

TECHNICAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
MONTHLY MEETING – March 17, 2004 (12 noon – 1 p.m.)
Meeting Summary

Board Members Present: Ken Madden, President
Elizabeth Morgan, First Vice-President
Dave Crippen, Second Vice-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 nominations were now open.

John Whitney, Chair of the Council of Reps. was nominated.

There were no other nominations at this time. In response to a question as to when nominations would close, Ken stated he would discuss with the Board and put an article in the next TEA Times.

Update on Contract Negotiations

1. WTD Negotiations: Ken distributed a copy of the letter WTD Negotiation Committee had drafted and Ken signed delivered to Ron Sims on March 10. He said this is the second level of three tiers in the Council Ordinance 11480 process. The Executive has fifteen days from the date of the letter to respond to TEA, or one week from Friday. If TEA is dissatisfied or if the Executive fails to respond, TEA can then go directly to the Council's Labor, Operations and Technology (LOT) Committee, chaired by Julia Patterson.

Ken and Eric Mandel appeared before the LOT Committee in support of the Capital Productivity Pilot Program Initiative. They took the opportunity to inform the Committee that while TEA supports this initiative and other methods to improve efficiency, we are going on three years without a contract and COLA.

Councilmembers Patterson and Irons have asked to meet with TEA representatives. Last Friday three of the Board members met with Councilmember Ferguson's legislative aide (he is the newly elected County Councilmember replacing Cynthia Sullivan). Eric has also made a call to Dwight Peltz's office.

Roger Browne, WTD Negotiating Team, stated that Jim Cline has proposed four meeting dates and has given Nick McCudden (King County HR) an agenda for a future negotiation session . There has been no response from Nick so far. A worse case would be if KC refuses to meet again which may lead to their enforcing the WTD contract. However, this seems unlikely until the Ordinance 11480 process already discussed has gone through all the steps.

Discussion followed on the following:

- What can WTD members do? (Roger said that the Negotiating Team had prepared a set of talking points and sample letter that interested members could send to Executive Sims and the County Councilmembers. He distributed copies of these. If members choose to send emails or letters, they need to send from home and not use KC email. Ken responded that now is the time for members to act. Letters need to be send this week or by early next week.)
2. Transit Arbitration: Dave summarized the arbitration session held the first week in March. The decision was made by both attorneys to focus on wage issues this session. TEA presented its case the first three days and King County only got part way through their presentation on the fourth day. The wage issue will be picked up again in the next arbitration session scheduled for April 19-23.

The April session was to deal entirely with non-wage issues. Both sides have tentatively decided to meet the week of July 6 if need be to wrap up the non-wage issues.

Both sides will attempt to see how many of the 32 non-wage issues can be settled outside arbitration.

It will take another 2-3 months after the last arbitration date for the Arbitrator to develop his and write up his decision, which is binding.

There was discussion on the following:

- What were Dave's personal observations of the process?
- There are several groups within Transit that feel they have not been represented the way they wanted to be during arbitration. The feeling is that the focus was entirely on the Engineers. Need to get the Grievance Committee in place so we can deal with work out-of-class issues.

Treasurer's Report/Initial Assessment Follow-Up

(1) Account Update: Eric reported the following

Total outstanding debt is around \$138,000, mostly owned to our own members.

196 members are making monthly voluntary contributions

Cash flow continues to be positive and monthly expenses are covered by voluntary contributions; however, the upcoming costs for arbitration will require using the Money Market reserve funds.

- (2) Impact of Special Assessment on New TEA Members: Eric noted there was concern expressed at last month's regular meeting of why new employees should be required to pay the full assessment for costs that occurred before they came on board? The assessment covers the cost of developing the contract. There is a heavier one-time burden on those employees who have come later and to those employees who have been here long but have not been voluntarily contributing, since monthly voluntary contributions will be credited to the assessment. One option is to start assessing as a multiplier based on month of hire, which shifts the burden off of new hires and on to more senior staff.

Eric stated that the Board has begun to take a look at this issue and is in the process of reviewing and discussing possible proposed options. The Board, however, needs to look at the entire financial picture. Possible options include setting a floor for those members here now based on the adopted policy, or setting a ceiling where everyone will pay up to that ceiling.

Ken reiterated that when the vote was taken in September on the dues and special assessment, there were several issues raised by the membership, which the Board agreed to look at and come back to the membership. One of those issues was the impact of the special assessment on TLT's, which was addressed at the February 25 meeting. This is another issue.

Discussion occurred as follows:

- The general consensus of some employees is that people who have not been paying need to be penalized - everyone should pay the initial assessment. (Eric noted that we are not proposing to lower fees for those employees who are not choosing to voluntarily contribute; only those that have come into employment since recognition.)
- Suggest keep Special Assessment the same but extend the payment option.
- An employee noted he had paid union dues prior to being employed by D&C - he would rather pay a \$200 initiation fee.
- Let's not penalize new members - let's raise the dues.

- A suggestion was made that employees who come after April 1, 2001 should be prorated - do not think we should have an initiation fee because we are different than other unions.

Eric said that he would keep TEA members updated as options are developed for consideration by the members.

Meeting adjourned at 1 p.m.

Patty Overby, TEA Secretary