

**TECHNICAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
MONTHLY MEETING –July 19, 2006 (12 noon – 1 p.m.)
Meeting Summary**

Board Members Present: Eric Mandel, President
Patty Overby, Secretary
Roger Browne, Wastewater Bargaining Chair
Dave Crippen, Transit Bargaining Chair
John Phillips, Council of Reps. Chair

Treasurer's Report

Eric reported in Keven's absence that TEA's financial goals are on track in case we have to go to arbitration. The Financial Plan is to be presented to the membership at the Annual meeting this fall. Eric said he wants to look at the possibility of rolling back member dues.

Update on Transit and Wastewater Negotiations

1. Wastewater (Roger Browne): Mediation began yesterday in a joint session with the County. Additional mediation dates have not been set yet. TEA and the County are far apart on two major issues: merit pay and administrative staff salaries.

Questions/discussion centered on:

- What are the issues with merit pay? (Roger responded this is relative to performance appraisals.)

2. Transit (Dave Crippen): Two mediation sessions were held on June 29 and July 7. TEA made a counter wage proposal on July 7 and is waiting to hear back from the County at the next mediation session scheduled for July 29. The Bargaining Team is not comfortable at this time distributing any proposals because they can substantially change. Generally, TEA's proposal accepted the County's classification proposals, as well as the Class Comp classification for other than engineers (i.e. project control, designers etc.).

The Bargaining Team will set up a meeting with Transit Design and Construction staff to review more specific details after the July 29 session. Members should tentatively mark their calendars for August 3 noon session.

Eric stated that the County has sent a letter to the 15 D&C staff informing them of their reclassification. These members were asked to complete PDQ's for reclassification last fall. TEA received copies of these letters. Affected Transit staff have the ability to appeal the County's reclassification via two potential options: the County's Personnel Board or a grievance.

The Board asked legal counsel advice on which of the two processes Jim Cline would recommend. The Board did not get a firm opinion. Jim had a

problem with the approach the County laid out and recommended that TEA not provide technical assistance to staff on any appeal, but to file a general ULP on whether or not the County has the right to reclass members without bargaining. The Board sent an email out to those members yesterday informing them that TEA is not recommending an option, that it is up to individual members if they want to appeal, and outlining the two options they may want to use.

Question/discussion centered on:

- If the Board files a ULP, what impact will this have on individuals that are appealing their reclassification? (Eric said that it should not have a major impact. The ULP is on whether the County has the right unilaterally to do this. It isn't whether the County got the classifications correct.)
- What would members be grieving if they chose to file a grievance? (Eric said the grievance would go to the County. He was not sure what you would be grieving other than working out of class. The County has informed TEA that this is not the right process. Grievances usually relate to language in the contract. Jim has said he isn't sure TEA has a grievance process in place because the contract has expired.)
- Thought we have a MOA that the contract would remain in effect while bargaining the new contract? (Eric stated that there was some language in a prior MOA but Jim is saying it may not be as strong as it should have been.)
- If staff likes the reclassification, they do not need to do anything, correct? (Eric said this is right. There is a new classification but members will see no change in pay or job duties until these are bargained.)
- Shouldn't members who are appealing file a position description qualification? (Dave said yes.)

Eric added that members appealing their reclassification need to respect appropriate deadlines. There is nothing preventing members from pursuing both appeal options.

Update on Grievances

Eric reported in Ade's absence that an arbitration meeting has been set for the first of January 2007 for Wastewater staff that were previously class-comped who were denied an additional step increase. Information on this was included in the recent TEA Times. If TEA prevails, back pay will go back to July 1, 2005.

VEBA Update

Eric said that there was a Global email sent to all County employees this morning regarding a new benefit the County is prepared to offer employees. This benefit is a Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association (VEBA) or a Health Reimbursement Arrangement.

Details of this are that upon retirement, 35% of remaining sick leave cash out would be deposited into an account held by a nonprofit, tax-exempt VEBA trust managed by a board of trustees of city, county and special purpose district representatives. These funds could then be used by the retired employee to pay for qualified medical expenses.

Eligible county employees through bargaining units will be asked whether they want to participate in a VEBA. The decision by each group will apply to all retirements in that group during a 3-year period, beginning January 1, 2007. In 2009 employees will have an opportunity to reconsider their participation for another 3-year period.

Each bargaining unit must make a decision by September 18, 2006. The individual Bargaining Teams will lead the effort in this.

Roger stated that Jim Cline has said he would come to the August Regular meeting to discuss this with members.

Discussion centered on:

- Do you have to draw on this fund if you leave County employment even if you have no plans to draw down on your pension? (Response: believe the answer is yes.)
- What is the impact if you are in PERS 2? (Roger said he would need to get clarification on this.)
- Can I contribute additional funds once I retire? (No, it's only the 35% of available sick leave that the County would be cashing out otherwise.)
- Are premiums acceptable expense? (Roger said yes - it is similar to the current Flex account and is whatever the IRS lists as eligible.)
- What happens if you die before the expenditures are fully made? (Roger said there is something about transferring to survivor benefits.)
- This would have an impact on those members still in PERS 1 as unused sick leave is used in calculating monthly pension payments.

Eric said the Board needs to talk further about this and what process should be used, the pros and cons as well as getting information out to members.

Issues for the Good of the Order

- Make sure you get your health information in or had phone conversations with your coaches. The end of this month is the deadline. August or September you will be notified of your status. Keep copies of all information.
- The Nominating Committee is looking for two more members to serve to develop a slate of candidates for this fall's election of President, Vice-President and Secretary. If interested please contact Eric Mandel.
- Bill Barsoum retired from Transit D&C.

The meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Patty Overby, TEA Secretary