



The Public Employee

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Local 1624
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SEPTEMBER 2004

Notice of General Meeting Constitutional Amendment -Dues Increase to be Decided-

AFSCME members are encouraged to attend the September 23rd General Membership Meeting and the October 7th Voting Meeting.

Among the Constitutional amendments that will be considered, AFSCME members will be asked to discuss and vote on a proposed **dues increase**.

Per our Constitution, there must be two readings of any proposed amendments before a vote may be taken.

At our **September 23rd** meeting we will discuss the various dues increase options as well as the feedback given by a focus group of AFSCME members who weighed these options. Any recommendations that our Executive Board makes will also be discussed.

Final discussion and a **membership vote** will be taken at our **October 7th** meeting.

Meetings Notification:

Thursday, September 23rd
Thursday, October 7th

Texas AFL-CIO Auditorium
1106 Lavaca (Northwest corner of 11th and Lavaca)
6:00 PM

Refreshments will be served.

A Constitutional amendment requires a majority vote of those present at our October meeting.

We have always incorporated our membership dues amount into our Constitution to ensure that any increases are fully disclosed, discussed and voted upon by our members. This is the foundation of an open and democratic union.

Please plan to attend and exercise your rights as an AFSCME member.

2005 AFSCME Family Scholarship

We are pleased to announce the **AFSCME Family Scholarship Program** for the year 2005 for children of AFSCME members. Under the program, thirteen (13) scholarships of \$2,000 each will be awarded to the winners selected from the applications which meet the eligibility requirements.

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Closing in on Budgets: County and City Proposals

Travis County

AFSCME has engaged the Travis County Commissioners Court and the Austin City Council on some specific and straightforward pay proposals.

AFSCME members, including a large contingent from the Travis County Transportation and National Resources Department, addressed the Commissioners Court at an August 18th public hearing. The members spoke strongly in support of Commissioner Ron Davis's proposal for a minimum 4% across the board salary increase effective in October.

Commissioner Davis's proposal also calls for pay ranges to move forward 4%, thus freeing-up those employees at the end of their pay range to receive the 4% as a part of their base salary as opposed to a single lump-sum payment.

AFSCME representatives spoke in support of this proposal and also introduced a proposal to increase the "Living Wage" for Travis County employees to \$10 per hour.

At the Commissioners' follow up meeting, AFSCME representatives made final comments regarding employee compensation.

The Commissioners Court voted unanimously to raise the County "Living Wage" to \$10 per hour.

On a 3-2 vote the Commissioners voted **against** moving the existing pay ranges by

four percent in spite of the AFSCME proffered logic in support of this.

Commissioner Davis Offered the amendment to move the pay ranges forward, which was seconded by Judge Biscoe.

City of Austin

AFSCME representatives met with City Manager Toby Futrell and proposed that the 3 ½% salary increase for City employees be administrated as an across- the- board cost of living increase with a corresponding adjustment of all pay ranges and to make such changes effective October 1st as opposed to the usual January 1st effective date. Ultimately the City Manager agreed on all points and included these measures in her base budget.

We are encountering opposition, however, in our bid to increase the "Living Wage" at the City to \$10 per hour, with City Administration introducing an exorbitant price tag for accomplishing this, citing the wage compression implications of this and the cost of addressing and correcting these. AFSCME representatives continue to meet with Council members showing the feasibility of our proposal.

We have, however, secured commitments for City Council support to include this item as a budget amendment.

It is inconceivable for any reasonable person to expect that anyone can afford to live in the City of Austin making less than \$10 per hour. This increase would impact approximately 340 current City employees.



AFSCME 2005 Scholarship Continued :

This year, we are able to offer thirteen awards, instead of the usual ten, due to a generous donation from the American Education Services/ Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (AES). AES is an organization which provides members with advice on higher education financing and a wide range of educational assistance. AES employs over 1,000 AFSCME members from Local 1224.

The scholarship will be renewed for \$2,000 each year for a maximum of four years provided the student remains enrolled in a full-time degree program at an accredited institution.

Eligibility requirements are as follows:

- Applicant must be a high school senior graduating in the spring of 2005 who will enroll in a full-time, four year degree programs at any accredited college or university.
- Applicant must be a daughter or son of an AFSCME member (or a child whose legal guardian or financially responsible grandparent is an AFSCME member).

Applications are available at the AFSCME office or call us at 477-5544.

Applications can also be downloaded from the AFSCME website at www.afscme.org. Completed applications for the 2005 scholarship must be postmarked no later than December 31, 2004. The scholarship winners will be announced by March 31, 2005.

Outside Employment Disclosure

AFSCME and HRD Resolution Still Pending

Several departments are circulating an Outside Employment Disclosure form which they are directing all employees to complete and sign.

The intent of this form is to help the departments know what, if any, outside employment you may have and if that outside job presents a conflict of interest with your City job.

That means your department will decide if you have a conflict of interest and will then instruct you if you need to quit that job or not.

When AFSCME learned of this maneuver we immediately challenged it. The City Human Resources Department agreed to have these forms recalled, but we are uncertain if that has been accomplished yet.

We believe this is an unnecessary invasion of your privacy.

We agree that conflict of interest between your City job and an outside job must be addressed. It is very simple, however. The City Charter defines what an outside employment conflict of interest is.

Basically, if you are working for a contractor, vendor, or agency that does direct business with the City, that is a conflict of interest. If you work for one of these you should report it to your department and allow them and Human Resources Department to make a determination.

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Become an AFSCME Cyber Activist! Sign up for the Action Alert List and receive legislative alerts via e-mail. Visit the Legislative Action Center on our web site—www.afscme.org—to see current issue alerts and sample letters, and for the latest news and information about what’s happening in Congress and how it affects you.

Put Up or Shut Up

As Union reps, we have many occasions to visit worksites throughout the City and County. In the process, we hear a lot of complaints: the work, my boss, the City, my pay, the law, Congress, the President, the War, overtime, harassment, the union, etc, etc.

When we ask these various employees what they have done or intend to do about any of these complaints, the answers fall into two separate camps.

This first camp generally answers this question with “What can be done?”, “It’s who you know, not what you know”, and “It’s the good ‘ol boy system”. We then ask, “do you belong to the Union?”; “Are you politically active?”; “Are you even registered to vote?” The answer, of course, is “No”.

The second camp may share the same concerns, anger and frustrations, but their responses include: “Let’s do something about this”, “What if we get all our members behind this issue”, “I’m telling everyone I know to help vote that bum out of office”, and “We’ve got to take back America”.

The vast majority of these employees are registered to vote, get out and vote, and are proud members of a Union.

That’s why AFSCME gets things done. Our members are more focused on solutions rather than problems. They get involved and will put themselves on the line for what they believe. They are a part of something: their Union, their political party, their community. Simply put, **they belong**.

So put up or shut up.

Register to vote
Get out and vote
Join the Union
Be a steward
Get involved and get active.

Don’t just sit and bellyache. Go do something!

