June 2021 Volume Π. Issue e

AFSCME LOCAL 3336 NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to the AFSCME 3336 Newsletter

This newsletter will be an occasional way to share information with represented staff. We hope you like it.

The #1 best source of information is our website (link below). There you can find the contract, bargaining updates and lots of other useful information. Much of it requires a login, if you don't have one reach out to a Steward or someone on the Executive Board.

Monthly meetings are the third Wednesday at noon. If you aren't getting notifications with call in info, let someone know and we will try to fix that.

You should be getting bargaining updates, and other occasional communication from the Local and Central unions, if you aren't, make sure we have your personal email.

It's June of an odd-numbered year, so everyone is thinking about bargaining. We don't have results yet, but teams are working on both Central Table and Local Table issues right now.

Equity Notes

Marie Diodati and Jamilla Thompson

Oregon AFSCME Council 75 recently concluded the first cycle of their Equity Train the Trainer Program. Celeste Jones and Corey Nicholson hosted the five sessions that were monthly for two hours every second Thursday evening. Themes such as Oregon's and the union's racist history, micro-aggressions and the different dimensions of racism were some of the themes brought up during the sessions. Each training dedicated time to developing trust and space for vulnerabilities between participants. The transparency, accessibility, whole heartedness and different identities of the facilitators were some of the major keys to the success of this experience. As members, we enjoyed the learnings and are excited to offer this training to our local. We will pilot it by offering it to the executive board and then open it up to stewards and members. We will probably run multiple cycles, because we find it important to have small cohorts.

Please reach out to us (Jamila and Marie), if you have questions or comments.

Would you like to submit something or help with future issues of this newsletter?

Contact Seth Sadofsky

Executive Board Members:

President Eric Feeley, First Vice President Lauren Dimock, Second Vice President Jim Orr

Secretary Anne Kim, Treasurer — **VACANT** (you?), Chief Steward Mike Romero

At-Large

Maria Diodati, Kelsey Dobo, Krista Ratliff, Mike Scott, Seth Sadofsky (Newsletter Editor)

Trustees

Contract Corner!

Article 21 – Payday and Pay Advances

Lauren Dimock

Who doesn't like getting paid on time? Not that we expect our employer to *not* pay us on time, but it could and has happened. This article specifies that represented staff are to be paid no later than the first of the month, meaning that if it the first of the month falls on a weekend or holiday that DEQ must pay workers on the prior business day. The one exception to this rule is January 1, which is a holiday. The contract specifies we are to be paid on the "first working day in January" to ensure that we are always paid for 12 months of work in every year—important for payroll and your own taxes. This is also important to know and remember for your own financial planning each January.

Something you might not know about this article is that it allows you to request a pay advance of 60% of your monthly gross salary—even in your first 30 days of employment. The contract outlines that this is generally reserved for emergencies requiring financial attention, and generally only allowed to once per 12 months. If you have more questions about this article, please look at the contract and/or contact a steward!

If any article of the contract is at some point violated, contact a steward and they can help you navigate the grievance process (Article 13).

A Word from VIP

Blake Gilbert, NE VIP

It's been quite a year plus at the VIP stations, first there were temporary closures, then learning to work with COVID risk on the front lines, then fire/air quality related closures and coming back while COVID cases rose. VIP staff have been ever present in our discussions as a Union as we try to stand in solidarity and help where we can.

I would love to give a shout out to my coworker inspectors who have been on the front lines here at DEQ VIP. This has been a very stressful time. Staff who have had to test vehicles and provide the excellent customer service to our public and have done so in very remarkable fashion. Way to go team VIP!

I would also add a huge thank you Eric Feeley and our AFSCME team for the great work they have done working on our behalf with the Leadership Teams in keeping us as safe as possible during the reopening and going forward. Please keep up the great work as we are not out of this yet. Stay well stay safe.

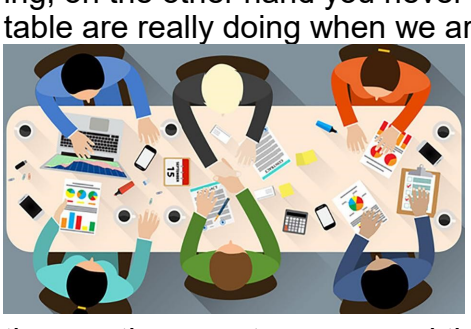
A Perspective on Bargaining

Lauren Dimock

Bargaining, if you're less familiar with unions and how they work, is an interesting and unique process. The union has a contract with management and the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to protect worker's rights, and we get the opportunity to "bargain" that contract every two years. During bargaining we make proposals which can edit, remove, or add wording to strengthen the contract. When We make proposals—no matter how absolutely excellent they are—they get bargained down with management to something less, or worst-case scenario nothing at all. This is my first year on the bargaining team and my first time observing this process first hand. This is also the first time that bargaining has ever been conducted over Zoom. We are only in the beginning of the process right now with three sessions down and seven to go. So what can I tell you with my beginner's lens in these early stages?

Your five bargaining team members and the AFSCME 75 council representative work *very hard* during this process. The union is and always has been the author of the vast majority of proposals that are presented at the table. Some of these proposals are workshopped during our caucuses, or working time spent separately from management during bargaining sessions. Other proposals are workshopped by team members on evenings and weekends. This year there are a few proposals that we have worked particularly hard on that have also included significant member participation and feedback. Those will be presented in early May and the proposals will be posted to the union website.

My other observation is how Zoom changes everything. I don't know what bargaining was like before Zoom, but it's easy to imagine the difference of not having a computer in front of you and looking at actual people across the table from you. While on one hand it's now easier to edit proposals with screen sharing, on the other hand you never know what folks across the table are really doing when we are presenting a proposal—are they reading emails? Are they watching YouTube videos? Or are they keenly engaged in bargaining a really great contract? I can't always tell. And even with everyone keeping their cameras on most of the time, you can't really see what the reactions are to a proposal that's being presented. With very few observable reactions, questions, or comments so far it is harder for us to strategize for future bargaining sessions with management. Don't worry—the team is ever-adapting, and committed to getting you the best contract possible.



The last thing I'll say about bargaining is that while the team works really hard to get these proposals through, we really can't get it done without the help and support of the membership. Thank you to all of the members who completed the bargaining surveys sent out this year, and thanks to those of you who have stepped up to help with proposals when the team asked for your expert review. We will need more support from the membership down the road, so stay tuned for membership action announcements. In the meantime you can read the bargaining updates posted to the union website (requires login) and spreading awareness to a co-worker. We are only as strong as we are united. It may sound corny, but it is the absolute truth.