

AFSCME Washington County Employees

Local 517 Officers

President:

Judie Atkins
430-6180
jud251@comcast.net

Vice President:

Barb Lunn
651-653-1388
bikerextraordinaire@hotmail.com

Secretary:

Kathy Cunnien
651-275-7065
kcunnien@comcast.net

Treasurer:

Barb Christianson

Chief Steward:

Jeff Birttnen
430-6505
jbbirtt@earthlink.net

Business Representative:

Scott Grefe
651-287-0506
Scott.Grefe@afscmemn.org

Executive Board Members:

Bob Jaqua
Judy Wertheimer
Judys1027@aol.com
Deb Myrvold

Trustees:

Angela Plumbo
Deb Burkhardt
Barb Cysiewski

MN AFSCME Council 5, Local 517

300 Hardman Ave. S.,
Suite 2
S. St. Paul, MN 55075
PHONE: 651-287-0506
FAX: 651-287-1311

www.local517.org

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING Wednesday, February 11, 2009 12:00-1:00 p.m. Gov't Center-Board Room

PRESIDENT'S REPORT-For the Common Good

So much has happened since our last newsletter; Election of our first African-American President, Senate race recount, and Governor Pawlenty's economic forecast for the state. What happens at the state level always comes down to us. The Governor is asking local government (counties and cities) to try to open contracts already in force to reduce any increase in wages and benefits. He is trying to have us believe that we can save some folks' jobs if we agree to lower wages and no increases. What would happen is employees would be at a lower rate of pay, benefits and after 3-4 months folks would lose their jobs anyway if he continues to make everyone believe this. The fact is that only 4% of the State's budget is employees' wages. If all state employees were let go for the next 3 years, it still would not save enough money to balance the State's budget. When the economy is bad and jobs are lost who do people turn to? They turn to the government for help and we provide the best services we can. Hopefully we will get enough money from aid through the stimulus package to continue to provide those services. Since the freeze, Governor Pawlenty has hired 131 management folks from the Republican Party including Cal Ludeman, Pat Awada Anderson and several others. We are not the problem, we are the solution! If people who earn over \$250,000 would pay the same amount of taxes as those of us who earn less than that, we could raise over 1 Billion dollars. A working Mom who makes \$38,000 a year pays 12.6% of earnings in taxes, while Stanley Hubbard will only pay 9.3% in taxes. Fair taxes are only a part of the solution. Our legislators need to get a spine and sponsor bills that will put middle class families first, protect our children's future, fix our broken health care system now, reduce government waste, eliminate programs that don't work, and restore fairness to our tax system. Now is not the time for layoffs at the state, county or cities. Good jobs create an economy that works. Governor Pawlenty needs to protect and create good jobs, like President Obama is. Please join us for Day On The Hill (DOTH) March 10 and 11. March 10 will be training for new folks that have never been to DOTH before, and the Local will pay for registration and lost time for this day. March 11 is the day we go to the Capitol and talk with our legislative representatives. We pay lost time, mileage and parking for this day. You would have to pay the registration fee of \$15.00 to cover lunch. We need to build our union stronger for our next contract. Please volunteer to help!

FOR THE COMMON GOOD!



We've all heard this before and it made sense then and it still does now.

Would you like to brainstorm with others who feel that we need to contact our legislators and tell them we need their help for the COMMON GOOD?

Come help us make a plan. Everyone who works or lives in Washington County is welcome.

DATE: February 5, 2009

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

PLACE: Washington County Government Center, Room 20

**Nominations open for Chair Officers and E Bd February 11, 2009, at
the General Membership Meeting.
12:00-1:00 p.m.
County Board Room**

RIVER VALLEY ACTION GROUP

INVITES YOU TO ATTEND THEIR NEXT MEETING

Thursday, February 12, 6:30 P.M.

WASHINGTON COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
WE MEET IN THE SOUTH WING OF THE WASHINGTON COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
ROOM 20 CONFERENCE ROOM, PLEASE CHECK IN AT THE GUARD STATION

Working together we can make a difference!

Agenda

Reports: Valley Peacemakers
Wildwood Passing Lane
RVA Financial Report

Report by Paul Teske on Transportation Advocacy Day

Planning our role on transportation in cooperation with Transit for Livable Communities

John Van Hecke from MN2020 on revenue ideas for our state budget
Presentation and dialogue

Break into working groups on our issues:

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| A. Transportation | B. Environment |
| C. Health Care | D. Issues affecting the Poor |
| E. Taxation and Revenue | F. Education Funding |

Report results back to full group

Responsibilities going forward: Committee visits at the Capitol, visits to our legislators, letters and e-mails to our legislators, letters to editor in local papers

Planning the March meeting

All residents of Minnesota Senate Districts 52 and 56 are welcome.

PLEASE JOIN US TO BUILD A PROGRESSIVE VOICE IN SENATE DISTRICTS 52 & 56

WHO ARE WE?

RIVER VALLEY ACTION IS A GROUP OF CITIZENS OF THE ST. CROIX VALLEY AREA WHO VALUE A HEALTHY AND INFORMED CIVIC COMMUNITY. WE FOCUS ON PUBLIC POLICY AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS.

OUR MEMBERS

CITIZENS LIKE YOU! RESIDENTS FROM LABOR UNIONS, NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS, AND SEVERAL FAITH COMMUNITIES WORK TOGETHER IN A NONPARTISAN MANNER.

WHO CAN JOIN?

ANY CONCERNED CITIZEN!



Town Hall Meeting Hosted by District 56 Legislators

Date: Saturday, February 7, 2009
Time: 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM
Building: Woodbury City Hall Council Chambers
Address: 8301 Valley Creek Road
City: Woodbury
Co-hosted by: Rep. Julie Bunn, Rep. Marsha Swails

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This is the last year of our current contract. Before the end of the year, our negotiating team will gather to discuss provisions for the next contract. I don't have to tell you that with the current state of the economy, we are in for an especially difficult battle. If we are to come out on the other side of this negotiation with a good contract, we need EVERYONE'S help! Local 517 with help from Council 5 is encouraging participation from ALL AFSCME employees. Call the house leadership (numbers are on a flyer in your departments or talk to an officer). Plan on attending AFSCME's Day on the Hill, March 10 and 11, if at all possible. On the 11th, we will have a rally in the Capitol Rotunda at 1:00. We want 1,000 + people there. If you can't commit to both days, we encourage you to attend on the 11th and if you can't attend the entire day, aim to join your union brothers and sisters for the Rotunda gathering (and bring along friends and family). Action at the legislature WILL AFFECT YOUR JOB! Contact an officer or steward to see how you can help.

On a related note, those of you who are fee payers, please consider becoming a full member. We need to show management that we have a strong union in order to obtain a fair contract. Also, if you are not currently a PEOPLE contributor, perhaps now is the time to commit to supporting our legislative activities. The monetary difference each month is very little and the pay off is so very big.

Barb Lunn
Vice President

AFSCME LOCAL 517

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

January 14, 2009

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 12:04 p.m.
2. Secretary Report: Copies of minutes for November and December were distributed. There was a motion to approve both. M/S/C.
3. Treasurer Report: Copies of the December Financial Report were distributed for review. There was a motion to approve. M/S/C.
4. Chief Steward Report:
 - Jeff has been working on an influx of grievances.
 - Day on the Hill is March 10-11. The first day is training and the second is visiting your legislators at the State Capitol. The second day is more important and members are responsible for the \$15 fee (the union cannot pay for this as it goes to the PEOPLE program). Jeff said they will be doing things differently this year. Rather than grouping members together by legislative district, it will be by job type. Judie passed around a sign-up sheet. Anyone else who is interested in attending should contact her. We will look at paying lost time for the second day but not the first; however, if you are a first-time attendee and feel the need to attend both, lost time will be paid for two days.
5. Business Rep Report:
 - Governor Pawlenty is proposing a wage freeze and wants state and local unions to renegotiate their contracts (it would be a hard freeze). The state's new fiscal year starts July 1 and the deficit could exceed \$6 billion. The state could cut all employees and that still wouldn't fix the budget. Scott brought copies of a "Cuts Won't Heal Recession" flyer for distribution to members. It's important for members to call their representatives and ask them to support responsible spending targets. Washington County's LGA (Local Government Aid) has already been cut by \$1.4 million.
 - Council 5 is starting a "Common Good Campaign" with a kick-off meeting this Saturday at the Ramada Bloomington (the old Thunderbird Motel). Jeff said he would attend and anyone else is welcome. Regions will be created and Scott, along with Jerry Serfling, will be working on the east metro area. Scott suggested involving the St. Croix Valley Group. We need to have the strength of all unions working together. The budget deficit affects all unions, not just AFSCME.
 - With our local's contract expiring this year, it will be important for our members to become involved now as later will be too late. We need to get past the mindset of feeling lucky just to have a job. Having good jobs with good pay is critical to keeping the economy moving. It will also be important to meet with our newly-elected commissioners.
 - The President's Meeting is being held January 23. Judie is attending and welcomed other officers to join her.
6. New Business:
 1. Affiliate Report (City of Stillwater) – Mike Pogge from the City attended and gave an update on their budget situation. It is being cut by 5% which is a total of \$1.2 million. There is one probable lay-off with no guarantees there won't be more, even with a hiring freeze. Furloughs were discussed but not well-received by union members. We need to make sure we do things that won't adversely affect other unions. Mike had a sign-up sheet for a Budget Ad Hoc Committee for those who live in Stillwater.
 2. State Budget and how it will affect us – This was addressed by Scott.
 3. Nominations Committee – A member is needed to coordinate nominations. All positions are open except for one Trustee. Jacque Boever volunteered to head the Nominations Committee.
7. Old Business:
 - Barb Lunn said about 50 members attended the Holiday Party (more than last year). It will probably be held on a Thursday again this year.
 - Barb Lunn is working on the membership list and doing cross-referencing to see who isn't having dues taken out.
 - Susan Racine discussed the email Julie Sorrem sent to county employees addressing precautions for extreme cold. Susan expressed concern to Julie about employees risking their own safety to get to work and the amount of time spent traveling on bad roads to attend meetings on county time.
8. Good and Welfare: There was not enough time to cover this topic.
9. Adjourn. There was a motion to adjourn at 1:06 p.m. M/S/C.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Cunnien

AFSCME LOCAL 517 E-BOARD MEETING MINUTES January 26, 2009

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 a.m.

1. East Metro (Washington County) Regional Meetings:
 - This group is being formed to keep on top of legislative items. The theme is “For the Common Good.” Scott Grefe will be taking the lead and Mike Keapproth, from Stillwater Prison Local 915, will be the communications coordinator. There are a lot of union members living in Washington County that are not AFSCME. The St. Croix Valley group could also take part in these meetings.
 - The first meeting will be Thursday, February 5, 6:00 p.m., in Room 20 at the Government Center. The goal is to make these meetings permanent – monthly/quarterly – with messages to be communicated every couple of weeks. Similar meetings were started around the state several years ago. Although many did not continue, there is a group up in Brainerd that has been going since 2001.
2. Day on the Hill (March 10-11):
 - Nine employees are currently signed up. At last Friday’s President’s Meeting, Judie committed to signing up 21 so we all need to try to recruit other members. The second day is more important than the first and Council 5’s goal is 1,000 attendees. Even if someone can’t go the full day, they can come to the Capitol Rotunda on Wednesday at 1:00 p.m. (even non-union).
 - Mileage is being paid along with lost time for the second day. Lost time will be paid for the first day for new attendees. Each member is responsible for the \$15.00 fee for the second day as the money goes to support the PEOPLE program. Checks should be made payable to AFSCME PEOPLE and are due to Judie by Wednesday, February 11. Parking vouchers will be available at Crowne Plaza for \$5.00. There was a motion to pay up to \$20.00 for parking if you are not able to obtain a voucher. M/S/C.
 - Volunteers are also needed. Jacque Boever will be working with Jeff at the registration table. There will be button sales and PEOPLE raffle tickets sold.
 - Since our cost-of-living adjustment will be going into effect, Barb Christianson will need your new hourly rate. If you have not received lost time in the past, she will also need an I-9 and W-4.
3. 2009 Calendar:
 - The Nellie Stone Johnston Scholarship Dinner is March 26. Judie would like to attend and offered to pay half the cost of \$65.00 (\$32.50). Our union is highly involved in this event and there is a lot of networking that takes place. There was a motion to pay the other half of \$32.50 for Judie. M/S/C.
 - Judie requested that Kathy update the website to include the calendar for the rest of the year (meetings, events, scholarship deadlines, etc.).
4. Other:
 - The Progressive Dues Committee will start meeting this year. We will need to budget for a special one-day convention for this in 2010. Details are not known but it will likely be held in the Twin Cities. Locals will have the flexibility to determine how to structure their progressive dues (percentage, set dollar amount, etc.). In the immediate term we need to think about raising our revenue. The by-laws need to be checked to see whether we can increase dues outside of the budget approval process.
 - We currently have 9.52% contributing to PEOPLE. John Ewaldt wants to have informational meetings again and include off-site locations this time. We can get a grant for organizing for PEOPLE (Council 5 pays 50%).
 - Bryce Wickstrom is interested in attending one of our membership meetings for informational purposes. We need to brainstorm on ways to raise awareness to increase attendance at our meetings. Attendance typically increases when the agenda is on wages and health insurance. Judy Wertheimer also stated she is working on verbiage for the contract negotiations committee to consider so we are not blindsided by unexpected changes to benefits.
 - There are two positions available at Council 5: Lead Organizer and Organizer in Training. The application deadline is Friday, February 13.
 - Barb Christianson stated it would be helpful to know when someone attends a special meeting (such as the Social Services Committee). Since she is unfamiliar with all of the union events taking place, it is hard for her to determine when an expense report is for a Local 517 sanctioned meeting.

- The Minnesota Union Women's Leadership Retreat is being held April 22-24, 2009, at Ruttger's Bay Lake Lodge. Moved to next month to possibly send someone who is a delegate to Labor Assembly, or officer. This is not a budgeted item.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Cunnien