

PTE Local 17 – COPPEA Chapter

Monthly General Membership Meeting

4/5/17

- **Introductions** – Meeting began with a round of introductions.
- **Regional Executive Committee (REC) Meeting** (Rachel)
 - REC is the governing body for PTE Local 17. The REC makes decisions for the larger union on items such as budget, confirming Executive Director, etc.
 - The REC met in Tacoma on March 25.
 - Highlights:
 - Behnaz Nelson is now the Executive Director of PTE 17
 - The budget was adopted.
 - Nikola Davidson has left PTE 17 for a new position. Members may know Nikola from the many trainings she did for the COPPEA chapter. The vacant training coordinator position at PTE 17 will be filled.
- **Union Rep Report** (Amy)
 - Amy will be on vacation next week (back to work on April 18th – in Portland). Elliot Levin will be her backup.
 - Professional Development Fund (PDF) as of March 23 had \$3,904 remaining. There have been 172 requests reimbursed.
 - The funds may all be allocated by now. However, people are still encouraged to apply because frequently people off the waitlist are funded.
 - Discussion followed about the application and reimbursement process.
 - Questions also were raised about changes to the PDF in bargaining.
 - No grievances pending.
 - Issue raised about safety around City Hall and the Portland Building. In particular, Commissioner Fish's message to BES and PWB that employees in these bureaus were not allowed to attend City Council meetings due to safety reasons. Questions have been raised:
 - How is Council accommodating members who need to speak before Council?
 - And shouldn't the safety of all members (not just BES & PWB) be considered?
- **Labor Management Benefits Committee (LMBC)** (Amy)
 - Amy sits on the committee; Elliot is her backup and Paul Cone regularly attends. The committee is composed of 7 labor and 7 management representatives. The committee reviews plan design.
 - For this plan year, the Benefits Office pushed for significant Kaiser plan benefit decreases, such as raising the deductible, to entice more people to move to City Core. (Proposals were attached to the March meeting notes.)
 - The labor members voted against these changes at the March 14th meeting because there didn't seem to be a need to decrease benefits. There is a strong strategic reserve.
 - Members at this monthly member meeting thanked Amy for voting against the Kaiser changes.
 - The Benefits Office also proposed increasing City Core benefits, but management voted this down after labor voted down Kaiser changes.
 - City Council could ignore the LMBC's recommendation. If this appears to be happening, PTE 17 will provide testimony on reasons for voting against the Kaiser changes.

- The Benefit's department hasn't given us an exact number on the current percentage split.
 - In the past it was about 30% (Kaiser) and 70% (City Core).
 - Indications are that split may be less City Core dominated currently; maybe close to 40% (Kaiser) and 60% (City Core).
- The LMBC is now going into non-plan-design season.
- **Bargaining Update**
 - Amy Bowles (800-783-0017 ext. 118 or amy@pte17.org) is the lead negotiator and the other team members are listed on the PTE 17 - COPPEA chapter website (www.pte17.org/coppea). Amy introduced team members in attendance.
 - Sessions have generally been every two weeks. We may start meeting more frequently as we get closer to the end of the current contract.
 - A member asked how bargaining works in terms of dropping proposals. Amy explained that we do it article by article. However, Amy met with the lead negotiator for the City team (Patrick Ward) before bargaining got into the full swing of things to give an overview of our proposals.
 - As of this monthly member meeting, most of the proposals we have dropped have been primarily around language changes. The exception is our vacation proposal, which we presented at the 3/24 session.
 - Vacation Leave proposal:
 - Start year one at 112 hrs and each subsequent year add 4 hours. Vacation leave would max out at year 32 (240 hrs).
 - This helps with recruitment and retention issues. (This is mostly anecdotal since the City doesn't have good data on this. And even if there was better information on the people not accepting or leaving City jobs, we wouldn't know the number of people who don't apply for City jobs because of the poor vacation leave the City offers.)
 - Items for 4/4 bargaining session:
 - COLA and wages are the primary items we will be dropping.
 - Regarding the COLA, we are asking for our 2% floor back. The floor was dropped to 1% during 2010 negotiations due to the economic crisis when we were concerned about jobs being cut.
 - The 25 year running average of the CPI (which is what the COLA is based on) is currently at about 2.2%.
 - We will likely be finished presenting our proposals by the 4/20 bargaining session.
 - Survey: we will probably be doing a mid-bargaining-season survey soon. We will send this out over personal emails, so please update your information with the Union. This can be accomplished at: <http://www.pte17.org/address/form.html>
- **Legislative Update** (Elliot)
 - Elliot is going to Salem for the legislative sessions.
 - This week, bill SB1040 will be brought to public hearing. Passage of this bill would ensure that employers and unions may enter into fair share agreements to the full extent allowed by federal law.
 - Contracting out changes are also being brought up in the legislature.
 - There is currently a \$125k cap on projects that can be done in-house. If a project is above \$125k, we have to contract it out or prepare an analysis for why it is more cost effective to do it in-house.
 - The \$125k amount has not changed in a very long time; analysis suggests that the cap, set long ago, in today's construction dollars should be about \$250k.

- Construction contractors have suggested getting rid of the cap, and thus have contractors be hired for all construction projects. Since there isn't enough support for this, they are now looking at making the analysis much tougher.
- These proposals affect our members' jobs – particularly those that work on in-house construction projects.
- PERS discussions
 - Problem: there is a large unfunded liability for PERS 1 and the legislature can't make any changes that would affect people who have already retired.
 - Legislature is looking for changes that can be made, but realizing that they can't squeeze much out.
 - If any big changes are made, there are a lot of people who are ready to leave before the changes would go into effect. This would cause great loss of institutional knowledge, especially if everyone goes at once.
 - Average PERS payout is roughly \$27k per year.
 - An article Elliot wrote about PERS will come out in the next Insight.
 - Insight will also feature a member from our COPPEA chapter.
- **Next member meeting:** Portland Building, 1900 Building Room 7A, at noon on 5/2/17.