



## Professional Employees Association, Inc.

### PROFESSIONAL VIEW

PEA'S NEWSLETTER FOR JULY-SEPTEMBER, 2007

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

### PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

**Submitted by David Peterson, President**

The Executive Committee has continued its schedule of monthly Tuesday night meetings at the union office. The agenda is dominated by committee reports, city or school district negotiation related topics, and the Business Agent/Legal Council Report on current grievances and other issues.

Some of the other current activities and discussion:

Appointed two new board members, because of mid-term resignations:

Treasurer - John Blackstone

City Negotiation Chair - Paul Hogrefe,

Appointed three new stewards:

Libraries - Kathleen Conger,

Public Works - Elizabeth Stiffler (serving as steward while Bill Vos is on leave),

Water - John Blackstone,

Appointed Rebekah Doyle as the PEA representative to the School District Labor Management Committee (LMC) for health insurance.

Reviewed information from the City and the School District LMC Health Insurance meetings,

Reviewed information on the funding status of PERA, with the scheduled employee increase in contribution from 5.75% to 6.00% effective January 1, 2008,

Discussed job description changes and responded to the City Human Resources Department,

Reviewed guidelines for working out of title situations,

Reviewed progress on arranging the union office (because of the recent office move);

Reviewed clerical service options for mail delivery and answering machine messages,

Discussed benefits verses cost of a "renter" property insurance policy,

Confirmed computer backup procedures,

Appointed attendees to two of the Mayor's 2007 budget presentations,

Set the Fall Steward-Board Membership meeting agenda,

Worked on the arranging of the 2008 calendar of events.

Donated \$200 to the City Picnic.

Again, thanks to PEA members for your support !

## PEA Calendar of Events

2007

Sept. 11th Combined Steward-Executive  
Committee Meeting  
Joseph's Grill—5:00 PM  
December 5<sup>th</sup> General Membership Meeting  
(with elections)  
Mancini's – 5:30 PM

2008

March 4<sup>th</sup> Combined Steward-Executive  
Committee Meeting  
Joseph's Grill – 5:00 PM

### Ongoing

The Executive Committee Generally meets the first Tuesday of the month at the union office at 5:30.

## New Board Members and New Stewards

**from David Peterson**

### **A welcome to the new stewards:**

Libraries - Kathleen Conger  
Public Works - Elizabeth Stiffler (serving as  
steward while Bill Vos is on leave)  
Water - John Blackstone

### **And a welcome to the new Board members (due to mid-term vacancies related to promotions):**

Treasurer - John Blackstone  
City Negotiation Chair - Paul Hogrefe

(We are in the process of looking for new  
stewards to replace John & Paul.)

## Sayings worth reading

All those who believe in psychokinesis raise  
my hand.

I almost had a psychic girlfriend but she left  
me before we met.

OK, so what's the speed of dark?

How do you tell when you run out of invisible  
ink?

Hard work pays off in the future. Laziness  
pays off now.

Many people quit looking for work when they  
find a job.

## Biography of our new City Negotiations Chair

**Submitted by: Paul Hogrefe, Systems  
Consultant III, Office of Technology /  
Information Services**

Hello all, I am the new PEA city negotiations chair. I have been working for the city for 18 years now. I started out working on the Finance System and now work mainly with the STAMP Central Address Database and AMANDA which is an enterprise system that handles permits, inspections, work orders, complaints, zoning cases and many other business processes for many different departments. I live in Minneapolis, just one block west of the Mississippi, with my partner of 14 years, Jim. Outside of work I prefer to be out in the garden or on my bicycle rather than in front of a computer.

I will be looking forward to all of your input on what is important to you as we enter the negotiations cycle this fall. I am a pretty organized and detail-oriented person, so I am hoping to serve you well, but I will definitely need help so please let me know if you are willing to help crunch some numbers or research issues that come up, thanks!

## More Sayings Worth Reading

I intend to live forever -- so far, so good.

If Barbie is so popular, why do you have to buy her friends?

24 hours in a day ... 24 beers in a case ... coincidence?

When I'm not in my right mind, my left mind gets pretty crowded.

I'd kill for a Nobel Peace Prize.

Borrow money from pessimists -- they don't expect it back.

Half the people you know are below average.

For every action, there is an equal and opposite criticism.

A conscience is what hurts when all your other parts feel so good.

## **Professional Employees Association (PEA) Steward—Executive Committee Meeting Agenda**

### **Time & Place:**

The meeting will be held **Tuesday, September 11, 2007**, at Josephs Grill, 140 South Wabasha in Saint Paul (651-222-2435).

5:00 to 5:30 Social time

5:30 to 6:00 Steward meeting

6:00 to 6:30 Dinner

6:30 to 7:00 Steward meeting (continued if necessary)

7:00 to 8:00 Executive Committee Meeting

### **Agenda:**

- 1) Steward Meeting – newsletter update (David Peterson)
- 2) Steward Meeting – recent labor issues (Mike Wilde)
- 3) Steward Meeting – city health insurance 2008 to 2010 (Kay Wittgenstein)

At the conclusion of the Steward meeting, the stewards are dismissed. However, stewards may stay for the Executive Committee meeting (This may involve discussion of confidential grievance situations that can not be communicated beyond the Executive Committee meeting).

- 4) Executive Committee Meeting (reports, old and new business)

### ***Reservations Required:***

RSVP to Kay Wittgenstein (651-266-1285 or [kay.wittgenstein@co.ramsey.mn.us](mailto:kay.wittgenstein@co.ramsey.mn.us)) on or before September 7, 2007.

You will be using the standard Joseph's menu at the meeting to order dinner. You also can order a Nonalcoholic beverage.

**Thank you for your participation in PEA !**

## THE CORNER

By Mike Wilde, Legal Counsel

I recently attended Mayor Coleman's budget address to the City's unions. Before I get into some of the details that he presented to us, it is worth noting that this Mayor has shown significantly more respect and interest in the people that spend their working days making this City operate: the employees. So despite what was going to be a bleak financial outlook, it was pleasurable getting the news first hand from our boss. The last two administrations seemed to treat the workforce as more of an afterthought. Now we are invited as an integral part. There ... that is the good news.

The City is facing a \$17 million deficit. This is a reality that the Mayor proposes to address with a plan A or an alternative plan B. The former hinges on developments that we all must hope are going to result from what happens at the State Legislature in the highly publicized special session that has yet to materialize at the Capital. The tragic bridge collapse on Interstate 35W caused Governor Pawlenty to publicly reverse his stance on new dollars that the state is willing to invest in public infrastructure. As you know, Governor Pawlenty has twice vetoed increases in the Minnesota gas tax. But now he has agreed to entertain such an increase if political parties can agree to the scope and agenda of the special session.

Mayor Coleman and other political leaders have consistently framed the infrastructure investment pledge as one that must include a return of prior local government aid (LGA) funding. Therein lays a key piece of the puzzle for St. Paul to combat this large deficit problem. If the Legislature enters a special session and increases the LGA funding, Mayor Coleman's plan A is the route. The Mayor and his friendly political forces will attempt to regain \$10.2 million in LGA. If successful, the Mayor proposes the following:

- Hiring 25 new police officers
- Acquiring 125 new squad cars
- Adding a mobile Rec team under changes in the Parks program
- Increasing the levy by about \$4.9 million

Although these proposals don't seem to directly impact PEA members outside of the police department and maybe a few in the Parks, the

overall impact will surely be better for all public employees than if the LGA is again denied.

The Mayor elaborated on inevitable changes in the Parks Department. This is due, in part, to the City's impossible task of maintaining the 42 recreation buildings that it currently operates. Up to 8 recreation centers will be transferred to private/public operations or closed. But the good news is that the Mayor is confident that changes in work shifts and the creation of a mobile rec team will actually increase the number of full-time employee position – in other words, no layoffs in the hard hit Parks Department. Likewise, staffing and scheduling changes are likely in the library, but the Mayor did not provide much detail on that yet, except to say that he did not anticipate layoffs.

On behalf of PEA members, the news of no anticipated layoffs provides some comfort. But we also recognize that our members face the same increased cost-of-living that the City does in its 6.0% inflation upswing. The Mayor was not about to share details about possible wage increases or negotiations strategy. Yet it seemed fairly clear to me that his "better service at better prices" goal is not rooted in pay freezes as was the case with a prior Mayor Coleman in the mid 90's. Obviously these details will unfold as negotiations begin at the close of the calendar year. At this time, however, I can say that the labor-management committee on health insurance already embarked on solid efforts to combat rising health care costs. Those results are being shared with you through your stewards and on the PEA website. The wage components will be hammered out in the months to come.

If LGA is again denied then the Mayor will revert to a bleaker Plan B. This would involve a much smaller increase in the number of officers and squad cars and it would be without the rec team proposal. The levy would increase by about \$10.2 million. Although the advances made against skyrocketing health insurance would remain constant, because they are already agreed to, the wage increase component of negotiations will possibly be more contentious and difficult.

The Mayor's budget proposal is easily accessible in great detail (470 pages) on the City's website so I won't try to incorporate that here. What is important for anyone working or living in St. Paul is the success of the push for LGA funding. PEA members must contact their

## The Corner (con.)

elected officials and emphasize their interests. The power of a phone call is overlooked. As educated and professional employees it would be simple for us to make a phone call, submit letters to the editor, call talk shows or contact the Governor to stress that St. Paul can no longer be starved out by the State. LGA money has formed part of our revenue sources for years and our work, our City and our standard of living

rely on a fair return of those revenues. This is necessary to make possible what the Mayor calls for ... that St. Paul become the Most Livable City in America.

Take action individually. Little steps can help. Also contact your PEA leaders and negotiation team members to help with ideas on how we can succeed in improving your next contract

## City of St. Paul Health Coverage 2008-2010

by Kay Wittgenstein

The Labor Management Committee on Health Insurance has been meeting for several months to determine what insurance carrier, plans and payment arrangements will be in place for years 2008, 2009 and 2010.

As we all know the expense of medical insurance continues to grow at incredible rates. We heard from BC/BS, Medica and Health Partners. After careful study of the proposals Health Partners was selected to be our carrier. In 2008 there is a 17% increase in cost from Health Partners, 9.5% in 2009 and 9.5% in 2010. This is substantially lower than BC/BS and Medica declined to submit a proposal. Due to the high cost of insurance both insurers and insured continue to try to be creative in ways to lower the cost of insurance.

We will have three Health Partner plans to choose from: (These are for both single and family coverage.) \$1500 deductible, \$500 deductible and a new plan called Distinctions.

After the plans were chosen and we knew the cost Health Partners was charging, we proceeded into very difficult and complex negotiations to determine the cost split between the City and employee. All Unions and Associations bargained together so all active employees are covered under the agreement. I have included the cost of each coverage at the bottom of this notice.

The deductible medical plans will be similar to 2007. This can be found on pages 24 and 25 of the employees benefit handbook. The Distinctions is a combination of 2007's other plans. As you will see, it is very expensive.

Under the \$1500 **single deductible** plan the City has agreed to **reimburse** the employees through a health flex spending account up to \$1200.00(\$100/ month) in **2008**.

Medical expenses can include co-pays, prescriptions, all the current items allowed under our flexible spending accounts **including medical expenses for dependents**. You can put up to \$4000.00 in this account.

The reimbursements will start with the money you contribute and then the up to \$1200.00 the City contributes. If you do not use the \$1200.00 for medical expenses in 2008 you do not receive the money.

For years 2009 and 2010 we are looking at other pre tax vehicles for reimbursement such as a VEBA account. Again, **this is just for the \$1500.00 single deductible plan**. A VEBA or similar account would allow you to withdraw the money when needed for medical expenses but also let you save what you do not spend. In 2009 and 2010 the City will contribute \$75.00 a month to this vehicle.

At our PEA Board meeting on Tuesday August 7<sup>th</sup> the Board voted to accept the medical plan and payment agreement for 2008, 2009, 2010 for City of St. Paul employees.

**It is imperative to sign up for benefits this year** even if you think you will have the same coverage. If you do not sign up, the default (what the City puts you in) may be more expensive than you realize. You will be **registering on line** this year so please get familiar with the **Benefit Ready** Program. ([www.BenefitReady.Com](http://www.BenefitReady.Com)).

# CITY HEALTH INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION PROPOSAL

July 24, 2007

Tentative Agreement

2008

Plan		Monthly Premium	City Contribution	Employee Contribution
\$1500 Deductible	Single	\$427.95	\$527.95	-\$100.00*
	Family	\$1,116.75	\$1,040.75	\$76.00
\$500 Deductible	Single	\$525.51	\$525.51	\$0.00
	Family	\$1,373.61	\$901.86	\$471.75
Distinctions	Single	\$593.87	\$457.54	\$136.33
	Family	\$1,552.29	\$901.86	\$650.43

2009

Plan		Monthly Premium	City Contribution	Employee Contribution
\$1500 Deductible	Single	\$468.61	\$568.61	-\$100.00*
	Family	\$1,222.84	\$1,120.75	\$102.09
\$500 Deductible	Single	\$575.43	\$567.93	\$7.50
	Family	\$1,504.10	\$926.86	\$577.24
Distinctions	Single	\$650.29	\$482.54	\$167.75
	Family	\$1,699.76	\$926.86	\$772.90

2010

Plan		Monthly Premium	City Contribution	Employee Contribution
\$1500 Deductible	Single	\$513.13	\$613.13	-\$100.00*
	Family	\$1,339.01	\$1,214.00	\$125.01
\$500 Deductible	Single	\$630.10	\$615.10	\$15.00
	Family	\$1,646.99	\$951.86	\$695.13
Distinctions	Single	\$712.07	\$507.54	\$204.53
	Family	\$1,861.24	\$951.86	\$909.38

*This proposal is contingent on the parties reaching agreement. The City reserves the right to withdraw part or all of this proposal at any time prior to final agreement and to adopt a different position without prejudice as to prior offers or counteroffers including this offer.*

\*Determination of tax free account will be selected by LMCHI. If VEBA or similar selected, amount reduced by \$25 per month.

For the City

For the Unions  
AFSCME Clerical

AFSCME Technica

AFSCME Legal

CCEA

Fire

FSA

Local 70

Machinists

PEA

Police

SPSO

Tri-Council

## 2007 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT	DAVID PETERSON	SCHOOLS - 360 Colborne, 55102	696-9626
VICE PRES.	KAY WITTGENSTEIN	PHD - 555 Cedar St., 55101	266-1285
TREASURER	JOHN BLACKSTONE	1900 N Rice St., 55113	266-6324
SECRETARY	BRIAN KRAWIECKI	LIEP - 8 E. 4 <sup>th</sup> St., #200, 55101	266-9134
NEGOTIATIONS			
CITY	PAUL HOGREFE	210 City Hall, 15 W Kellogg, 55102	266-6783
SCHOOL	REBEKAH DOYLE	SCHOOLS - 360 Colborne, 55102	767-8366
PERSONNEL	KARIN ANDERSON	CAO - 750 City Hall, 15 W. Kellogg, 55102	266-8765

## STEWARDS

CAO & OFS	REGINA ETOLL	500 City Hall, 15 W. Kellogg, 55102	266-8726
FIRE	PAULA PETERSON	100 E. 11 <sup>th</sup> St., 55101	228-6203
LIBRARIES			
CENTRAL	SUSAN HENRY	MMC, 2109 Wilson Ave., 55119	501-6305
FULL TIME	KATHLEEN CONGER	Highland Pk, 1974 Ford Pkwy., 55116	695-3700
BRANCHES			
PART TIME	SUSAN McMAHON	Highland Pk, 1974 Ford Pkwy., 55116	699-6756
BRANCHES			
LIEP & HR	FRANK BERG	8 E. 4 <sup>th</sup> St., #200, 55101	266-9072
PARKS & REC	BRIAN TOURTELOTTE	300 CH Annex, 25 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St., 55102	266-6414
P.E.D.	CRAIG O'BRIEN	1100 CH Annex, 25 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St., 55102	266-6695
POLICE	MARSHA PANOS	367 Grove St., 55101	292-3781
PUB. HEALTH	SUSAN MYRAN	555 Cedar St., 55101	266-1210
SCHOOL DIST.			
	LYLA GRIFFIN	360 Colborne, 55102	767-8288
	COLLEEN SHIELDS	360 Colborne, 55102	767-3472
TECH. & MAN.	PAUL HOGREFE	210 City Hall, 15 W. Kellogg, 55102	266-6783
PWO			
	BILL VOS ( <i>on leave</i> )	700 CH Annex, 25 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St., 55102	266-6113
	ELIZABETH STIFFLER	800 CH Annex, 25 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St., 55102	266-6210
WATER	JOHN BLACKSTONE	1900 N Rice St., 55113	266-6324

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