

Westchester Community College CSEA Unit 9202, Minutes of General Membership Meeting

Dated March 27, 2018, 5:30PM

Executive Committee In attendance:

Carol Ann Zavarella-Vasta, President, Suzanne Paribello, Vice-President, Robert Novak, Treasurer, Teresa Michaud, Secretary was excused.


46 of 283 members were in attendance.

Guests in attendance: Charisse Seneres, Region 3 Director, John Staino, Local 860 President, Philip Lupe, CSEA Health Benefits Specialist, Alisa Cagle, LRS

Meeting called to order at 5:30PM by Carol Ann Zavarella-Vasta, President; followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

Reports:

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer commented that the Unit had lost status three years ago. The Unit's bank accounts had been closed and the balance of the funds have been deposited with Local 860 until we regain our status. All of the necessary paperwork, including the past three years of IRS filings, had been submitted to CSEA and forwarded to the IRS. We are waiting for the IRS to reissue a tax ID number so that we can regain control of our funds.



Sick Bank- Carol Ann reported that there are 203 days in the bank. Two requests were submitted, one was approved and the other denied. She indicated that there could be an upcoming open enrollment period to increase membership. There have been six new enrollees.

Trainings:

Shop Steward Workshop, Tuesday, April 24, 2018 and Wednesday April 25, 2018 from 5:30 PM to 9 PM, at the CSEA Local 860 Office, at 595 West Hartsdale Ave., White Plains, NY 10607.

Defensive Driving Course flyers were distributed for Spring 2018 dates.

Committees:

Scholarship Committee, Bob Novak, Chairperson, reported that information and application forms will be distributed via email by March 30, 2018.

Sub-Committees/Negotiations, Suzanne Paribello, Chairperson, reported that she sent out an email inviting interested members to join subcommittees, by areas, to provide input for the upcoming contract negotiations.

Health & Safety Committee, Paul DiRoma, Chairperson, Delzora Mabra & Liz Sloat Members.

Conferences:

Region 3 Spring Conference-Verona, NY April 13-15, 2018, President will be attending



Statewide Conference on Occupational Safety and Health, Lake Placid, NY April 27-29, 2018



Announcements:


Local 860- Saturday, May 19, 2018, Trip to Atlantic City-Flyer distributed

Special Olympics-Polar Plunge-Letter from Billy Riccaldo distributed.

JANUS vs. AFSCME is currently in the Supreme Court. We are expecting an adverse decision this summer. A JANUS victory will allow people to opt out of paying union dues. This would result in less services provided by the union and potentially the collapse of the unit itself. This would mean that the labor contract we enjoy today would be gone. All are encouraged to support the union.


Open Discussion- Q and A's

- Clarification was given regarding the negotiation subcommittees. Various areas of the college would form subcommittees to express their wants and needs for the next contract. These lists will be consolidated and prioritized by the negotiations team and brought to the negotiations table this summer. The negotiations team will consist of seven members. Four will be the executive committee and the remaining three will be selected from a cross section of the staff base. We are expecting to have negotiations training at WCC. All members of the team are expected to complete the training course.
- Janus vs. AFSCME, comments were made that as people leave the union, less dues will result in less resources, less LRSs, less Lawsuits, etc. Should unit membership fall below 50%, the employer can and will decertify the union.



There is a misconception that exists regarding our dues that a portion goes to fund political agendas. This idea is promoted by "Right to Work" organizations. The truth is that none of the dues fund political action committees. The union has a separate fund for PACs which is funded by donations.

- Great concern was expressed by many members that as members leave their positions due to change of jobs or retirement, many of the positions are frozen and the work is now being performed by part time, non-union employees. This results in a reduction of union members. Alisa Cagle noted that bargaining units have exclusive rights to positions. We must review the work being done to see if it is being done by a non-represented person. If so, legal action may be taken within three to four months of their start date. Members should inform the union leadership of potential infractions in their areas.
- Carol Ann Zavarella-Vasta read Dr. Miles response to the executive Committees' letter regarding the implementation of the MOA.



Our letter expressed, the units dissatisfaction with the way the college was implementating the MOA. That is, the retroactive charge for healthcare without proper disclosure of the cost, the college's decision not to switch providers to NYSHIP as was discussed in the negotiations, the fact the no committee had been formed to discuss healthcare buyout options, and we stated that we expected that the college would provide a detailed written explanation of the computation of the retro payment as well as the retro healthcare in the spirit of transparency. We requested that the college abrogate their claim to retroactive healthcare contributions. Copy of letter attached.

Dr. Miles responded to confirm receipt of our letter. She indicated that the college was now obligated to implement the agreement as approved. Please see copy of letter attached.

Suzanne Paribello stated that as a result a long awaited meeting of the executive committee and the college representatives, Retroactive pay for longevity would be included in the retro payment in April rather than delayed until December as the college had intended.

Several members expressed passionate dissatisfaction with Alisa Cagle, our LRS, for not having our back in the wording of the contract. Given her extensive experience in contract negotiation, it is felt that she should have anticipated and provided for the unexpected events that former Executive Asstorino put in place. This resulted in the delay of the approval of our contract.

The membership reiterated our complaint that the college failed to adequately disclose the contingent cost of healthcare for 2016 and 2017. One member specifically stated that she would not have chosen a plan if the true cost had been disclosed with the annual Summary of Benefits.

Many members expressed the need to be represented and have our contract reviewed by an outside attorney in the next negotiation cycle. Bob Novak stated the unit budget is about \$13,000 annually. Labor attorneys typically charge \$500/hour. It would not be feasible to have an attorney present at negotiation. John Staino stated that while the union would not send an attorney into negotiations, we could have our proposals and MOA reviewed by CSEA attorneys at different phases or the contract negotiation process. This did not happen in the last negotiation.

Membership grieved the lack of a sunset clause giving people the opportunity to retire prior to the implementation of the healthcare contributions.