your supervisor agree; otherwise, you will be evaluated on your regular performance of work duties. 3) Your supervisor will be responsible for initiating your performance review. They have 60 days after your 2080 hours to complete your review. If it is not completed within that 60 days, you can notify your department head, and they will order it complete within 30 days. If it still is not completed in 30 days, a grievance can be filed. Members who have been most successful have been proactive with their supervisors in setting goals/expectation and meeting with them regularly. This yearly can mean an additional 1%-3% increase yearly (max 9%).
- **Longevity Pay Increases** - Longevity pay is increased to \$25 per pay period for 10 years of service, \$40 per pay period for 15 years of service, and \$60 per pay period for 20 years of service. The new rates are effective on January 1, 2026.

If you have questions on the contract or performance pay changes please contact City Negotiation Chair Patty Lammers, patricia.lammers@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Reminders about where we currently are in the contract process: Human Resources (HR) and Labor Relations are working on the process of City Council approval of our collective bargaining agreement. That can take a month (or more). We are hoping for approval in mid or late July.

After the contract is approved by City Council, HR and Payroll will work to establish an implementation timeline for back pay of the Across the Board wage increase (effective April 1, 2026) and Longevity Pay increases (eff January 1, 2026). PEA will notify membership of the backpay schedule as soon as we are able to.



2026 PEA UNION NEGOTIATIONS CONTRACT OVERVIEW

**3 year
contract:
2026-2028**

Added 30 day notice for changes made to remote work policy

Replaced "funeral" leave language with "bereavement"

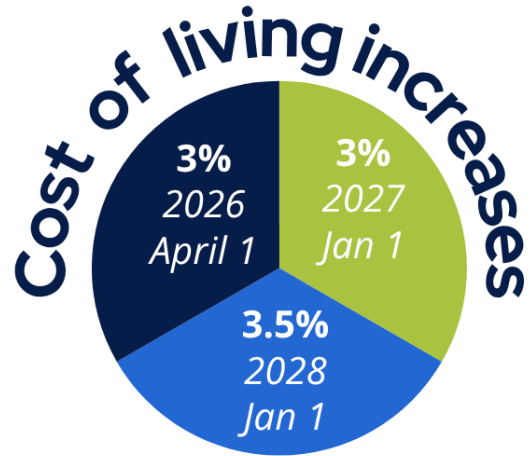
Renewed Language Differential pay for Libraries

Added clarification language for holidays happening during paid parental leave

Added arbitration for grevances must be referred for scheduling within 90 days

Increased OTC on call rates

Increased boot allowance & added uniform allowance for specific Parks dept. titles



Added One Floating Holiday

Beginning in 2027. Whether you want to use it for a religious holiday or the day after the Super Bowl, it's up to you!



Deferred Comp Match Increase in 2027 and 2028

2026: \$900* | 2027: \$1,100 | 2028: \$1,200

*what we get now



Longevity Pay Increase

NEW: These amounts are set and will NOT increase with COLA.

Years of service	Bi-weekly amount (starting in 2026)
10-14 years	\$24 (\$624/yr) → \$25 (\$650/yr)
15-19 years	\$32 (\$832/yr) → \$40 (\$1,040/yr)
20+ years	\$40 (\$1,040/yr) → \$60 (\$1,560/yr)

Bi-weekly amounts added to paychecks. Not part of base pay.



Performance Pay Process Adjustments

- SMART Goals are no longer required, evaluations can be based on your job responsibilities.
- Adjustments to evaluated goals/job duties will be given for delayed reviews
- Expanded grievance rights for the process (performance evaluation decisions still go through Dept. Heads)
- Reviews must occur at or around your 2080 anniversary in your job title.
- Supervisors should meet monthly with employees to provide avenues for mutual feedback.

Library Audit for Perf. Pay

- HR will share findings by Oct. 1, 2026.
- Potential back pay would be awarded pending audit results.

Appendix B vs Procedure

Both documents refer to the performance-based compensation plan. But what's the difference?

- **Appendix B** is part of the contract (and part of what you are voting on) and legally binding. Modification requires mutual consent.
- The **procedure document** is internal "at will" guidelines, subject to change by management, and NOT part of a union vote. The procedure doc should be used to familiarize yourself with the Performance Pay process.



Executive Committee

President	Sara Nurmela sara.nurmela@ci.stpaul.mn.us	HREEO - 280 City Hall, 15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102	651-266-8974
Vice President	Sarah Brown sarah.brown@ci.stpaul.mn.us	SPRWS - 1900 Rice St., 55113	651-266-1635
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Newsletter (effective Q3 2026)	Michaela Sy michaela.sy@ci.stpaul.mn.us	Libraries	651-266-8577
Webpage www.peaonline.org	Adam Worm adam.worm@ci.stpaul.mn.us	SPRWS - 1900 Rice St., 55113	651-266-6875
Mailing Address	Professional Employees Association	PO Box 7333 Saint Paul, MN 55107-0333	

Stewards

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School District	vacant		
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