

**TECHNICAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION**  
**MONTHLY MEETING – June 21, 2006 (12 noon – 1 p.m.)**  
**Meeting Summary - DRAFT**

*Board Members Present:* Eric Mandel, President  
Ade Franklin, Vice President  
Patty Overby, Secretary  
Keven Sandquist, Treasurer  
Roger Browne, Wastewater Bargaining Chair  
Dave Crippen, Transit Bargaining Chair  
John Phillips, Council of Reps. Chair

**Announcement**

Eric reminded members to complete their participation in the Healthy Incentives Program and submit logs (if not online) to Harris Healthtrends by June 30<sup>th</sup>. Contact info can be found on the County employee website at <http://www.metrokc.gov/employees/>. Once members do either the required two calls and or log activities, you qualify for Gold.

**WW Productivity Incentive Fund Use Feedback**

Eric stated that there was an article in the TEA Times that we would be soliciting feedback from Wastewater members on the use of Productivity Incentive Funds for travel/training. He stated that Wastewater achieved 2005 savings - half of this goes back to the rate payers in the form of reduced rates. The rest is divided between WW staff bonus payouts, the Rainy Day Fund (to provide a cushion if Wastewater does not make targets in future years) and the Incentive Fund. This is a continuation of discussion from the last general TEA meeting.

He then asked Brian Duncan, one of the three TEA representatives on the Productivity Incentive Fund Committee, to speak on what the Committee members would like from TEA members.

Brian gave background on the Incentive Fund (when it began and why). He noted that the Committee is made of representatives from all Wastewater unions. The Committee has agreed to take a small percentage of the total eligible funds and spend it on refreshments for productivity-enhancing workshops/conferences.

He said the Wastewater TEA representatives on the Committee want feedback on if it is reasonable to spend some portion to send staff to training/workshops they would otherwise be unable to go to due to the County's rules. There is about \$20,000 that could be spent on this endeavor. The TEA representatives want feedback on if it should be done and if so, what are the criteria. He noted that this input would guide both future funding decisions and criteria, though the committee already agreed to allocate the \$20,000 for this year.

Following are individual comment highlights from the discussion that ensued:

- Does a portion of this go to experimental projects? (Response: could be but no one has given us suggestions or parameters.)
- Wastewater management said the County's travel process would be streamlined. This hasn't occurred.
- Believe the County should pay for employee training and workshops and money should not be taken out of the Incentive Fund. It sets a bad precedent.
- Maybe there could be a cap set on how much money we would spend on training so it does not become the primary source. (Response: there isn't yet an individual cap, but the total is already capped for the year.)
- The County requires staff to fill out a form requesting travel for training and you have to justify it. Think if the Committee decides to allocate money from the Incentive Fund for travel for training/workshops, there should be a similar form with required justification on how this will lead to enhanced productivity.
- Understand that Don Tyler has final approval from the Committee's recommendation on spending for training/travel. Do not think this should be allowed. The Committee should have final approval of use of any savings.
- See a conflict in that if this is approved, employees will get paid while in training, potentially violating County policy.
- Think there are benefits to staff attending workshops/training and interacting with peers from other organizations and agencies. Think this is justification enough.
- Do not support using these funds for travel - it sets a bad precedent; we achieved the savings and we can determine how to use it; and do not see how it can be fairly applied.

Brian thanked members for their input and said they could continue to send information via email to any of the TEA Committee members. He said what he got from today's meeting was no support for use of the funds for travel. He noted that he would follow up to see if there is language in the Enabling Legislation that states that Don Tyler must approve use of funds.

Eric asked Brian to report to him on findings and he would put the information into an upcoming TEA Times. He thanked all of the Wastewater TEA representatives for their hard work on the Committee.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Keven had nothing to report at this time but will provide a report next monthly meeting.

## **Update on Transit and Wastewater Negotiations**

1. Transit (Dave Crippen): The first mediation session is scheduled for June 29. Others are set for July 6, 7 and two more the end of July. Other sessions are scheduled for August. The Bargaining Committee and Team met yesterday. Dave had two action items that the Board wanted him to follow up on relative to communications to the Transit members at large.

The Committee/Team decided that Dave and the Bargaining Team members should have lunch meetings for Transit TEA members specifically to discuss/review what has occurred in the past mediation sessions. These would occur after a group of mediation sessions, not after each session because some are back to back. He anticipates having something after the first set of sessions the first of July. Notification will be sent out to Transit TEA members.

Discussion centered on the following:

- Is the purpose of these lunch meetings one-way or to get feedback? (Dave replied he never turns down input. The main reasons, though is for Dave to pass on information. The Bargaining Team and Committee representatives will also be present at these sessions.)
- Has the attorney prepared a counter offer? (Dave said no. Jim was going to meet with the Team tomorrow to prepare a "what if" proposal. Jim has not done any further analysis on the wage proposal presented us in January. He's waiting for information from King County.)
- Is Jim prepared to go to next Thursday's mediation session? (Dave said that the first session will focus on procedures which are typically what happens at the first meeting with the Mediator.)
- Who is the mediator? (Sally - can't remember her last name.)
- Is there a commitment to get a counter proposal by the second mediation session? (Dave said he hoped this happens but he cannot guarantee it.)

2. Wastewater (Eric Mandel/Roger Browne): The County has finally agreed to the first mediation date. It is July 18. This is the only mediation session scheduled. It will cover ground rules/procedures and the philosophy around bargaining.

Discussion centered on the following:

- Don't we have to move quickly to be on the County's Health Plan? (Roger noted this is important to the County but not to TEA. TEA members would continue to be covered under existing medical plans.)
- Who is the mediator? (Martha Nicola).

- Due to Chris Cassias leaving, what will happen regarding legal counsel coverage? (Roger said that Jim Cline will take over. He has hired Jim Smith to replace Chris who leaves in August, though we don't know how they will staff TEA issues. Smith has extensive police labor law experience.) Will the law firm be overtaxed with Jim having to cover both Transit and Wastewater? (Roger said he did not know. He feels Cline's firm has given us good service in the past and he believes the Jim is hiring someone of equal caliber to Chris.)
- Are we going to mediation on all points? (Roger said that TEA and the County have TA'd a number of issues. We are apart on wages for the admins, and benefits for the admins. And other staff.)
- Would you characterize the County's position as regressive? (Roger noted on some issues yes.)
- What's the reference to the "Dirty Dozen"? (Roger said that several years back management and TEA recognized there was about a dozen staff that was not correctly classified, but because the County refused to act on this during contract negotiations, there was a verbal agreement that those people would get reclassified back to the beginning to the contract period. This has not yet happened.)

#### **Update on Grievances**

Ade reported that on the Transit side there are two active grievances both at Step 2. The County has until the end of the week to respond. He believes these will go to arbitration. There is also a ULP filed. On the Wastewater side the grievance filed for the all those previously class-comped who were denied an additional step increase is going to arbitration - this will not occur until mid-September. A date has been scheduled.

The meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

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Patty Overby, TEA Secretary