



North Texas Association of Public Employees Steelworkers Local 9479

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Ntape - Steelworkers
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Do you belong
to the
Steelworkers?
You do if your
Pay stub says
NT Pub E

Pension Report - Austin Nov 5th

The City's reluctance/refusal to follow through on promises made to the Civilian Employees and the Texas Pension Review Board (PRB) has apparently really hacked the PRB off. The meeting opened with the PRB Chair, Shari O. Shivers questioning whether the City of Dallas was possibly acting in bad faith, since it appears to have set aside a previous agreement it had made both with the PRB and the Dallas Civilian Employees.

Shivers also questioned a message sent to her by Mayor Miller stating that there was not going to be anyone at today's meeting representing the City of Dallas. This was news to Mr. Benavides, and may even have surprised many of his fourteen other bosses who thought that they HAD hired him to represent the city.

It appeared to Shivers that the City of Dallas does not currently have a plan to address the pension short fall issues. She did not seem to consider the first meeting of a new working group, to restudying the issue, to be a viable plan of action.

The Chairman for the City of Dallas Civilian Employees Pension Fund, Randy Stalnacker spoke briefly. He outlined the history of the problem and the agreement that had been made between the working group, the Employees Pension Fund, the City Council and the Texas PRB. He told them that he had requested that the council authorize the election necessary to finalize the agreement and that the council instead instructed the city manager to form a panel to study the pension benefits. He finished his presentation by assuring the board that the under funding was NOT due to the Employees Retirement Fund increasing the pension benefits in any way over the last ten years.

City Manager, Ted Benavides then told them that the deal made with the PRB and the employees had basically come unraveled since last he spoke to them in March. Since that time, the council has been briefed and there had been a consensus that the city should designate a five person panel to study the plan.

Please see Pension page 4

Are you a winner?

Well of course you are, after all, you are a member of the Steelworkers. ☺
But, you could be an even bigger winner when you attend the December meeting.

Everyone signed in at the December meeting will have their name thrown in the attendance jar. What is an attendance jar you ask? Well for every time you have signed in at a monthly meeting, a work session or rally, your name gets popped into the attendance jar. So the more active you are in your association, the more chances you have to win. Haven't made it to any meetings this year? Well make this your first meeting and perhaps you will get lucky.

During the December meeting we will be drawing names for tons of fabulous prizes. There will be numerous gift certificates for \$100.00 each as well as Union caps and t-shirts. What kinds of certificates do you ask? Best Buy, Barnes and Noble, Sears, Block Buster, and Target. What kind of hats? Ummm, black, they will be black hats and shirts, with gold lettering, Very nice. All your friends who don't have one will be jealous. Honest! ☺

Oh and snacks. We will also have snacks. So please make plans to attend. No, really, you need to attend. Because you must be present to win!!

So we will see you the first Tuesday of December (12-02-2003) Prizes will be drawn and snacks consumed after the business meeting starting at 6:00 p.m. See you there, and good luck!!

ASK – All questions answered. What do you want to know about your Association?

I recently received a 'What have you done for me lately' email from a member who was discouraged that there was 'nothing on the table'. Normally, I just answer the emails or talk to the member and things straighten themselves out. But as we come to the end of our first year, I thought it would perhaps be better to expand upon my answer and list some of the goals and accomplishments that we have achieved. After all, the average member does not need assistance filing a grievance or workers comp claim. So perhaps it is good that we are all reminded of what we have accomplished in our first twelve months of existence, so we can start thinking about what we want to accomplish in our second year.....

Dear Discouraged, What in particular were you looking for? While I of course wish there was 'money' on the table, as you know, our tax base is in the toilet right now. But rest assured when there is money; a. we will know it as we have lots of people telling us stuff and b. we will fight for our fair share. As far as working for you, I am not sure what 'you' particularly wanted, but....

We helped stop the privatization of a whole department, Fleet Maintenance. - What this means to you if you are NOT Fleet Maintenance, is that the privatization groups will not claim a success and immediately move on to another department/job group.

We were a main reason that Developmental Services did not become an 'at will' department stripped of its civil service protections. - This means that if you were one of the people who were arbitrarily assigned to that new department you will retain your civil service rights. If you are in a different department, it means that you can now transfer or promote to that department without giving these rights up.

We are working on codifying the grievance procedure which varies wildly from department to department, and sometimes even from district to district with in a department. This means if ever you do file a grievance, it will be easier and less arbitrary.

We joined with the retirees to fight the increase in the deductible, trust me the mayor was not happy with the \$500.00 stipend that we will be getting in January. While we would all wish that the deductible had been left alone, this means that if you are a healthy, single employee, you will be gaining \$500.00. If you use your deductible or have a family, this will in a small way offset the expense.

We joined with others to protest the new cell phone rules, pointing out the increased costs, unfairness and problems associated with it. It has been pulled to be tweaked, so we have a shot at not seeing it again, or if we do, seeing it in a form that is not so labor unfriendly.

We are watching the council and human resource actions. Notifying the membership of problems and changes that they are trying to slip under the radar. An example of some of the problems we notified the membership of are the short term disability sneakiness and the problem with unauthorized deductions to people who dropped the combined charities.

We are monitoring, reporting and educating the employees on the changes and actions in the pension problem. If you read the paper and then read our online report, you saw that there was a big difference in the coverage of the problem. We have audio tapes ordered of that meeting which will be posted as downloads for people to listen to, so they know what is going on with something so important to all of us.

We belong to the national/sub regional/district groups who are working for political change especially for municipal employees. We have a Rapid Response class that we will be sending people to in February (paid for by the District Group, thank you very much) and in March the sub regional group will be holding a work shop for all municipal groups in Texas. Where we will discuss problems and goals unique to municipalities in general and Texas in particular.

And while there are lots of other little things we do and assist with, we also pay for, develop and support the website (and now message board) which enable employees to be kept informed of what is going on with the city in general, no small feat when our employees are spread out over 387 sq miles.

So as we finish our first year, I ask all of you to think about what we have done, and to let us know where you think we should be going. If you have thoughts on what our goals should be for next year, please attend one of our monthly meetings, or email me at mrfrey@cityofdallasemployees.com

"If capitalism is fair then unionism must be. If men have a right to capitalize their ideas and the resources of their country, then that implies the right of men to capitalize their labor." - Frank Lloyd Wright

Support striking and locked-out grocery workers.

More than 90,000 grocery workers are on strike or locked-out--fighting health care benefits, both for themselves and for their future co-workers. Their employers--profitable grocery store super chains like Safeway-owned Vons and Albertsons and Ralph's--are insisting on radical cuts in pay and especially health care benefits.

The strike fund dollars these members receive from their union can't stretch to cover even the basic needs of their working families.

As we approach Thanksgiving, give thanks for the stand these workers are taking...and GIVE just a little to help support them by visiting this link.

<https://secure.ga3.org/08/thankgroceryworkers/nP11owGd1s1wa>

As the Mayor is fond of saying.... What about people in private industry... Well, since she is stuck on that phrase, it behooves us municipal employees to do what we can to help set the bar a little higher in the private sector.

As we know from recent experience, health coverage is under attack here at the city, it has become like a steam roller. Each business that succeeds in reducing or eliminating health care from their benefit package encourages and adds momentum to the next business attempting it. Companies encouraging each other to post a higher profit at the expense of families having affordable health coverage is wrong. It needs to stop, because no matter how bad we think we have it now, it could get worse for us if this becomes a common idea in the private sector.

Who knows, perhaps these workers will be the ones who stem the tide. If they don't, perhaps they will slow it down a bit. Regardless, they deserve our admiration for making the attempt, and also our assistance we can give them.

Amusing Rumor

THE MAYOR IS AN ALIEN?

Apparently, a long time employee thinks they have discovered proof that the Mayor is not of this world, she is a Ferengi!

This rumor seemingly sprung from someone reading the The Ferengi Bible – Which is subtitled the "Rules of Acquisition." Anyhow the following two rules coupled together is apparently what started this speculation.

Rule 1 - "Once you have their money, NEVER give it back"

Rule 211 - "Employees are the rungs on the ladder of success. Don't hesitate to step on them"

Ummm, guys.... I don't know which is worse, that someone actually thinks this.... Or that someone actually read the Ferengi Bible. ;D Come on people, that is pretty sad... :D

Of course what is worse is that I could find several Tekkie sites devoted to this 'Bible' that enabled me to check this rumor out. :D

If anyone has any other rumors, or wish to comment on this one please join us at <http://code217.proboards23.com/index.cgi?b>

My pay stub says NT Pub E but I never received my membership card, or any mail from the Steelworkers. Why?

For some reason we have a bad or incomplete address for you on your card. Please contact us with the new or correct info.

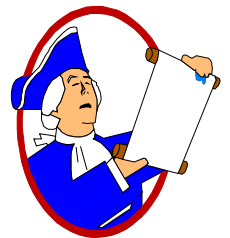


Meetings Time Changes!

Join us on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m.

500 South Ervay Suite 112A.

Don't forget Parking is free in the attached garage after 5 p.m.



Sad, but possible





Although it is true that only about 20 percent of American workers are in unions, that 20 percent sets the standards across the board in salaries, benefits and working conditions. If you are making a decent salary in a non-union company, you owe that to the unions. One thing that corporations do not do is give out money out of the goodness of their hearts. - Molly Ivins



Dues are less than \$5.00 a week; most of us spend more than that at the candy machine. Why not invest it in our future.

Pension Report continued from Page 1

The study would include funding, governance, investment programs, legal issues, benefits, how the plan compared to other plans, changes that could be made to the plan and how the plan should fit into the over all composition of the City's benefit package.

Needless to say, the PRB is not real happy with the City and especially not with the memo from the Mayor that no one would be at the meeting representing the City Under questioning Benavides stated that the automatic clause in the agreement seems to have spooked the council, especially as it wrestles with the 5-5-5 Police and Fire raises.

The PRB seemed to be pretty skeptical of the City's hopes that the employees would again pitch in to balance the fund, when the previous agreement was being disregarded. They were also upset that the agreement had never been put on the ballot. Chairperson Shivers stated that the employees had voted on increasing their share in good faith, but wondered what would happen in the future since it seemed the city would always have competing interests that needed funding.

The PRB feels that the City has drug it's feet long enough and needs to do something... declare bankruptcy, fund it, hold the election, or whatever. They DO NOT want to see anymore studies as this has been going on for nine years already.

The PRB is going to set up another meeting in three months at which time they want someone who can settle the problem sent to talk to them.

Please note the following people were on council in 1999 when the original agreement had been unanimously accepted. **Salazar, Loza, Miller, Thornton Reese, Hill, Chaney, Finkelman, Greyson, Forsythe Lill**

For a complete report please with the accompanying background info go to <http://www.cityofdallasemployees.com/coderetirement.htm>

Get on the mailing list to get reports as they happen by sending your email address to comments@ntape.com

Scholarship Program - Texas AFL-CIO

As you know, the Steelworkers are affiliate members of the AFL-CIO, and the Dallas AFL-CIO Central Labor Council. Which means that members and children of members are eligible to apply to win one of fifteen \$1000.00 scholarships being awarded in Texas. In addition to being a member or dependent in an affiliate labor group, the applicants must be high school seniors who plan to attend a university, college or technical institute in the summer or fall term. Applications must be in Austin on or before January 30st, 2004

Each central labor council will arrange interviews and tests for applicants. After the interviews, councils will select semifinalists. In selecting, councils consider need, understanding of the labor movement as demonstrated by the test scores and potential for leadership in service to the community. The statewide education committee of the Texas AFL-CIO will select 15 winners from among the semifinalists. Material on organized labor will be sent to each applicant to prepare for a test about unions. Remember the Deadline is January 30.

You can call, write or email for an application, timeline and guidelines.

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For additional copies of this newsletter please visit <http://www.cityofdallasemployees.com>

Pension Report continued

New Message Board - If you would like to comment on this article please go to <http://code217.proboards23.com/index.cgi?board=general>

See the **Dallas City Retired Employees Association report go to** http://www.dcrea.org/PRB_Notes.htm

If you would like to see Jim Schutze's Report on this in the Observer go to <http://www.dallasobserver.com/issues/2003-10-23/schutze.html/1/index.html>

Frequently Asked Questions about joining the Steelworkers

How much does it cost to join the Steelworkers? - It is very inexpensive. The maximum it can be is \$5.00 a week, and depending on income, lots of people contribute less. The dues structure is spelled out in the bylaws here at cityofdallasemployees.com look under bylaws

How come the dues are not listed on the enrollment card? - This card was put together and approved by the City Attorney's office. And only the stuff that they approved could be put on it prior to printing. So that was not allowed on the card. You would have liked the dues structure on the card, the City Controllers office wanted the employee number and not the social security number on it, and the Steelworkers would have liked a space for email addresses on them. But we were required to print the card that they approved. We have since been able to use a stamp to slip in the employee number and the email address at the edge of the card.

Does it really matter if I join? – YES!

It is only through a collective voice in the workplace that civilian employees can have a real impact. Non-members are going to be DEPENDING on members to fight against future cuts or for increases. Is that fair? Not really. It's like expecting your co-worker to fill up your gas tank once a month. Skeptical about the benefits of Association membership? Look at all the stuff that the Dallas Police Association has been able to get for it's members. They are a prime example of the benefits of having a large association working towards the long haul on issues that concern them.

Strength in Numbers - As a Steelworker you have power in numbers. There are Steelworkers - AFL-CIO members all over the city and state who are not city employees. As a Steelworker we can call upon them when assistance is needed on the local level. We also have an the Regional and International Office, staffed with various professionals who can assist us when the problem is more than a local union can handle. **Ask yourself - Are things ever going to improve if I do nothing?**



The AFL-CIO has done more good for more people than any group in America in its legislative efforts. It doesn't just try to do something about wages and hours for its own people. No group in the country works harder in the interests of everyone. - President Lyndon Johnson, 1965

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Place Stamp Here

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If you would like join the Steelworkers please fill the card below. After filling out the card, fold the paper so that the filled in card information is on the inside and the Steelworkers Address is on the out side. Secure the bottom with tape, affix a stamp and mail to: North Texas Association of Public Employees Steelworkers Local 9479, 500 South Ervay -Suite 112A, Dallas, Texas 75201

AUTHORIZATION FOR REPRESENTATION AND PAYROLL DEDUCTION

**North Texas Association of Public Employees
An Affiliate of United Steelworkers of America, AFL-CIO, CLC**

I hereby request and accept membership in the North Texas Association of Public Employees—an affiliate of the United Steelworkers of America ("NTAPE/USWA"), and I hereby authorize and designate the USWA to act as my Representative for purposes of presenting grievances concerning my wages, hours of work, and other working conditions and terms of employment.

I further authorize and request my Employer to deduct from my earnings the amount certified by the NTAPE/USWA to be deducted each month, which represents my membership dues to said organization. The amount is to be transmitted to the International Secretary/Treasurer of the USWA. This authorization shall remain in effect until further notice from me in writing or upon termination of my employment.

First Name _____ Middle Initial _____ Last Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Tel. # _____ Employee # _____

Employed By (Department) _____ Job Title _____

Employee Signature _____ Date _____

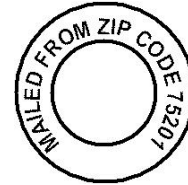
Email Address _____



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Meetings Changed to 1st Tuesday - Important Pension Fund details inside!