



WEEK IN ACTION!

Weekly News From Your Union ~ May 16 – May 20, 2016

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VSEA Supervisory, Corrections Units Receive New Contract Summaries & Comparison Of Proposals

This morning, the Chairs of the VSEA Corrections and Supervisory Unit Bargaining Teams emailed a comprehensive contract summary to all their Unit members, highlighting the Teams' gains achieved in this past round of bargaining and providing a comparison sheet of the State's bargaining proposals versus what the VSEA Teams proposed. If you belong to either of these Units, please check your email for this important notification.

Vermont State Colleges' Members Reach Tentative Agreement On New Contract

Unlike the NMU, Supervisory, Corrections and Judiciary Units' Bargaining Teams negotiating experience in 2015/2016, VSEA's State Colleges' Bargaining Team was able to reach a tentative agreement this week with the Chancellor's office on a tentative contract agreement—without having to resort to employing fact finders, mediators and the Labor Board.

Details of the tentative agreement are currently being sent to all VSEA VSC members, and a ratification ballot will soon follow in the mail.

Important Notice! VSEA Union Representative Territories Are Changing!

New Approach To Pair Union Reps With Specific Agencies/Departments

VSEA Organizing Director Vinnie O'Connor and Field Services Director Gretchen Naylor announced this week, via email to all members, that, beginning Monday, May 23, VSEA's six Union Representatives will now be assigned to specific state agencies and departments, as opposed to regions and territories, which has been the practice.

In case you missed it, here is what O'Connor wrote to members in his email about the change:

Last year, in an effort to provide more targeted, hands-on support for hundreds of state employees working in the Agency of Transportation, a decision was made to assign one VSEA Union Representative almost exclusively to this Unit. The experiment was very successful, and now VSEA leaders want to duplicate its success by making similar Unit/Agency VSEA Union Representative assignments statewide and across government.

At its May 12 meeting, the VSEA Board of Trustees voted to approve this staff reshuffling, and here are some of the reasons they gave for the decision:

- *Greater efficiency to provide services to VSEA members;*
- *Continuity of service for members and employer;*
- *Streamline operations;*
- *Tracking workplace trend's by Departments/Agencies; and*
- *Building stronger member leaders on Departmental issues.*

Please note that this reshuffling will not impact the status of any current Union Representative's caseload, meaning the Union Representative originally assigned to your case will see it through with you to resolution.

Here is a list of the new Union Representative assignments (*Note: Please note that VVH was missing from yesterday's email announcement and is assigned to Rachael Fields and that DAIL is also assigned to her. The Agency of Agriculture is Nikolas Stein*):

Rachael Fields

Health Access Eligibility Unit
Department of Aging & Independent Living
Department of Health
Department of Mental Health
Department of Vermont Health Access
Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital
Vermont Veterans' Home

Brian Morse

Judiciary Unit
State Colleges' Unit
Supervisory Unit (except AOT)

Mike O'Day

Department of Corrections (North)
Department of Public Safety (North) – Civilian
Military Department
Sworn Law Enforcement (North)
Williston 911 Dispatch

Bob South

Buildings & General Services
Criminal Justice Training Center
Department of Corrections (South)
Department of Liquor Control
Department of Liquor Control Warehouse
Department of Public Safety (South)
Emergency 911 Board
Rockingham 911 Dispatch
Sworn Law Enforcement (South)

Nikolas Stein

Agency of the Administration
Agency of Agriculture
Agency of Commerce and Community Development
Agency of Education
Agency of Human Services (Central)
Agency of Natural Resources
~~Department of Aging & Independent Living~~
Department for Children & Families
Department of Financial Regulation
Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (Civilian)
Department of Innovation & Information
Department of Labor
Department of Libraries

Department of Taxes
Green Mountain Care Board
Public Service Board
Secretary of State's Office
Treasurer's Office
Vermont Lottery

Dave Van Deusen

Agency of Transportation
Agency of Transportation Supervisors
Department of Motor Vehicles (Except Sworn Law Enforcement)
Office of the Defender General
Vermont State Housing Authority

Judiciary Docket Clerks Featured In Short Video, Calling On The Court Administrator To Ask For More Money To Fairly Pay Them

On May 14, a short video posted to [VSEA's Facebook page](#), featuring Docket Clerks working for the Judiciary.

For a long time, VSEA Docket Clerks have been fighting hard to be reclassified and paid more, so the Judiciary Unit Bargaining Team made their fight a bargaining priority for this round of what have been very difficult negotiations. To date, Court Administrator Pat Gabel is refusing to address the Docket Clerks' low pay at the table, which is why the VSEA members decided to make a video to send a personal message to her.

Docket Clerks are asking VSEA members to please share the video far and wide to educate Vermonters about their fight for a fair wage and reclassification.

Thanks in advance for your help and support for these workers.

Another VSEA Member Declares As Candidate In Vermont House Race

Add Cheri Goldstein's name to the growing list of frontline state employees who will be working this year to follow in the footsteps of VVH member (now Union Representative) Rachael Fields, who was victorious in her first-ever run for the House in 2012.

Goldstein becomes the second VSEA member in House Speaker Shap Smith's district (the towns of Elmore, Morristown, Woodbury and Worcester) to announce a run to succeed him. Earlier this year, VSEA First Vice President Aimee Towne announced that she too is seeking election to one of the two seats up for grabs in the Speaker's old district. Goldstein has worked in state government since 1999, and she is currently a Workers' Comp Claims Adjuster in the Office of Risk Management.

Judiciary member Evan Hill has also announced earlier this year that she is seeking election to one of two House seats to represent Grand Isle.

[Read Cheri Goldstein's Announcement On VSEA.org](#)

VSEA is asking members who live in Cheri, Aimee, Evan and Rachael's districts to consider casting your vote for a fellow state employee. The more rank-and-file worker voices in the State House, the better!

Waterbury Chapter Meeting On May 27

VSEA's Waterbury Chapter is meeting Friday, May 27, beginning at noon in the State Office Complex's Mountain Ash Room in Waterbury.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Chapter President Tracey Harrington by email at Tracerann@gmail.com.

VSEA Franklin/Grand Isle Chapter Meets

Members of the VSEA Franklin/Grand Isle Chapter met on May 18 at the 14th Star Brewery in St. Albans to discuss a lot of the same issues concerning state employees across Vermont, including privatization, employee safety and security and leased space versus state-owned (a topic of particular importance in St. Albans, where workers were moved out of state-owned space into leased space, and the complaints about the workers' new digs are plenty). Chapter members also received a bargaining and legislative update from VSEA Executive Director Steve Howard.

All VSEA Chapters are gearing up now for the summer "Annual Meeting" season. These Chapter Annual Meetings are held in the period just prior to VSEA's main Annual Meeting on September 10 in Killington, where VSEA members representing Chapters across the state will meet to determine VSEA's future direction and goals.

VSEA Chapters are urged to snap a few photos, like the F/GI Chapter did, and post them right here to VSEA's Facebook page.

Thanks!

VSEA Mourns Loss Of DOC Member Tim Simoneau!

VSEA is mourning the untimely death of VSEA member and onetime Board and Council member Tim Simoneau, who worked for the DOC for 21 years, primarily at the Northern State Correctional Facility in Newport. Simoneau died of natural causes.

As mentioned, Tim was an active VSEA member for a long time, serving in several leadership roles during his working career. In addition, Tim and his wife also gave selflessly of themselves; adopting several children with special needs and making it their mission to prevent and someday end child abuse.

WIA published a story in 2007 about Tim and his wife being called to the State House to be honored for their work to prevent child abuse. They were part of a ceremony to commemorate the first year that April was designated "Child Abuse Prevention" month in Vermont. The story is a pretty good example of the kind of people the Simoneaus are and the kind of man Tim was.

When VSEA member Tim Simoneau isn't working as Corrections Service Specialist at the Northern State Correctional Facility in Newport, he and his wife, Tammy, are busy caring for their large family, many of whom are foster children. One of those children is daughter Madison, who became the Simoneau's foster child in August 2001 when she was just eight months old. In 2003, the Simoneau's officially adopted Madison.

"Madison was a shaken baby and she is the first 'broken baby' placed with us," says Simoneau. "The issue of child abuse prevention is important to us because we see what happened to Madison and we never want to see this happen to another child."

Madison and the Simoneau's were front and center on April 3 when Gov. Douglas held a special ceremony to pronounce April as "Prevent Child Abuse Month."

"This was a great event because it drew much-needed attention to this very important issue," says Simoneau. "It also gave my wife the opportunity to talk publicly about an issue that we discuss a lot at

home. And it was also a good way for people in the audience to hear firsthand about the issue of child abuse prevention.”

Tim and his wife belong to many organizations linked to the issue, including: Prevent Child Abuse Vermont, Parent to Parent of Vermont, Federation of Families with Special Needs and a Traumatic Brain Injury group.

Simoneau says that VSEA members who want to get involved in the issue of child abuse prevention should start by considering becoming a foster parent through the State’s Department of Children and Families. Members can also donate money in October through SECCA contributions to groups like Prevent Child Abuse in Vermont and other similar organizations.

“It’s important for people to get involved,” says Simoneau. “More important, never shake or abuse a child!”

VSEA is sending its deepest condolences to the entire Simoneau family.

Council Members’ Agenda Item Ideas Sought

VSEA First Vice President Aimee Towne sent an email this week to Council members, soliciting suggestions for items to include on the agenda for the body’s June 7 meeting at Castleton University. Council members asked Towne for the solicitation at the body’s February meeting.

Aimee is urging Council members to email their agenda suggestions to her no later than May 26 to ensure that the meeting gets warned appropriately.

Contact Aimee by email at atowne@vsea.org or by phone at 802-793-4754

VSEA History Lesson – August 1944

One of the items being prepared for members attending this year’s VSEA Annual Meeting in Killington is a reprint of a 1984 document titled “A Brief Chronology of the VSEA 1944 – 1984,” which was created in 1984 by the VSEA History Committee. In the coming weeks, *WIA* will be sharing snippets from the book with members.

Here’s one of the first entries in the booklet, from August 29, 1944:

The Committee mails the proposed V.S.E.A. Constitution and By-Laws to State employees with a copy of an August 9 letter to the Committee from Governor Wills. Governor Wills (R) wrote: “I am heartily in favor in the formation of a Vermont State Employees’ Association. I appreciate the opportunity you have given me to look over the Constitution and By-Laws of the proposed organization, and it would appear to me that they very adequately meet the needs and requirements of such an organization. It also seems to me a splendid purpose can be served by such an organization, and you have my best wishes for success in its operation. A ballot was enclosed; the Constitution required 51% of the employees to join before the organization could be formed.

VSEA Member Candidates Sought For Three Board Of Trustees' District Seats

Petitions are now available online for VSEA members interested in running for one of these three VSEA District Board seats:

District 1 - Barre & Central Vermont

District 2 - Waterbury & Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital

District 5 - Rutland & Bennington

To be eligible for election to one of these Districts, a member must reside or have an assigned workstation--and continue to reside or have an assigned workstation--in the respective District.

If interested, you must be a member in good standing, and you must collect the signatures of 25 or more full, dues-paying VSEA members.

Click here for a petition: <http://bit.ly/1Nofcmz>

The deadline to submit your petition is Wednesday, June 1, 2016!

If you are unable to access a petition online, please contact VSEA headquarters at 223-5247 to request to have a hard copy petition mailed to your home.

VSEA Awards & Scholarships Committee Wants YOU!

This week, two VSEA members and one retiree met to review more than 40 applications submitted for one of seven scholarship awards VSEA will be awarding at the June Council meeting. It's a lot of work, and the Committee could use some help, especially from members with an interest in helping your union promote and advance its popular awards and scholarship program.

Some of the Committee's primary duties include:

- Promoting the VSEA Awards and Scholarships programs to the VSEA membership;
- Annually reviewing the criteria for awards and scholarships to work with objective criteria; and
- Recommending ideas for new awards, as appropriate, to the VSEA Board of Trustees.

If you would be interested in joining this Committee, or learning more about it, please contact the Committee's staff liaison Kris Lizzari, who can be reached by email at klizzari@vsea.org, or by phone at 223-5247.

Free Press Story Highlights Ramifications Of Private Contractor Contributions To Elected Officials

The May 15 *Burlington Free Press* featured a story titled "[Vermont Contractors Funnel Money To Politicians](#)," and the reporter provides several examples of how contractor contributions are possibly buying influence with elected officials, or could be interpreted as trying to buy influence.

Here's an excerpt:

Politicians and contractors deny any suggestion of unethical behavior.

"We don't perceive it as a conflict," said Joe McNeil, whose law firm McNeil, Leddy & Sheahan gave [the State's top official] \$1,000 in 2014 while working to negotiate the state employees' contract.

"It'd seem that in a state as small as Vermont, if political contributors were eliminated from consideration from open bid competitions, the state might be disadvantaging itself," McNeil said. McNeil said the firm gives contributions to politicians who represent "the values that we share." Some observers have called for a state ethics law that would prohibit campaign contributions from state contractors.

"You need not prove actual corruption to be concerned about the appearance of corruption," said Paul Burns, who has pushed for greater restrictions on contractors' contributions as executive director of the Vermont Public Interest Research Group

"Most people believe it's just wrong for campaign contributions to grease the skids for future contracts," Burns added.

On a related note, the group *In The Public Interest* published a story this week titled “[What Government Contractors Really Mean When They Say They’ll Do It Cheaper](#),” and it’s worth a read. It begins:

The decades-long experiment of contracting out public goods and services by governments, known as “privatization,” has often had dire consequences for the public, workers, and the environment. Our report, [Cutting Corners: How Government Contractors Harm the Public in Pursuit of Profit](#), details the negative impacts on the public of cost-cutting by contractors across a variety of public goods and services and at every level of American government.

To maximize profit, companies have often cut corners by reducing the quality and accessibility of services, reducing staffing levels, lowering worker wages, and sidestepping protections for the public and the environment.

[AFL-CIO Updates Executive Paywatch Website](#)

The national AFL-CIO announced this week that it has released the 2016 edition of its popular [CEO Paywatch website](#), with a wealth of information about the pay and bonuses being awarded to our nation’s Chief Executive Officers. There’s information like:

- Have you heard of Masimo Corporation? You should pay attention, because in 2015, its CEO, Joe Kiani, had [more than \\$119 million](#) in total compensation (most of it in stock awards);
- The [average CEO](#) of an S&P 500 Index company made 819 times a year’s pay for a federal minimum wage worker;
- “CEOs at the 25 S&P companies with the most unrepatriated profits are paid 79% more than the other S&P 500 CEOs.”; and
- “For every domestic job lost, U.S. multinationals create nearly seven jobs overseas.” (And we should fight that not by scapegoating workers in other countries but by pushing to improve their wages and working conditions.)

Check out the difference between the average working Vermonters’ annual pay versus Vermont CEO’s [here](#).

[VSEA Policies Now Available Online](#)

Wondering about a VSEA policy and want to look it up online? Now you can.

VSEA’s website now has a page listing your union’s governing policies, and members with “member-only” website access can review any or all of them by [clicking here](#).

Again, note that in order to view the policies on [www.vsea.org](#), you must first be a registered user of the union’s website, which will then 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.

[VSEA To Conduct Gubernatorial Straw Polls](#)

In order to provide your VSEA Board of Trustees with better insight on how VSEA members feel about all the declared candidates for Governor in 2016, the union’s Legislative Committee will be conducting two electronic straw polls for members to participate in; one before the primary election and another before the general election. The Board of Trustees governs VSEA’s political process, so input to the body from as many members as possible is very important.

IMPORTANT!! In order for a member to participate in the straw polls, VSEA must have an updated home email address for the member. VSEA cannot send emails of a political nature, such as the straw poll announcement, to state email addresses. If you are unsure, or don’t remember

ever providing VSEA with your home email, please take time today to submit your name and home email address to VSEA@VSEA.org (please write “Home Email” in the subject space) To ensure you can vote, VSEA need this information no later than **May 20, 2016**.

The first electronic straw poll will be conducted in early June. Keep an eye on *WIA* for updates, but for now, send us those home email addresses.

Membership Recruitment Committee Looking To Reinvigorate VSEA Advantage Discount Program. Soliciting Member Input!

VSEA members belonging to your union’s Membership Recruitment Committee are actively working to reinvigorate the VSEA Advantage Discount Program; a popular member benefit that provides state employees with special discounts to Vermont and national businesses and services.

“The Committee is really interested in hearing from members right now about what new businesses and services you would like to see added to the program, from all across Vermont,” explains Membership Recruitment Committee Chair Katelyn Chase. “We want to learn more about where VSEA members shop and where you use services? We also want to find out what kinds of leisure and recreational activities you enjoy, which will let us target vendors who are offering goods and services that are important to VSEA members.”

VSEA members are urged to send your ideas and thoughts to Katelyn at kchase@vsea.org. Please write “Advantage Program” in the subject line.

“The Committee is really hoping to roll out a beefed-up Advantage Program soon, so keep an eye on future *Week In Actions* for progress updates and announcements of new vendors offering discounts,” adds Chase. “Thanks everyone for sending us your ideas.”

Note: The VSEA Advantage Discount Program is open to all members currently paying full dues to the union. A majority of participating businesses do require state employees to present their green VSEA membership card as verification of their full-fledged union status. In the future, VSEA will be making presentation of the card mandatory in order to receive a discount. If you do not have a green membership card, and you are paying full dues to VSEA, please contact Ayla Hudson at ahudson@vsea.org to be verified and receive a card. Thank you.

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:

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.

Quote Of The Week!

“We need more Tim S's in our world and less abusers. RIP Tim Simoneau.”

VSEA Retirees' Chapter President Joanie Maclay, writing on VSEA's Facebook page about this week's untimely death of longtime VSEA activist Tim Simoneau, who also devoted his much of his life to combating child abuse.

Threatened While On The Job? VSEA Wants To Know.

VSEA President Dave Bellini is asking all state employees who are threatened while performing your job duties to provide an account of the threat not only to your supervisor or the State, but also to VSEA.

“VSEA wants to begin to compile its own record of threats against frontline state employees, no matter your occupation,” explains Bellini. “I’m asking all employees who are threatened, especially those working in AHS, to take a few minutes to fill out an online form VSEA made to collect your report. The information will help us provide a firsthand account of the number of threats being made and where they are being made, in addition to some other things.”

If you are a state employee who is threatened on the job, please click [here](#) to find the online report form, **which will remain confidential**, unless otherwise approved by you.

Upcoming Meetings/Events/Holidays:

May 24

VSCSF Executive Board Meeting
VSEA HQ
Montpelier
9:00 a.m.

May 25

Steward 3 Training: The Contract & Challenges In The Workplace
VTrans Training Center
1716 U.S. Route 302
Berlin
9:00 a.m.

May 26

Retiree' Chapter Meeting
VSEA HQ
Montpelier
9:30 a.m.

May 27

Waterbury Chapter Meeting
State Office Complex
Mountain Ash Room
Waterbury
12:00 p.m.