

talk... **table** talk... table

AFSCME Council 5 Locals 34 • 552 • 1719 • 2822 • 2864 • 2938

June 14, 2011

NEGOTIATIONS RETURN THIS FALL – BUT A SEPTEMBER 13 MAXIMUM TAX LEVY CAMPAIGN IS ALREADY UNDERWAY

Hennepin County recently opened our contract for negotiations, with AFSCME's initial proposal due on September 19 and the County's first proposal scheduled for September 26. But this year, our work is already underway. Your AFSCME Master Negotiations Committee has met three times, and has appointed **David Cohoes of Local 2938** to chair this year's Strike Committee and **Cathy McMahan of Local 2864** to head the 2011 Action Committee.

Why are these Committees up and running already – and why do we want to invite you to give of your time and energy this summer (and fall) in making these Committees a success? The County Board is scheduled to set its maximum tax levy for 2012 on September 13th – **before** any contract proposals hit the table. And the County Board – which reduced its maximum in 2010 to a 1% (\$7 million) give back – has already suggested it has no will to set a maximum above **0%**! Our Action Committee's first task: a Maximum Tax Levy campaign seeking more than 0%.

Without the County Board raising revenue through increased County property taxes, with the Republican-led Legislature passing a budget that eliminated State money that the County would have applied to its budget, with a stalemate between the Governor and Legislature that might not be settled before we begin negotiations, without a State contract to serve as a guidepost for Hennepin County Labor Relations and AFSCME, and with the reduction of Federal stimulus aid in 2012, we would assume that there will be limited resources for us to negotiate over this fall.

However, the County has deep reserves. It had the ability to purchase the 701 Building, across from the Government Center, for over \$25 million this spring. The move to self-insurance has been successful, with the County already beginning to bank funds that would have gone to HealthPartners in the past. Departments have identified ways of cutting costs, reducing budgets, potentially eliminating programs and costs reliant on property tax dollars only.

AFSCME has examined the County's budget and reserves. We expect to negotiate with the County over the wages we saw frozen the past two years, over the step increases that are not being issued this year, and over the health expenses that have continued to plague our members – as well as the Employer – this past decade.

Remember, **we** do the work that makes Hennepin an excellent, full service county for its residents. As members of these locals, each of us must get involved this summer to make sure our employer reciprocates with a fair contract before our current contract expires December 31, 2011. Once again, that means pushing for a responsible levy so the county can afford to give us a fair contract while maintaining the vital public services we provide.

- ❖ **Local 34 – Social and Health Services – President: Jean Diederich**
- ❖ **Local 552 – Probation and Parole Officers – President: Pat Guernsey**
- ❖ **Local 1719 – Adult Corrections Officers – President: Dale Blom**
- ❖ **Local 2822 – Clerical and Related Services – President: Lynn Stetler**
- ❖ **Local 2864 – Professional and Librarians – President: Caron Chapman**
- ❖ **Local 2938 – Legal and Essential Units – President: Kellie Charles**

AFSCME Business Representatives – Matt Nelson, Jeff Dains, Mark Baker

Rhonda Griffin, Local 34, one of many Hennepin AFSCME activists at the Capitol this spring!



Jay Linnell (L34), Pat Guernsey (President, L552) and Dirk Schot (L2822) – three who protested the Legislature adjourning May 23rd without a compromise budget and without taxing the richest 2% in order to generate revenue to operate the State.



Negotiation Schedule – 2011

September 19 – AFSCME Presents Initial Proposal

September 26 – Hennepin County Responds with Its Initial Proposal

October 10 – Face-to-Face Bargaining Session
October 24 – Face-to-Face Bargaining Session

November 7 – Mediation Session
November 14 – Mediation Session

Don't Miss the AFSCME Council 5 Picnic on Sunday, August 14 at Battle Creek Park, St. Paul

The Master Negotiations Committee agreed that, as we craft our initial proposal to present to the Employer in September, it would be appropriate to remind members where we started in 2009, what we faced from the Employer in its initial proposal, and where we ended up.

AFSCME's Initial Proposal in 2009

To minimize layoffs, the union presented a modest proposal for a one-year contract:

- Increase wages by 2% or \$0.45 per hour, whichever is greater, for 2010
- Keep the premium for single health coverage at \$25 per month
- Increase the employer's share of the family health care premium from 76% to 85%
- Allow AFSCME access to new employees during orientation

Employer's Initial Response in 2009

The county reciprocated with an opening proposal that insulted its dedicated employees:

- No wage increases in 2010 and 2011
- No step increases in 2010 and 2011
- In addition, the county wanted another \$10 million in cost reductions through painful choices, that included:
 - No stability pay, which is worth up to \$1200 a year for eligible employees
 - Impose a \$200 deductible on employees with single coverage and \$400 deductible for employees with family coverage
 - Increase the \$25 health insurance premium for singles to \$50 in 2010 and \$75 in 2011
- Change bumping rights to weaken job security for members of locals 34 and 2822
- Eliminate privatization protection for members of locals 34 and 552

Contract Ratified, December 2009

- ✚ Two-year contract, 2010 and 2011
- ✚ No wage increases in 2010 and 2011
- ✚ **Step increases in 2010**
- ✚ No step increases in 2011
- ✚ **Stability pay retained for 2010 and 2011**
- ✚ **Outsourcing prevented in local 34 and 552 social service and probation jobs**
- ✚ **No change in bumping rights for locals 34 and 2822**
- ✚ Premium for single health insurance remained \$25 through November 2010, then increased to \$32.50 through November 2011, then increased to \$40 for December 2011
- ✚ For employees with single health insurance, who earn \$18 an hour or less, a \$300 payment was agreed to, to help offset insurance costs
- ✚ Employer's share of family health care premium remained at 76%
- ✚ **No deductibles imposed on single or family health insurance coverage**
- ✚ **AFSCME was provided access to new employees at orientation**