



INSIDER NEWSLETTER

Association of Sanitation Districts Employees
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Brothers and Sisters,

This will be my final message to you as President of Local 18. For the past 2-1/2 years, it has been my honor and pleasure to serve in this office. As I've said earlier, even though my retirement from the Districts is not yet set, I'm certain I will not be around to serve out another full 2-year term as union president. Our membership needs and deserves someone who will be there for the entire time. Therefore, I'm proud to hand over the reins to incoming President Glenn Acosta who ran unopposed. I'm certain his steady and solid hand will guide us through the upcoming contract negotiations. And, for as long as I remain at the Districts, I will make myself available to the new Board in any capacity they require.

As your president, one of my goals was to keep the Board discussions open and forthright. It was fine for us to have debates, disagreements, and yes, even disappointments, so long as we remained respectful of one another and kept in our minds that all of us were there for the purpose of serving our members' needs.

As we await the results of our hotly contested Board elections, I'd like to share a look back on all our union's successes, great and small. And I want to wish all of you a very Happy New Year!

AFSCME LOCAL 18 IS BORN

In an unprecedented display of organization and unity, members of the Professional, Professional Supervisory, Supervisory, Energy Recovery and Confidential Bargaining Units signed up in droves in early 2017 to join the newly formed Association of Sanitation Districts Employees. We were followed the next year by the White Collar and Technical Support Units. And even though the smaller Confidential Unit decided to leave the union, we now have about 600 dues paying members, roughly 75% of the employees in the six Bargaining Units. This is unity in action.

End of the Year 2021 Issue

Board of Directors

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Earle Hartling, Professional Unit

Vice President

Mo Bina, Professional Unit

Secretary

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Steve Sealy, Supervisory Unit

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Jose Mendoza, Technical Support Unit

Lonice Thomas, White Collar Unit

David De Vase, Energy Recovery Unit

AT-LARGE DIRECTORS

Basil Hewitt, Prof. Supervisory Unit

Dwain Tucker, Professional Unit

Rebecca Urac, Technical Support Unit

TRUSTEES

Mar'lyn Bland, White Collar Unit

Dave Walbeck, Professional Unit

Rechetta Williams, White Collar Unit

SUCCESSFUL CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

Negotiations for our very first contracts began in spring 2017 and went on for a full year until we reached impasse. With a lot of outreach by our members to the mayors who sit on the Districts' Board, we were finally able to reach agreement for the Professional, Professional Supervisory and Supervisory Units in mid-2019, followed immediately with contracts for Tech Support, White Collar and Energy Recovery. We were able to successfully fend off Management's "soft landing" wage take-away, preserve our COLAs, and recover the COLAs withheld from us over the preceding two years. Our only regret is that we were unable to convince Management to accept our proposal to mitigate the effects of the State's PEPRA law on our newer employees.

PEPRA EXEMPTION FROM 0.5% UAL CONTRIBUTION

In late 2019, the Local 18 Board, in conjunction with SEIU, successfully lobbied the Sanitation Districts' Collective Committee to approve our request to exempt PEPRA employees from unfunded accrued liability (UAL) payments to CalPERS. PEPRA employees avoided paying 0.5% of their salary to CalPERS and any additional UAL payments through the end of our contract.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Local city council elections are extremely important to our union, as the mayors of Districts' cities serve on our agency's Boards of Directors and make decisions that directly affect our members' employment, pay and benefits. Your Local 18 Board of Directors carefully considers candidates seeking our support before offering an official endorsement considering ONLY whether a candidate has demonstrated his or her support of labor in the past, has pledged to work with us in the future, or if their opponent is known to be openly hostile to our union and its members. These are the only considerations as they are the ones that directly impact each one of us. In a very important election in 2020, your Board of Directors endorsed Victor Gordo who defeated incumbent (and no friend to Local 18 members) Terry Tournek for Mayor of the City of Pasadena. Prior to that, Local 18 members and AFSCME successfully worked at getting the less-than-friendly Districts' Board Chairman, David Armenta, voted out of office in Pico Rivera.

NEW PROJECT DESIGNERS

The Districts' Design Department had difficulty keeping Drafting Technicians, who had to spend 18-months as hourlies with limited benefits before coming on full-time. Your union board negotiated for Drafting Techs in Design to be moved up to Project Designers and they became monthly employees as of December 2020. We were also able to eliminate the 18-month probation period proposed by Management for these new employees (and something they wanted to extend to all other job classes).

LOCAL 18 WEBSITE

We successfully launched our Local's own website in 2020 which contains useful information for our membership. A link to our website can be found at the end of this newsletter.

SALARY INEQUITIES

Both the Union and HR put several inequity proposals on the table in 2021 and, while we didn't get everything we asked for, inequity adjustments were made for several job classifications, including Customer Service Supervisor, Supervising and Senior Systems Analysts, Programmer Analysts I and II, and Supervisor of Design Technology. This opportunity will be coming up again in spring 2022.

SUCCESSFUL TELEWORK NEGOTIATIONS

During several meetings with Management, we were able to negotiate, soften or eliminate some of the language in the original draft policy, such as allowing for alternative telework locations beyond your primary residence. We were able to get up to 2 days of telework per week and the service requirement down to 2 years for new hires. Although not everything we had wanted, the Telework Policy is a huge advancement from where any of us thought we would be prior to start of the pandemic. Undoubtedly, further improvements to this policy will come about with future negotiations.

SUCCESSFUL PERB CHALLENGE

Local 18 filed an Unfair Labor Practice Charge with the Public Employees Relations Board (PERB) in support of a Districts' employee who was terminated based on GPS data from their Districts' vehicle. The Administrative Judge found that Districts' Management interfered with Union's representation of employee and acted in bad faith by not meeting and conferring with the union before using GPS as a disciplinary tool, among other bad faith acts. The judge ordered the employee restored to their former position, with full back pay and benefits, along with 7% interest on those amounts. The case was appealed before the full PERB Board and the results were upheld in favor of the employee and the union. We are currently in settlement discussions. This demonstrates that your union will stand with you against unfair labor practices and shows management that we will never again take such things lying down.

SUCCESSFUL OVERTURNING OF A "TRANSFER"

An AFSCME member was asked to take on the duties of a coworker, while still working on his previous duties. He stayed in the same group in the same section and worked for the same bosses, but now had responsibility at a new facility. The employee was denied a transfer he applied for because he was told that he still had 18 months left on what was claimed to be a "transfer." We were successful in overturning this so-called "obligation," as the employee had not requested the transfer (as specified in our MOU) and had not changed his work duties substantially, despite the fact a separate facility was involved.

LOCAL 18 DUES

And finally, AFSCME International reassesses its dues structure annually. For calendar year 2022, dues have been increased by \$0.95/month. Our dues moving forward will now be \$43.65 per month, split between both checks.

To find Local 18 on-line, go to: <https://www.afscme36.org/local-18-los-angeles-county-sanitation-districts>