



## WEEK IN ACTION!

Weekly News From Your Union ~ April 4 – April 8, 2016

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### **VSEA & State Headed To Labor Board Tomorrow**

VSEA's Non-Management, Corrections and Supervisory Unit Bargaining Team members and their staff negotiators will be at the Vermont Labor Relations Board (VLRB) tomorrow for a very important hearing on the "last-best" contract offers of both the workers and the State. The hearing begins at 10 a.m. at the VLRB offices on Bailey Street in Montpelier.

Because this VLRB process is such an anomaly, here's another short primer about how it works from here:

#### LAST BEST OFFER

Each party's last best offer (LBO) was filed with the VLRB under seal on March 21.

The VLRB is holding a hearing on the LBOs on April 7. Within 30 days of certification, the VLRB shall select between the LBOs of the parties, considered in its entirety without amendment.

Should the Board find the LBOs of both parties unreasonable and likely to produce undesirable results, or likely to result in a long-lasting negative impact upon the parties' collective bargaining relationship, the Board may select the recommendation of the fact finder as to those disputed issues submitted to the Board in the LBOs.

The decision of the Board shall be final and binding. No membership ratification vote on the LBO selection, the contract will be imposed without mutual agreement, pending appropriation.

The Board shall determine the cost of the agreement selected and request the General Assembly to appropriate the amount determined to be necessary to implement the selected agreement.

#### FUNDING BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE VLRB IMPOSED AGREEMENT

If the General Assembly chooses to appropriate sufficient funds, the agreement shall become effective at the beginning of the next fiscal year.

If the General Assembly appropriates less than the amount requested, the terms of the agreement affected by the lesser appropriation shall be renegotiated based on the amount of the funds actually appropriated, and the agreement with the negotiated changes shall become effective at the beginning of the next fiscal year.

No portions of any agreement shall become effective separately except with mutual consent of both parties.

## 911 Board Says DPS Wants To Privatize Vermont's Entire Emergency Response System

VSEA members and many in the law enforcement community were caught by surprise this week when the Vermont Emergency 911 Board issued a press release on April 4 that began:

*“The Vermont Enhanced 9-1-1 Board has been notified by Commissioner Keith Flynn that the Department of Public Safety will not be continuing to participate in the statewide 9-1-1 call taking system. The Commissioner indicated that the two Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) operated by the Department will cease taking 9-1-1 calls, tentatively on July 1, 2017.”*

The two Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) the 911 Board is referring to are located in Williston and Rockingham, and they are staffed by VSEA members. Almost a year ago—against strong public opposition—the State went ahead and closed Vermont's only two other State-owned PSAPs in Rutland and Derby.

The State took issue and wasted little time firing back at the Board in its own April 4 press release that read, in part:

*“A press release from the E-911 Board stating that the Department of Public Safety ‘will not be continuing to participate in the statewide 911 call taking system’ is false. No decision has been made surrounding the participation of the Department of Public Safety in the statewide 9-1-1 call taking system. The attempt to misled the media and public is completely outrageous and under-handed.”*

The State's release just served to pour gasoline on the fire, as the 911 Board shot right back in another press release later in the day that included emails that seem to confirm the Board's allegations, one from a DPS official to the Board on March 23 that reads, in part:

*Hi Gary [Taylor, St. Albans Public Safety Director],*

*Your meeting notes accurately convey what I heard in the meeting as well. DPS would like to be out of the 911 call-taking business. I know you did ask for a formal letter and that would have to come from the Commissioner. I also know that any such endeavor would take time to plan and while not meant as a date certain, for discussion sake (only) we tossed out a date of July 1, 2017. I'm sure both DPS and E911 will need to discuss this further and we are ready to do so.*

*Joe [Flynn, DPS Deputy Commissioner]*

As the representative for dozens of dispatchers working in Williston and Rockingham, VSEA was quick to jump into the fray to defend this critical service, issuing its own release on April 4 that reads, in part:

*“VSEA and our members working at these PSAPs intend to fight any ill-advised privatization scheme with the same vigor as we did last year; hopefully with a different result this time around,” says VSEA President Dave Bellini. “The Board's announcement did not provide any detail about what DPS' plan is or what the costs are associated with it, so we don't know much yet. We'll be working with our PSAP members in the coming weeks to learn whatever details there are about this privatization effort, and what its safety and financial impact could be for Vermonters and our towns and communities. If forced to, VSEA will once again stress that these dispatchers are Vermonters serving Vermonters. They know their regions and personnel, and when it comes to issues of public safety, this is very important.”*

[Read the Full VSEA Release](#)  
[VTDigger Story](#)

Update:

On April 5, the State and the 911 Board issued a joint statement that contained the following:

*“We want the public to know we are committed to working together to resolve any lingering budgetary or policy differences. Most importantly, everyone should know that regardless of any disagreements on policy, when you dial 911 you will have a dedicated state or local official on the other end of the line ready to respond. That is what we have today and we are committed to ensuring that continues to be the case going forward.”*

“What’s missing from this damage-control statement is a position on whether or not the Williston and Rockingham PSAPs will remain State-operated or not,” says VSEA Communications Director Doug Gibson. “For that reason, President Bellini is correct about VSEA not taking any chances. The union will be moving forward, hopefully again with many in the law enforcement community, to begin strategizing about how to defeat this wrongheaded, privatization scheme.”

## **House Gov Ops Quickly Schedules 4/7 Hearing On PSAPs’ Future**

Apparently, lawmakers were as caught off guard by this week’s news of DPS’ desire to privatize Vermont’s entire 911 Emergency Service as VSEA dispatchers and, it would seem, most of Vermont’s law enforcement community were.

The House Government Operations Committee is wasting no time looking into the report, scheduling a hearing on this week’s PSAP events for Thursday, April 7, beginning at 2:30 p.m. The hearing will be held in Room 49 at the State House. VSEA dispatcher members who are able are being urged to attend.

*WIA* will update readers next week on any new developments that might come out of tomorrow’s hearing.

## **What Does “Member-Driven” Mean To You? VSEA First VP Wants To Know.**

VSEA First Vice President and Council Chair Aimee Towne asked *WIA* to pose a question to the membership-at-large for her. She would like to know what the term “member-driven” means to you.

“I hear people saying that VSEA is ‘member-driven,’ and I agree, but sometimes when I ask them what that means, I get all kinds of different answers,” explains Towne. “I just want to take an informal poll of our members about the term because I think the answers they give me will help guide my efforts to involve more VSEA members in our union.”

VSEA members can tell Aimee what they believe “member-driven” means by sending an email to [atowne@vsea.org](mailto:atowne@vsea.org); subject line “Member-Driven.”

“Thanks in advance for everyone’s help,” adds Towne.

## **Linda Backus Award Scholarship Offered To College-Enrolled Children Who Are Working For Social Justice And Who Have Parents Who Belong To A Vermont Union!**

This award is presented by United Academics, the faculty union at the University of Vermont, to an undergraduate student for outstanding civic engagement in advancing economic and social justice goals. The award is named in honor of Linda Backus, former professor of education at UVM, committed union organizer, and second president of United Academics.

**To be eligible, the student must have completed two years at a higher education institution--not necessarily in Vermont--and have an immediate family member who is a member of a union in Vermont.**

Application deadline April 22.

[Details](#)

For more information, contact Stephanie Kaza, Chair of the UA Scholarship Committee, at [skaza@uvm.edu](mailto:skaza@uvm.edu) or 802-656-0172.

Award winners will be announced by mid-May.

### **Central Vermont Chapter Meeting Monday, April 11**

VSEA Central Vermont Chapter President Cassandra Edson asked *WIA* to remind that the Chapter's next meeting is Monday, April 11, at VSEA headquarters in Montpelier. The meeting begins at 5:00 p.m. Please RSVP to Cassandra at [cassandraedson@hotmail.com](mailto:cassandraedson@hotmail.com).

### **Rutland Chapter Meeting Is Wednesday, April 13**

VSEA Rutland Chapter President Matt Jakubowski asked *WIA* to remind that the Chapter's next meeting is Wednesday, April 13, in the Asa Bloomer Building's Fourth-Floor Conference Room. The meeting begins at 5:00 p.m.

### **Bennington Members Invited To Meet With Union Representative on April 11**

VSEA Union Representative Rachael Fields is inviting members in Bennington to grab your lunch and come to the third-floor, shared conference room at the Bennington State Office Building on Monday, April 11, to meet with her from noon to 1:30 p.m.

Bring you questions, concerns and comments about any current contract or workplace issue. Rachael can also provide you with an update on bargaining and other fights and campaigns.

If you have any questions in advance, call Rachael at (802) 595-0150.

### **VSEA Holding S. 14 Meeting On April 12**

On Tuesday, April 12, VSEA is holding a special meeting to discuss the requirements of the S.14 legislation passed in 2013. The meeting begins at 3:10 p.m. at VSEA headquarters in Montpelier.

S. 14 reads:

*“Annually, the employees of the bargaining unit shall meet and discuss whether employees who have chosen not to join the employee organization shall be allowed to vote on the ratification of any collective bargaining agreement entered into pursuant to this chapter. After discussion, employees that are members of the employee organization shall vote on whether to allow employees who have chosen not to join the employee organization to vote on the ratification of any collective bargaining agreement.”*

### **April 30 Is Deadline To Enroll For New Easy-Issue, Permanent Life Insurance Option**

*In early February, VSEA announced a new offer to members to purchase voluntary permanent life insurance through the convenience of payroll deduction and easy online enrollment. Here is a new reminder about the offer, which is being rolled out in a series of *WIA* announcements.*

### **Announcement #4 – April 6 – Time Running Out To Sign Up For Affordable Purelife-Plus Life Insurance**

Most people do not want to talk about death. Don't miss this chance to protect your family. The online application deadline is fast approaching. You only have until April 30, 2016 to apply online.

Have you logged in?

Enrollment Dates: 3/1/16 to 4/30/16

To enroll, [click here](#)

Login using your employee number in both the ID and password fields.

If you have any questions or need assistance with enrolling in coverage, please contact VSEA's insurance administrator, R.K. Tongue Co., at (800) 638-6353 or email [info@rktongue.com](mailto:info@rktongue.com).

For additional information, [click here](#).

*PureLife-plus (PRFNG-NI-10) is an individual, flexible premium universal life insurance product. For details of coverage see the PureLife-plus brochure. PureLife-plus is underwritten by Texas Life Insurance Company, P.O. Box 830, Waco, TX, 76703; 1-800-283-9233 16M016-C (5) 1013 (exp0218)*

## **Bolton Valley Already Offering VSEA Members Deeply Discounted 2016-2017 Season Pass Rates**

Bolton Valley Ski Resort has been a participating member of the VSEA Advantage Discount Program for years, offering full-fledged VSEA members and their families discounted day and season passes.

Even though the 2015-2016 ski season isn't over quite yet, Bolton is already offering VSEA members an early-bird special deal on a 2016-2017 season pass. This is special pricing that Bolton Valley is offering on a trial basis to gauge Vermonters' interest in purchasing a pass way ahead of time if the price is deeply discounted.

Bolton is offering an adult "All-Access" season pass for \$269 to VSEA members. This is a \$230 savings per pass from last year. This price is good until October 31, 2016. Youth passes (\$159) include an added discount that Bolton will stop offering on April 4, 2016, so, if interested, book these sooner, not later.

[Click here](#) to order your pass(es) today! On the page, you'll find a list of prices and instructions to order. Members will need a promo code at the time of checkout, which will apply discounts to the full price passes. VSEA's promo code is 51VSEA.

## **VSEA First Vice President Looking To Fill Vacant Council Seats**

VSEA First Vice President Aimee Towne asked *WIA* to remind members about several open seats on the VSEA Council. These Council seats (by departmental heading) still remain open:

Aging and Independent Living

Agriculture

Auditor of Accounts

Buildings and General Services

Children and Families

ACCD/Housing

ACCD/Economic Development

ACCD/Marketing and Tourism

Commission on Women

Criminal Justice Training Council

Education

Finance and Management  
Financial Regulation  
Forests and Parks  
AHS/Rate Setting & Auditing  
AHS/IT Unit  
Labor  
Library  
Liquor Control  
Lottery  
Mental Health  
ANR  
Public Safety - Civilian  
Public Service Board  
Public Service Department  
Secretary of State  
Tax Department  
Transportation  
Transportation Agency/DMV  
Treasurer's Office

You can find a self-nominating form by [clicking here](#). (opens/ downloads as a PDF)

With more than 120 VSEA members, the VSEA Council is one of your union's primary governing bodies and its largest and most diverse, with departmental representatives from across state government. The Council meets quarterly and retains a right to override decisions made by the VSEA Board of Trustees.

Questions? Please contact VSEA Administrative Assistant Ayla Hudson at 802-223-5247, or by email at [ahudson@vsea.org](mailto:ahudson@vsea.org).

## **Special Alert To Stewards From VSEA Labor Educator**

*Note: Be sure to read #3 and then click to sign up.*

### **1) UPDATE! Save the Date! Friday, May 20: VSEA Steward Summit Training.**

All Stewards are urged to attend this special, all-day training. VSEA officers and staff will join us to collectively explore ways to improve public services, strengthen our contracts, and build our Union. The day will include breakout sessions and workshops by bargaining unit, department and Field territory. Breakfast and lunch will also be provided on May 20.

New! **Members** are invited to stay overnight at the hotel on May 19, especially if you are traveling from far

away. You will need to make your own room reservation by April 11. Call Best Western directly and ask for the VSEA rate for May 19. VSEA will reimburse you for the hotel stay. There will also be a group dinner on May 19.

Best Western Waterbury: 802-244-7822

Questions about the training, contact Tim Leno: [tlenoch@vsea.org](mailto:tlenoch@vsea.org)

Questions about hotel reservation, contact Amy Haskins: [ahaskins@vsea.org](mailto:ahaskins@vsea.org)

## 2) Spring Trainings

[Click Here To Sign Up](#)

See *WIA* entry “Labor Educator’s Winter/Spring 2016 Training Schedule” for more information.

3) Individual trainings/meetings at your worksite.

I would like to hold **one- to two-hour individualized trainings** with you, depending on your availability. Stewards can sign up for a training by clicking below on whichever link is nearest your worksite, and then select a time and suggest a location to meet. I will follow up with an email to confirm and discuss logistics.

Topics range from your experiences and worksite challenges to statewide issues and current VSEA campaigns.

[Burlington & St. Albans](#)

[Newport & St. Johnsbury](#)

[Morrisville & Waterbury](#)

[Montpelier & Barre](#)

[Rutland & Middlebury](#)

[White River Junction & Springfield](#)

[Bennington & Brattleboro](#)

## **VSEA Labor Educator’s Winter/Spring 2016 Training Schedule**

*VSEA Labor Educator Tim Leno asked WIA to remind about the latest round of trainings he is conducting in the winter/spring 2016. If you are interested in registering to attend one or more trainings, you can do so by [clicking here](#). Please direct your training questions to Tim at [tlenoch@vsea.org](mailto:tlenoch@vsea.org).*

**Trainings in blue are for all members.**

### **Steward Training: The Grievance**

Wednesday, April 13

VTrans Training Center

1716 U.S. Route 302

Berlin

### **Steward Training: The Labor/Management Committee**

Friday, April 15  
DVHA Conference Room  
312 Hurricane Lane  
Williston

### **Diversity & Solidarity For Public Sector Union Members**

Friday, April 22  
VTrans Training Center  
1716 U.S. Route 302  
Berlin

### **Quote Of The Week!**

*“We asked the State to sit down and try to reach agreement, working with the fact finder’s report, but they decided to play politics for reasons no one was able to explain to VSEA negotiators and Teams. It felt mean-spirited.”*

VSEA President Dave Bellini in a press statement earlier this week about the State’s decision to fight with bargaining units, rather than negotiate.

### **VSEA Legislative Team Updates Now Online**

VSEA’s Legislative Team has been sending bi-weekly updates on State House happenings to about 500 members, but now the updates are available for VSEA members to read online. To read one of the three updates the Team has issued to date, please [click here](#).

Please note that in order to view the updates on [www.vsea.org](http://www.vsea.org), you must first be a registered user of the site, which will grant you “member-only” status. If you are not a registered user of VSEA’s website, you can [click here](#) to sign up today. If you are not a registered user, you will receive an “Access Denied” message when trying to view the updates.

### **Important Reminder About Messages to the Legislature or the Public!**

VSEA members are under attack, both at the bargaining table and in the Legislature, and members’ voices are the most powerful force we have. Members are already speaking out, particularly to legislators, so we need to remember some basic ground rules. [Click here](#) to view a memo that outlines some basic points about how to make sure your speech is protected. One of the key rules is this:

**When you communicate with legislators, the media, or the public, make sure you are not on work time and don’t use the employer’s computer!**

Nothing will undermine your message more effectively than the suspicion that you are using work time or the employer’s property for personal purposes. Electronic messages to lawmakers should originate from your personal email account and not from your state email account. The same goes for posting on websites or blogs. Send your messages from your personal email on break time, or pre- or post-work.

VSEA thanks all members for your attention to this request.

### **Joint Safety & Health Committee Posts “Complaint Form” To Gather Data From State Employees**

For years, VSEA members and staff have served with management on a specially created Joint Safety and Health Committee, which meets periodically to discuss current safety and health issues impacting state employees, your worksites and/or the public. Committee members also strategize together about





**April 13**

Rutland Chapter Meeting  
Asa Bloomer Building  
Fourth Floor  
Rutland  
Noon

**April 13**

Steward Training: The Grievance  
VTrans Training Center  
1716 U.S. Route 302  
Berlin  
9:00 a.m.

**April 14**

Child & Elder Care Committee  
VSEA HQ  
Montpelier  
9:30 a.m.

**April 15**

OCS Labor/Management Committee  
VSEA HQ  
Montpelier  
8:30 a.m.

**April 15**

Steward Training: The Labor/Management Committee  
DVHA Conference Room  
312 Hurricane Lane, Suite 201  
Williston  
9:00 a.m.

**April 15**

Special Events Committee  
VSEA HQ  
Montpelier  
9:30 a.m.