

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES
LOCAL 171
P.O. BOX 1000 EL RENO, OKLAHOMA

NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 22, 1992

OFFICIAL NOTICE TO AFGE LOCAL 171 MEMBERS

Nominations and Elections are scheduled to be held for the offices of PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENT, SECRETARY, TREASURER, CHIEF STEWARD, and SERGEANT-AT-ARMS for your Local.

Nominations will be made at a special meeting to be held Friday, December 11, 1992, 4:30 PM, at the union office. Nominations will be accepted from the floor OR you may make written nominations to the Election Committee before the meeting if you are unable to attend.

Elections will be held Friday, January 8, 1993, by manual ballot in the Officers Day Room from 6:00 AM to 4:30 PM. You may receive an absentee ballot from the Election Committee if you will be unable to vote on election day.

The ballots will be counted by the Election Committee at the regular union meeting on Friday, January 8, 1993, 5:00 PM at the union office. Run-off elections will be held at this meeting if required. Swearing in ceremonies and installation into office will follow.

Members of the Election Committee are Johnny Fuller, Sheli Williford, and Terry Norris.

A Special Meeting will be held on Friday, January 22, 1993, 4:30 PM, at the union office to consider the Local's FY'1993 budget and dues structure.

HOLIDAY TURKEY

Be sure to stop by Beachler's IGA in El Reno to pick up your free Holiday Turkey compliments of Local 171. These are to be 12 to 16 pound Gold Medallion turkeys. All you have to do is show your ID and sign the membership list at the courtesy booth. Local 171 extends to all of our members a wish for a healthy and happy holiday season.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

I look to the future with hope and enthusiasm for the changes on the horizon which will be ushered in by the Clinton administration and what these changes will bring to government workers.

AFGE National President John Sturdivant stated, "AFGE stands ready to forge a partnership with the Clinton Administration to unleash the creativity, ingenuity and enthusiasm of government workers who are uniquely aware of the problems this country is facing and the sacrifices needed to rebuild America".

I believe government workers like you and I will benefit from the change in leadership at the top levels of our government. There will no doubt be new people setting the tone and direction of the Justice Department and even the Bureau of Prisons. I think these new leaders will turn away from the worn path of federal worker bashing and attacking government services.

New leadership and direction will also be seen at federal agencies like the Federal Labor Relations Authority, Merit System Protection Board, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, OSHA, OMB, OPM, and others which will effect the way federal employees are dealt with.

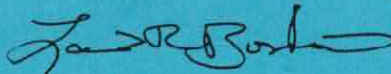
I can see a time when decisions in specific cases are based on an accurate assessment of the facts instead of a political agenda bent on bashing federal workers. I can even see a time when the FLRA laws against committing Unfair Labor Practices will have teeth in them, thus forcing labor and management to effectively deal with each other. This will lead to a more harmonious working relationship to the benefit of all parties including the taxpayer.

I'm sure you have heard the Director has been missing from his job as head of the BOP since mid-October. There has been lots of speculation as to the reasons for his disappearance. I think this will be explained in the next edition of Newsweek and it will be shown to be a result of the Bret Kimberling case which occurred here at FCI El Reno just prior to the 1988 presidential elections. I also think we will see a major house cleaning purge throughout the Department Of Justice.

These changes will bring the opportunity to correct the existing problems facing federal workers and restore a sense of fairness to our workplace. We will have the opportunity to impact these decisions and I know many are eager for this chance. Let's all rise to the occasion and be a part of this positive change.

Your union is the vehicle for you to voice your opinions and have a real effect on our future. Be involved and work to improve our lives and build a bright future of our country.

Lari R. Bonham, President



LOCAL SUPPLEMENTAL AGREEMENT

Our Local Supplemental Agreement has been carried forward for another three year term with little change. It was agreed to and signed off on October 28th. It is now nearing the end of the 30 day review period by the Central Office and the CPL. It was ratified by unanimous vote of the members at our last regular meeting.

Warden Tom Kindt deserves all the credit for this agreement. His advisors wanted to enter negotiations and attack many of the existing provisions. This would have led to an expensive and protracted negotiation process which I think would have damaged our working relationship. Warden Kindt saw that both sides could live with the existing agreement and moved to avoid the potential conflict. My sincere appreciation goes to Warden Kindt for his vision, leadership and decisive action on this agreement.

LABOR / MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

Our overall working relationship with management remains somewhat strained. The main point of contention remains in the area of unilateral changes in working conditions without consultation and negotiation with the union. The right to prior notification and consultation is based in the law and the union simply wants to exercise these rights. Members of management often implement changes without consideration to these rights possibly due to a lack of knowledge and understanding. The union has no recourse except to file unfair labor practice charges against management when informal discussions fail to resolve these issues.

Our union won a recent arbitration decision regarding the union's right to receive documents related to the settlement of a MSPB case and the union's right to be present during the settlement of the case. Again, these union rights are based in law and the arbitrator agreed with us. Management has notified the union of their intention to appeal the decision to the FLRA which I believe only delays the inevitable outcome of the case.

We have two arbitration hearings coming in the near future. One deals with the adverse action taken against a staff member while the other is related to performance evaluation issues.

Cost containment and budget cutting issues remain a point of contention between labor and management. Many feel we can live with the cuts as long as management and line staff share in the sacrifices needed to meet these budget constraints. Fairness is the basic issue here. The misery needs to be shared equally by all parties for it work. We will continue to work toward that goal.

I do appreciate the willingness of Captain Ron Sheffer to address these difficult issues at our last union meeting. He has shown his bravery if nothing else. I believe continued dialog will help.

LOCAL DUES STRUCTURE

No other issue I know of will bring about as much controversy as this issue. Our increase in dues last year which was in response to increases in per capita tax by AFGE and the Council of Prison Locals proves my point.

I made a commitment to you that this issue would be brought up again if enough support for that was expressed. To my surprise, very little interest has been expressed. In fact, the sentiment seems to be to leave well enough alone. Many believe that constantly changing our dues structure will hinder the ability of our local to make long term plans for financial stability. For the most part, I agree.

However, I believe in the sound judgement of our membership and think you will make the tough decisions necessary for our local to remain a strong and vibrant voice. Toward the goal of establishing the atmosphere necessary for the members to work their will on the local, I have listed this issue as an agenda item to be acted on at the Special meeting to be held Friday, January 22, 1993, 4:30 PM at the union office, along with the FY'93 budget.

One issue which I have recognized over the last year is the fact that all of our members cannot afford to pay dues on an equal basis. A member earning GS-5 pay cannot afford to pay as much as another member earning GS-12 pay. This disparity often leaves some staff members who want to join the union but are unable to afford the dues left without full union protection. This is an issue of basic fairness which I think we may be able to address on the local level provided no constitutional prohibitions exist.

The AFGE constitution and our Master Agreement requires that all members pay the same amount in dues. However, I don't know of a prohibition against rebating part of the dues back to lower paid members. This would also mean that higher paid members would be paying a proportionately higher rate for the same services. This seems to me to be a fair trade.

Although I have not worked out the details, I can envision a dues burden redistribution plan which would have higher paid members paying an average of \$12 per pay period for dues with lower paid members paying an average of \$8 per pay period and those in the middle wage group paying an average of \$10 per pay period.

This type of plan would not be revenue neutral, in fact it would result in a net reduction in dues to the local unless the higher paid employees average dues were increased above the \$12 level. The problem with that is the dues would have to be increased for all in order to increase them on the higher paid members.

I believe it would be possible to adopt the \$8/10/12 dues structure if it is coupled with appropriate adjustments to our annual budget and the national dues structure remains unchanged. The former we control while the latter is in question.

The automatic increase in per capita tax to the CPL was voted out at the last convention. This increase resulted in the extra \$.50 going into the local treasury instead of to the CPL since our dues had already been increased. This savings will help the dues redistribution plan have less of a negative impact on the local.

However, the CPL has plans to request an increase in the dues at our next convention. This may or may not happen. The CPL claims these funds are needed to provide the training to locals that is needed. AFGE on the national level is under the same financial pressures. The last convention approved dues increases which are scheduled to take effect the first of 1993 and 1994. These will definitely impact our local since our last increase was designed to absorb most of these upcoming increases without any dues redistribution program which would result in lower funding levels for the local.

This plan would result in an annual rebate of \$52 to mid range paid members and \$104 to the lower paid members. This could be rebated annually, say in December before Christmas. The direct impact on the local would depend on where the lines are drawn to separate the groups.

A similar plan has been under consideration on the national level for some time, but has not been acted on nor does it look likely in the near future. That plan would make the dues equal to one hours wages per pay period. The dues for some would be \$6 while others would pay up to \$18. This is really where the problem needs to be addressed, on the national level.

El Reno has a can do attitude and will not necessarily sit back and wait on someone else. That is why I want to propose this idea to you for consideration. You may decide on this plan with or without modifications. You may decide to leave the dues as they are. You may decide on an across the board cut in dues. The decision and responsibility is yours. It is the responsibility of your elected officers to carry out your wishes and we will.

Look these plans over and decide where you want our local to go. Then become an active participant in building our local into the best local in the nation. Plan to attend the very important meeting which will address these issues and let your voice be counted. We will be stronger with your efforts.

AFGE SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

It is important for each of you to read the following report from the Conference of Councils pertaining to the AFGE Special Committee Report and to vote your own conscience on the ballot they sent you.

LETTER FROM CPL PRESIDENT MIKE GROTEFEND

The 1991 National Convention formed a Special Committee to examine the structure of the Federation and to make a proposal for binding referendum by the locals. The committee issued its final report in August 1992.

In its nine recommendations, the Special Committee did not properly limit itself to its mandate. It addressed unrelated issues such as per capita levels, dues collection, and convention floor rules. The report is nothing but a cynical political plot that would guarantee the continued deterioration of our union.

The Conference of Councils makes the following observations regarding the committees proposals:

(1)(a) Relocation of National AFGE Headquarters. The committee would move most Headquarters staff to another location in the D.C. area and lease out the current building. Such a move would be made even if there were no financial savings. Moreover, the office of the National President would remain at the current site, physically isolating him from the staff. The only purpose of this scheme is to weaken and isolate National President Sturdivant.

(1)(B) Reorganization of National AFGE Headquarters. This "cost-neutral" proposal will reduce the Presidents staff and shift several departments and additional positions to the Woman's Director. The committee here is simply rewarding its political allies and punishing its opponents. There is no stated cost savings, no increase in efficiency, nor any other reasonable explanation for these changes.

(2) Formation of District Executive Boards. The proposal would create boards of at least five elected members to oversee affairs of the District, including budget, NEC votes, and policy implementation. The boards are given no enforcement authority over the NVP's, however. There is some merit to District Advisory boards, but the committee has not fleshed this idea out. As it stands, it is a hollow and meaningless proposal.

(3) Revision of District Financing. First and foremost, this proposal increases per capita by \$3.00. In addition, the complex District funding formula maintains the misallocation of our resources. Small Districts would continue to receive disproportionate shares of funding at the expense of Headquarters and large Districts. Redistricting would never be required.

(4) Split Dues. The National President would be authorized to meet directly with Agency management to negotiate direct payment of per capita to AFGE. The proposed Constitutional language does not limit such agreements to delinquent locals. While voluntary split dues are acceptable, this proposal unduly infringes on the exclusive bargaining rights of councils and locals.

(5) Expansion of the Education Program. While this is a worthy goal, the recommendation mandates the specific content of training, which does not include organizing. No additional funding is earmarked. Councils would be required to coordinate training with fifteen separate Districts, rather than with Headquarters.

(6) Improved Communications. There are some worthwhile ideas here, including consolidations of all AFGE databases, desktop publishing, and monthly publication of the Government Standard. However, all other publications, such as the Collective Bargaining Report, would be discontinued. A special assessment of \$.50 would be charged to all locals, on top of the \$3.00 per capita increase.

(7) Reorganization of the Organizing Program. The committee would fund the Districts to form organizing teams recruited from locals. Efforts such as the NTEU raid on SSA would be handled by fifteen separate Districts, rather than by a single coordinated campaign. Locals that do not provide volunteer organizers to the Districts could be subject to trusteeship.

(8) National Convention Changes. Per capita changes would be approved by majority vote rather than two-thirds. This provision would allow the NEC to more easily gain additional funding without imposing reasonable accountability. Why not allow restructuring of the NEC by majority vote?

(9) Percentage Per Capita. The committee recommends that the National Secretary-Treasurer study the issue of percentage per capita. We support the idea of the study, although it was not necessary to form a committee to make this request.

The Committee spent over \$500,000 while disregarding the key issue facing AFGE--the distorted structure of the Districts and the NEC. Our members demand streamlined Districts. Unfortunately, the Special Committee exhibited the same obstructionist voting block that currently exists on the NEC. The majority of votes on the committee represented only 38% of the membership.

The report, if implemented, would decentralize the Federation, creating fifteen separate District unions. Our National President would become little more than a figurehead. Rather than adopt a political hatchet job that reinforces the present inequities, organize your membership to reject the Committee's report. Let us then begin preparation in earnest for the 1994 National Convention.

VOTE NO ON THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORT!!

