

Weekly Word

Monroe County Federation of Social Workers, IUE-CWA 381

167 Flanders St Rochester New York 14619

(585) 328-7170 voice

(585) 328-2162 fax

web site: www.fsw-union.com

e-mail: fswmessage@aol.com

John Vasko

December 2, 2004

Tentative Agreement Fails: Yes- 66 No- 318

Last night, the second contract vote meeting was held. The votes from the first meeting were unsealed after the presentation so that members at last night's meeting could vote. When the last ballot was cast, a team of volunteers proceeded to count the votes.

It was evident from the discussion at each meeting that the deciding factor was overwhelmingly the changes in health insurance. Rating a close second was the wage increase offer on two counts: the adequacy of the offer and the failure to include an increase for 2004. Part of the compensation issue related to the workload that everyone has seen increase dramatically over the past 2 ½ years.

There are two things I am grateful for: The first is that members took time out of their busy lives, especially around the holidays, to participate in this very important process. The second is the spread between the votes, since this gives a clear indication of the membership's needs. While this was clear to the Union negotiating all along, it is important for the membership to take full responsibility for their will by casting such a decisive vote. Thanks to each and every one of you that participated.

Many of you completed an exit poll when you left. The results of this poll will be tabulated and reported on next week. This information will be exceedingly useful when we meet again with the County. We are already attempting to schedule a follow-up meeting near the middle of December. At that time the Union team will decide the best course of action. The options are to continue to negotiate or file for impasse with the Public Employee's Relations Board. This will put us on the course of mediation and fact finding with a state appointed representative. The end result could be a contract or legislative imposition.

As it has been for the past year, our current contract remains in effect, no changes to health insurance are made unless you elect those changes under the open enrollment period, which ends tomorrow, 12/3. If you've been contemplating a change, or have held up on filing Flexible Spending deductions for 2005, you should make every attempt to get this done by tomorrow. I have been assured by the county that they will try to accommodate late paperwork from us because of the contract issue, but your best guarantee is to do this by tomorrow.

There was also a commitment from the membership to continue the mobilization efforts that have been in place. The date of the next mobilization team meeting will be announced shortly. As underscored repeatedly over the past two meetings by the membership and the negotiating team, no mobilization will be effective unless we all participate. You have made your point by voting, now you must work to see the results you desire.

If you feel a need to respond, please email me at fswpresident@aol.com. Do not hit "reply to all." Once again, thank you for your participation, and especially...thanks for your vocal support of the negotiating team.