

Weekly Word



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Contract Update

This morning we had our first bargaining session with the Monroe County team. After the usual round of pleasantries and introductions, we were provided with some of the initial proposals from the County.

The session today was an opportunity for the County to show us the direction they would like to head. Much of the discussion centered upon taking a look at language that hadn't been addressed in a very long time. We spent most of the time hearing what the County had to say and seeking clarification of intent of the proposals they provided.

I want to be clear that this was an initial session and that we have probably not seen all of the proposals that the County has to make. There was also no bargaining going on, just attempts to understand.

There was some discussion about two of the "elephants in the room": the County budget and health insurance. Both are like monkeys on the back of Monroe County and the workers. The County asked us to consider a health care proposal, which we will. Most of our next session will be devoted to dialogue around health care and meeting with representatives from Excellus BC/BS.

For me it was interesting to note that some of the contract articles that were discussed were the same ones the FSW team has proposals prepared for. You can probably imagine that our proposals took a different stand.

Our next meeting is not until October 14th, which should be a full day session. In the meantime, the FSW team will be reviewing the County proposals, researching the impact of those proposals and developing a position relative to the County's proposals, including health care.

There are probably a lot of words or phrases I could come up with to describe my reaction to today's session but I believe the best way to think about the proposals is to relate them to our proposals...they are a wish list. In other words, if I was management and could create a perfect world in which to manage, this is the way I would set it up.

Our proposals are similarly a wish list in the County's view. As time goes on we will eventually discover where the rubber meets the road. The most important factor is that you all stay tuned and informed, because, as I've said before...you guys are the most important part of the negotiating team.

Survey Update

We were supposed to have the surveys turned in by last Friday, so if you haven't done yours yet, get it in before the floggings start. We have about 200 hand written surveys but I don't have a final number for those completed online.

The highest interest areas continue to be wages, health insurance, and retiree benefits when you consider financial benefits. The posting process ranks high, as do the number of surveys wanting protection from abusive management practices.

In reading the satisfaction part of the surveys, there continues to be a desire for more communication, more visibility (on my part), and more general information and education. Hopefully, we can start the educational process in the next couple of weeks. I will be looking for volunteers on the executive board and steward council to write some informational pieces to include in this bulletin over the next few months.

Human Service Worker of the Year 2008

On September 12th, the judging committee comprised of FSW members and private sector human service administrators met to review the nominations that were submitted. The winners are:

Public Sector	Todd Ranous, Sr.Caseworker-YOU Team
Private Sector	Mary Casselman-Collazzo, Gilda's Club
Volunteer	Mike Dooley, Bone Marrow Unit (SMH), Christopher's Challenge
Bertina Forde Rising Star	Lauren Coia, FCP Team 30

The award luncheon will be held on Friday, October 17th at the Convention Center from 11:30AM to 1:30PM. As in the past, our members and retirees will be able to purchase tickets for \$15 compared to the general \$25. Registration forms for this event can be printed off the FSW website.

Ed Grabowski Scholarship Winners

Congratulations to the winners of this year's \$1000 educational scholarships:

Anthony Bianchi, son of John and Evelyn Bianchi

Anthony Young, son of Donette Scott

Some scholarship info for 2009 is now available at the www.unionplus.org website under "Tips and Updates." In the coming months, the CWA and IUE-CWA scholarship information will become available.