

Business Agent Ken Bergen's Report

June 2020

Contracts currently in negotiations:

- **Advanced Math & Science Academy**
- **Andover Housing Authority**
- **Wachusett Regional School District**
- **West Newbury Police**

Contract negotiations starting soon:

- **Douglas (Cafeteria)**
- **Douglas (Custodians)**
- **MV Transportation**

ABF (Worcester): A meeting was held with the Company over its intent to terminate a member. After discussions with the terminal manager and the company's labor representative, all parties agreed to reduce the termination to a three-day suspension. I want to thank Alternate Steward Chuck Martin for his assistance in this matter. An issue was brought to the Union's attention regarding non-payment of 2020 vacation time to two employees who retired prior to January first. After discussions with the company's labor representative, the company agreed to pay all 2020 vacation time and the members have received the vacation pay in full.

Advanced Math & Science Academy: Negotiations are progressing slowly with additional meetings being scheduled in the coming weeks.

Andover Housing Authority: Negotiations are still on hold due to the COVID-19 restrictions. The Union continues to reach out to the director for a resumption of talks. A Side Letter of Agreement has been drafted and presented to the Housing Authority to continue the practice of modifying the summer work schedule.

Douglas (Cafeteria) and (Custodians): A preliminary meeting was held with the District's administration team to go over budgetary issues brought on by the COVID-19 shutdown. The District and the Union will begin negotiations next week.

Groveland (Highway) and (Water & Sewer): Due to the COVID-19 situation and impact on local budgets, the Town and the Union have agreed to a one-year successor agreement to the contract that expires at the end of June. The measure provides for wage increases for all classifications in both departments and has been agreed to by the members and approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Fitchburg Dispatchers, Parking Control Officers and Airport Linesmen: A meeting was held with representatives of the City to discuss the economic impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having on the City, and on the implications that holds for the budget for the next fiscal year.

Hudson RPM: A meeting was held with the members to go over the last, best offer presented by the Company. The members voted unanimously to accept the two-year agreement which provides for preservation of work language, increases to the starting pay rate, annual hourly pay rate increases and increases in pension contributions maintaining company participation in the Teamsters Pension Fund and the members monthly pension accrual. I want to thank Stewards Mark Campbell and Gabe Cruz for all their hard work and perseverance throughout the negotiations.

Lawrence Safety Officers: A grievance mediation was held over an involuntary transfer to another building within the district. At this time, the member feels the offer made by the district to resolve the matter is insufficient. We're currently assessing our next steps.

Northbridge Instructional Classroom Assistants: Through negotiations and mediation, a tentative agreement has been reached with the school system and is being put before the membership for a vote. A couple of google meetings have taken place with the members to go over the specifics of the tentative agreement and balloting is being conducted through mail referendum with the counting of ballots taking place later this week.

Rowley Firefighters: Addressing a measure that was introduced in the last contract negotiations, the Town has agreed to increase its percentage of the premium for the employee's health insurance coverage by 2½%. Further discussions with the Town and the other bargaining units within the Town are expected in the attempt to further reduce the members' health insurance burden.

Saint Vincent Hospital: Several meetings have been held with the hospital's representatives over the many issues resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak.

Discussions are continuing. A meeting was held with a department manager and a member over some issues within the department.

Wachusett Regional School District: Negotiations for a COVID-19 MOA, addressing the many issues resulting from the outbreak, the suspension of classes and the closure of schools have concluded, and an agreement has been reached with the district. The Agreement maintains all elements of the collective bargaining agreement and addresses the new processes of remote education and the Paraprofessionals role. Negotiations for a successor agreement to the contract that expires at the end of June are scheduled to resume this coming week.

West Newbury Police: Negotiations are still currently on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Union has contacted the Town requesting the resumption of negotiations and we're currently waiting on a response. In the meantime, in response to a Union request, the Town has agreed to the carrying over of unused personal and holiday time beyond the end of the fiscal year. This is a result of shift changes initiated in order to limit the risk of exposure to the members of the force and the members limited ability to utilize the time provided under the contract.

It's been another busy month attending and participating in negotiations, disciplinary meetings, mediations and numerous conference calls and on-line meetings. I want to express my gratitude to all our Stewards for all their hard work in representing the members on a day to day basis in the workplace. I also want to thank our Principal Executive Officer Shannon George, my fellow Business Agents, and our Executive Board for all their support and for always putting the members first.

Respectfully submitted,

Business Agent Ken Bergen