



Statewide Bargaining Update

Our Union and the State exchanged proposals for the second time on Feb 6th. Our Union made proposals on keeping our Insurance status quo, a strong 4.75% Cost of Living Adjustment in each year of a two year agreement, a new top step and a step increase for all workers not topped out who missed in the last ten years, additional holiday (day after Thanksgiving), and the State paying to upkeep licenses and other professional requirements. The State proposed language around using Oregon Family Leave Act (OFLA) and Bereavement Leave together, and standardizing the salary eligibility date across AFSCME represented agencies.

Rainbows and Unicorns – Really? Local Table Update

Our team (Rick Rother, Henning Larsen, Lisa MacGregor, Karen Williams, Jim Glass, Tyler Woodard) met with the Management team (Kerri Nelson, Keith Anderson, Gerry Preston, Sue Korn, Glenn West) for the first time on February 3rd. We opened with a statement that conveyed the challenges of the last four years, where we think we should head, and a summary of our ideas on how we can get there: The challenges that derived from the recession were salary and step freezes, furloughs, and layoffs. On the heels of layoffs came Outcome Based Management and Breakthroughs, and a couple of years later, Reorganization. Among the needs we expressed were leadership, direction, and validation. We explained validation as:

1. Being fairly compensated for work
 2. Our input is not just listened to but asked for
 3. Our effectiveness is measured by environmental outcomes
 4. We receive timely responses and explanations for decisions
 5. We feel safe to question and express a different view point
- And, finally, we said, we need to feel that we are not expecting too much when we demand the same accountability and transparency from our leaders as the public demands from us. We then summarized a few categories that our proposals would fall into around themes expressed in The Road Ahead:

1. A highly trained, motivated, and diverse workforce
2. Effective and proactive communication
3. Drive accountability and transparency to a new level
4. Focus on outcomes related to employee engagement, workplace safety and productivity
5. Process improvement

To this, the Management team replied, (with slight paraphrasing), "we'll be interested to see how you work these concepts into practical, implementable contract language. While these may be good conversations for a Labor-Management committee, it sounds like you're talking about rainbows and unicorns, and we're pretty sure unicorns are extinct."

Really? Job satisfaction, fair compensation, training, diversity, wellness, high quality work - That's Rainbows and Unicorns?

Our proposals will come from the feedback we are getting from you via the bargaining survey and also from issues that have come up over the last two years – through grievances, classification decisions, member experiences, and yes, those Labor-Management Committee conversations.

We introduced three proposals: increasing access to desired training and career development, creating a leave category for service on a professional board, and clarifying language about when vacation accrual increases take effect. Management submitted a proposal about required notice and employee response when a position is transferred. The teams accepted each other's proposals and asked questions, but did not counter propose.

At the beginning of the meeting we agreed on ground rules that include something very important: Bargaining meetings are open to anyone who wants to attend, provided attendance is on their own time. Please consider taking an hour or two of personal business or arrange your schedule so you can come see how bargaining works. Our next meeting is Monday, March 9, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. and will be held at the AFSCME office at 6025 E. Burnside.

Representation Highlights

Kevin Downing, Steward, Headquarters

Over the last two years, our stewards and staff rep, Issa Simpson, have provided representation to dozens of members, and defended our contract through grievances and settlements. In 2011, a represented employee was reassigned to other work that was then determined to be beyond her current classification. The manager and the Human Resources office realized that a reclassification request was appropriate. The reclassification paperwork was prepared and the employee began work out of class with a 5% pay adjustment. Since the employee was at the top step of the old classification, the new pay scale ended up at about the 6th step of the new classification. This was how the situation progressed for over two years, with the only pay adjustments for cost of living and furloughs as appropriate. The employee periodically asked about the status of the reclassification approval and was told at various times that it was in process, submitted to the Department of Administrative Services or otherwise moving forward. At two years and two months, she approached her steward and Issa Simpson to try to figure out what was taking so long. Turns out, and it is still not clear exactly, the reclass may not have been submitted to DAS until very recently, possibly not until the Local made inquiries. The represented employee said, "The reclass was only submitted to DAS because the union became involved and had there been no union to represent my interests, I would have continued to be told 'your reclass is in the process.' The only reason this is a success story is because of the union and also my direct manager who provided nothing but encouragement."

The reclass was soon approved, but with a Salary Eligibility Date set inexplicably 14 months after the employee had begun working out of class. The employee, having not gotten any step increases since starting the reclassified position and standing to lose one step because of the delays in submitting the request, filed a grievance. With the Local's support, the employee won the grievance, securing back pay to the original start date, a Salary Eligibility Date reflecting the time when the work actually started and a process improvement plan for the Agency in handling reclassification requests. This is just one example of your Local at work for you.

Join Your Member Action Team

Increase your chances of getting a better contract.
Ensure your bargaining team is successful at the table.
Plan activities for your bargaining campaign. Attend State Worker Lobby Day, on Tuesday, March 3rd.

Fill out the Survey

If you have not yet filled out the bargaining survey, good news, it is still open! You can find it at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/S2KSDGQ>.

Know Your Rights / Know Your Stewards

William Brown, Steward

Union stewards are essential to promoting and protecting your rights. They are the eyes, ears, and voice of the union in the workplace. Our union stewards are volunteers who take time to learn the fundamentals of the laws and your rights as bargained in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Stewards are a valuable resource that we often take for granted.

Our stewards for Local 3336 have been an active voice for our members at DEQ. Through the grievance procedures and other processes they have worked to protect our workplace rights in the following: professional differences of opinion, classification disputes, ADA accommodations, flextime schedules, defending members who had been targeted by managers under "communications credo" and "code of professional conduct," wage disputes, and many other areas.

Take the time to learn who your stewards are. A list of Local 3336's stewards can be found at our website at AFSCME3336.org. Thank them for the work they do. Consider becoming a steward. If you would like more information about becoming a steward, contact Karen Williams, Rick Rother, or any of our stewards or officers. Without those who act to protect our workplace rights, those rights are merely words on paper.

Serve on your Union Board

We have an open at-large board position. If you are interested in being appointed, contact Karen Williams (our local President (503) 229 - 6254 or (503) 720 - 8925 cell/text.) The position requests that you attend executive board meetings once per month and participate in running our union local. The term lasts until our next elections in October 2015.

Calendar

February 11 - 11 a.m. Rally at the Capitol Steps in Salem to support Health Care for All Oregon. Sign up for buses leaving from metro area and learn more at: www.hcao.org.

February 23 - General Membership Meeting, Election of Delegates for Oregon AFSCME State Convention

February 26 and March 3 - AFSCME Lobby Days. Join AFSCME co-workers to let legislators know about the important work we do. Contact: Tyler Woodard at twoodard@oregonafscme.com.

March 9 - Local Table Bargaining- wear your AFSCME T-shirt! Everyone is invited to attend on personal time. Bargaining is 9am - 5pm at 6025 E. Burnside.

April 24 - 26 - Oregon AFSCME State Convention, Salem.