

**TECHNICAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION**  
**MONTHLY MEETING – April 21, 2004 (12 noon – 1 p.m.)**  
**Meeting Summary**

*Board Members Present:* Ken Madden, President  
Eric Mandel, Treasurer  
Patty Overby, Secretary

**Nominations for Grievance Committee**

Ken reminded members that the membership had passed the Bylaw amendment for the Grievance Committee at the February meeting. The amendment provides for four members to be appointed for a two-year term by the Board from candidates that have been nominated. He said that John Whitney had been nominated at the March meeting but had to withdraw. Two others have been nominated: Lisa Taylor and Sue Michaud.

We still need at least two nominations. Nominations will be open until we have a full slate.

**Treasurer's Report**

1. Account Update

Eric reviewed the following:

- The \$10,000 reserve in a money market account for Transit arbitration is now at \$6,500. Money has been spent for the first week of Transit arbitration that was held in March. We now estimate the cost will run between \$12,000 - \$17,000. Will probably need to suspend payment to Jim Cline, legal counsel, in order to pay the total cost of Transit arbitration. Eric has discussed this with Jim and he understands the situation. We pay a retainer for Cline's services based on the number of members in TEA. TEA is getting a good deal with this arrangement.
- \$1,900 is coming in each month from the voluntary contributions (\$140,000 is the total debt thus far for paying back voluntary contributions).

2. Special Assessment for TLT's

Eric stated he is still working on some options to deal with some members' concerns about inequity of the special assessment on TLTs. The original rationale behind the special assessment was that this is the cost of developing the two contracts and everyone should pay for this because everyone benefits. Eric is still analyzing the impacts and after refining will present at the September annual meeting. Members will then have an opportunity to vote on maintaining the current situation or adopting a combination of how far back the assessment should go. Until we have a contract, Eric noted he did not want to put a cap on it.

Discussion included:

- How do you handle people who no longer work at King County that have paid voluntary dues? (Eric stated that the Board had made a decision to pay these members back what they contributed unless they have submitted something in writing that they are willing to forgo being paid back.)
- Ken stated he would prefer not waiting until September to have members vote on this issue - it needs to occur earlier. Eric said he would work on something and discuss further with the Board.
- Is this an issue of equity rather than a concern that the organization may lose dollars if members do not pay the full amount? (Response: A straw poll of members present showed the majority felt it should be foremost a matter of equity.)
- Thought that eventually, the special assessment would be a flat fee for new employees. (Response: it could be - annually we are obligated to come back to the membership at the annual meeting in September to review the financial plan. Members will have an opportunity to vote at that time each year on any proposed change.)
- What percentage is assessed for voluntary dues and permanent dues once the contracts are signed? (Response: the membership approved a dues assessment rate of .4% of regular hourly wages).
- Is assessment calculated on overtime? (Response: no only on regular wages.)
- Suggest everyone pays the same via an initiation fee - this is common in most unions. (Response: this was examined and the membership felt it was not fair for someone in an administrative position to pay the same as someone in a higher paid position. The Board instead offered an election between choosing a higher dues rate with no special assessment or a lower dues rate and a one-time assessment based on a formula including wage rate and months since bargaining unit recognition. The membership voted for the latter option.)

## **Update on Contract Negotiations**

1. Transit Arbitration: Ken stated that the Transit TEA members had met yesterday to vote on a non-wage package proposed by King County. He reiterated that there were few tentative agreements generated between TEA and King County so all of the non-wage related issues were taken into arbitration. The first week of arbitration in March focused on wages. The second session scheduled next week was to finish on the wage issues. A tentative time had been scheduled the first of July to deal with non-wage issues. At the end of the first arbitration session, the arbitrator asked both sides to meet and try to resolve as many of the non-wage issues as they could prior to the second arbitration session scheduled next week.

TEA and the County met to work on resolving the 32 non-wage issues. The results were presented and discussed with Transit employees last Thursday, and then further discussed and voted on yesterday. The package was accepted as presented. Transit will get \$1,200 for accepting the package when implemented, after the arbitration decision is made. If anyone wants a copy of the non-wage contract language that was approved, contact Ken or Patty.

Ken said that this language would be incorporated into the wage issues/decision to be made by the arbitrator.

Ken reminded members that the arbitration session is open to TEA members to listen and he encouraged all members to come if only for short periods. We will get information out to members informing them of the days, times and location.

2. WTD Negotiations: Ken said TEA has had several individual meetings with members of the County Council's Labor, Operations & Technology Committee to prepare them for a potential presentation by TEA per K.C. Ordinance 11480,

King County feels they have presented their last, best and final offer. The Wastewater Negotiating Team does not feel it is the best and final offer. The County had asked the County Prosecutor's Office if they can unilaterally implement a contract with TEA's Wastewater group and got concurrence from them. The County had also requested the State mediator certify that we are at an impasse. However, the State mediator would not certify this and thus mediation presumably would need to continue. The next date for mediation has not been set yet.

The Negotiating Team has taken steps pursuant to the County's 11480 Ordinance that the County is not bargaining in good faith. In meeting with Councilmember Julia Patterson, chair of the LOT Committee, TEA said we wanted COLA's released for our members and to continue working through the mediation process, consistent with the approach granted to other unions in recent action before the LOT Committee. Chairman Patterson asked for two weeks to see if she could resolve this issue with the County Executive's office and Human Relations. She has until April 29<sup>th</sup> - if there is no movement, TEA is prepared to present its issues before the LOT Committee on May 11.

Discussion occurred on the following:

- A member said they'd rather have COLA paid later on what they would have been making with retro pay. (Response: that is not in alignment with what the bargaining team's strategy is. There are a lot of employees

frozen at top step who would not get retro pay besides COLA, and it is best to get the COLA now. The implementation of retro pay – Class/Comp or otherwise – and how it is calculated is a separable issue which is still up for mediation.)

- What are the top holdups? (Response: wages and classifications. On the one hand, the County seems concerned about the impact of giving higher wage ranges to Class/Comp positions, as it would require them to pay the same ranges to other non-WTD County employees with the same titles. On the other, while the County has agreed in principle to give non-Class/Comp titles to WTD classifications to avoid this, it has only offered to do so for ranges below that of Class/Comp.)
- What about filing a lawsuit (Response: not advisable, given the extended time frame that would then be required which could delay settlement for years).
- How will the Roberts Duncan lawsuit impact TEA? (TEA members need to check with Bendich law firm to see if their name is included. It should cover eligible employees from January 1998 until April 2001 when TEA was recognized. Eric said there is a County website - you can contact them and they will tell you if you are qualified at [www.metrockc.gov/legal/robertsduncan](http://www.metrockc.gov/legal/robertsduncan).)

### **King County Medical Survey**

There was a question as whether or not TEA members should respond to this survey. Ken noted that members could choose to participate as individuals, but that TEA as an organization is not making a recommendation on their members' participating. The survey and its implications will be discussed by a labor coalition (JMIC) which TEA is currently not a part of.

### **Political Contacts and Member Actions**

A question was raised of how much money was contributed to County Executive Ron Sims' campaign. Ken stated that TEA gave a \$150 donation at a fundraiser held last week. The Board made a decision to make the contribution and use the opportunity to meet with Executive Sims and to express our concerns about the wastewater labor contract. Ken noted that the Board decision to make the donation was not unanimous.

What is the dollar limit that TEA can make in political contributions? Ken said per the Bylaws there is no limit. The Board has made a policy to limit contributions to \$300 or less to those County Council members who are on the LOT Committee, had of Finance or Budget Committees, or other viable candidates.

Meeting adjourned at 1 p.m.

Patty Overby, TEA Secretary