

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

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

October 24, 2013

County Proposes Wage Freeze, Rescinds Deal at Bargaining Table



Hennepin County is proposing a two-year general across-the-board wage freeze for workers on steps. The county also rescinded a tentative agreement about the rights of limited-duration employees. That bad-faith bargaining is not acceptable!

Your AFSCME Table Team members have been negotiating hard on your behalf since we first met with the county August 12. Both sides presented opening proposals. Over the course of four meetings, the union and the employer reached tentative agreements on some items and dropped other portions of their proposals. That's how negotiation works. Then, for the first time in memory, the county reneged on an agreement made at the bargaining table.

On October 10, the county and the union reached a tentative agreement to give our limited-duration members a chance to apply for permanent jobs. No guarantees, no promises, just an opportunity to become regular county employees after proving themselves. This costs nothing, but it gains the county goodwill from its workers. When we met again, on October 21, the county rescinded our agreement. The union had let go of some important issues as part of the give-and-take to reach the deal. Now that the county took away what we bargained for, we've also lost the opportunity to negotiate the issues we took off the table. While it may seem like a small issue, it all boils down to trust. When negotiators keep promises, we trust them. When they don't, it's anybody's guess.

On top of breaking its promise, the county also told us that restoration of steps is "enough compensation" for employees not at the top of their pay scale. The county asserts that these employees don't need a general wage increase at the beginning of each year of our new contract. Makes no sense after the county has admitted it's hard to retain new employees when almost every other county in the metro area has higher starting pay!

Bottom line: Hopes to settle the contract in an early and reasonable fashion evaporated October 21.

It's time to show Hennepin County that we won't be divided! We are not interested in agreements that are rescinded! We are not interested in a settlement that pits older union members against our newer members! We all deserve the same general wage increase at the beginning of the year – and members who are not at the top of their pay scale deserve their step increase on their anniversary date.

Do you want everyone in our union to receive a general wage increase at the beginning of the year? Hennepin County doesn't think that should happen. They want to divide us by offering a general wage increase ONLY to those members at the top of their pay scale. The county is ONLY offering a step increase on your anniversary date to workers not at the top of the pay scale. Market adjustment studies show Hennepin County is far behind with both entry-level and top-level wages. We feel that EVERYONE deserves to receive a general wage increase at the beginning of each year.

Tell the Commissioners: STEP IT UP!

Call your county commissioner today. Ask them to stop bargaining in bad faith. Tell them that county workers need steps AND general wage adjustments.

If you live in Hennepin County, call your own commissioner (find yours at <http://bit.ly/18IAhBg>).

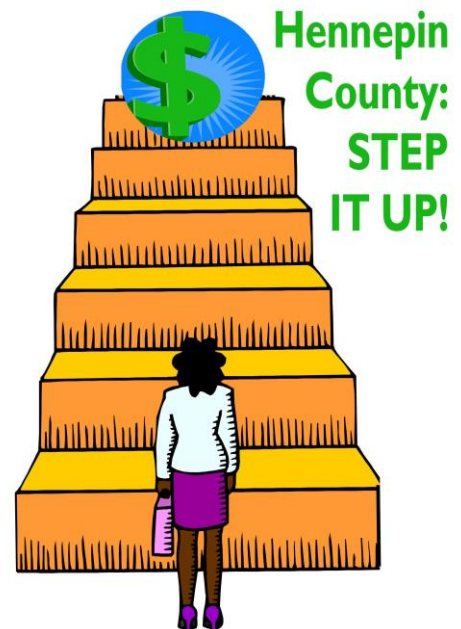
If you don't live in Hennepin, call board chair Mike Opat.

- Mike Opat: 612-348-7881
- Jan Callison: 612-348-7886
- Gail Dorfman: 612-348-7883
- Linda Higgins: 612-348-7882
- Jeff Johnson: 612-348-7887
- Randy Johnson: 612-348-7885
- Peter McLaughlin: 612-348-7884

But don't stop there!

Contact our Educate, Engage, and Outreach Committee Chairwoman Heather Hemmer at HeatherH_87@yahoo.com.

There are many ways you can help get a fair settlement.



Read the latest bargaining updates at <http://afscmemn.org/hennepin-county-bargaining>.

If you have questions about contract negotiations, please contact your AFSCME leaders:

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

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