

ASEA ANNUAL/VIRTUAL BUSINESS MEETING

AUGUST 17, 2024

President Dona Bowry called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Present

Jeff Jackson

Dona Bowry

Holli Sublett

Judy Beatty

Loy Bailey

Lisa Rhodes

Brock Baker

Greg Murray

Matthew Thomas

Chasity Lucas

Jerry Jones

Gary Wallace

Dorothy Henderson

Present

Laura Sherwood (Zoom)

Jordan Schwartz

Mary McGehee

Bob McQuade

Jennifer Siccardi

Celeste Sorrells

Curt Carson

Brandy Watkin

Heinz Braun

James Scott

Clayton Rogers

Toniesha Sargent

Charles Elliot

Absent

Janice Griffin (Excused)

Alyssa Duggan (Excused)

Jim Abson

Executive Director John Bridges suggested that we change the by-laws; create ad-hoc committees for the concerns that we currently have such as membership, retirement, or legislative. Some of the committees listed in the current by-laws haven't met in several years. The committees should be called by the current President. He also suggested that we change the by-laws; to change map and number of board members to regions instead of districts since some districts have been without representation for years. This would open coverage for areas that have never been represented across the state. The At-large positions could be active or retired. **Motion made by Bob McQuade to change the by-laws as discussed; second by Dorothy Henderson with the Motion Passed.**

Executive Director John Bridges asked the board members to change the by-laws for John F. Motes Scholarship. Holli Patrick asked if we had a budget for how many scholarships are given each year or a budget. John explained that is determined by the Executive Director per the by-laws. Brock Baker suggested that we change the name of the scholarship. John suggested changing the name to the ASEA Scholarship. Judy Beatty explained that we need more publicity for the scholarship so more people would be interested to apply. **Motion made by Bob McQuade to rename the John F. Motes Scholarship to ASEA Scholarship; second by Gary Wallace with the Motion Passed.**

Executive Director John Bridges went over the suggested changes for the selection process for the scholarship. **Motion made by Holli Patrick for ASEA staff to review and rework the selection process**

for the newly named ASEA Scholarship. It will be presented at the next meeting for the board to review; second by Mary McGehee with the Motion Passed.

Executive Director John Bridges announced the results of the Executive Committee votes from the previous meeting. Judy Beatty-16, Jerry-10, Janice-9 and Matthew-9. He congratulated Judy and Jerry for the appointment to the committee.

Legislative Goal Discussion

Pay-Plan

The Governor has requested a new pay plan for 2025, OPM is currently working on this and a consulting firm with both reviewing each position and current pay. John stated that he has asked OPM if ASEA could possibly make some suggestions for new employees and tenure employees. Issues such as supervisor pay problems where someone they are supervising is making way more, increase in pay for years of service. Mary would like to see tenure pay-seniority pay that was removed from the last pay plan at the last minute leaving out employees who had worked and dedicated their careers to working for the state. Holli Patrick suggested removing the cap or the max from the pay grades for those employees who have no option to move up in pay in their current position. Judy Beatty stated that OCSE needs to revise the grades and gave an example. Brock Baker feels supervisors should make more than new hires. Especially when a supervisor is training a new employee who just started, and they will be making more than the person training them who may have been employed 20 or more years. Curt Carson suggested pay increases for positions that require and college degree and possibly get education. Holli Patrick explained that when the last pay plan was implemented some agencies didn't increase the Grades 1-5. Matthew Thomas stated some Grade 6 employees were surpassed by Grades 5 even if they were supervisors. John stated that he had discussed this with OPM, and those issues had been fixed. He stated he would try to help anyone if they contacted him with this problem. Toniesha Sargent explained there needs to be grade level bumps. Judy Beatty stated we need to make sure there is enough pay grades for employees to advance because there is no place for some employees to advance. Heinz Braun stated we needed to address and combine the job titles of employees to eliminate vacate positions. Jeff Jackson explained that the federal government has only 2 pay grades per position based on experience or qualifications. Mary stated that there should be a separate pay scale for supervisory positions. Jordan Schwartz suggested that we send out a survey to members or on social media to see what employees concerns regarding the pay plan are.

Board recommendation: DO PASS.

Career Service

Executive Director John Bridges suggested that we work on increasing the career service payments. A modest increase would help some employees. Holli Patrick suggested adding a 5-9-year category. Brock Baker added that could maybe help retain newer employees longer. **Board recommendation: Increase all the current levels by \$500 and add a 5-9-year category; DO PASS.**

Leave Payout

Executive John Bridges explained when you retire there is a CAP regarding payout of leave time that is currently set at \$7,500. He stated that he would reach out to OPM to see if they are working on this issue or any plans in the future. Bob McQuade said he retired 20 years and had 80 days of leave and only received \$7,500 so it hasn't changed in years. He would like to see the formula reworked. Holli Patrick stated that you can roll-over a portion of your leave to Diamond Deferred **Motion made by Bob McQuade to remove the CAP; second by Holli Patrick with the Motion Passed.**

Juneteenth

Executive Director John Bridges explained this is the second year this has been brought up and he doesn't think legislation wants to increase paid holidays for employees. He explained maybe have the option to take this day a flexor floating holiday instead of a birthday. Mary explained a lot of people don't know the importance of what Juneteenth stands for. **Motion made by Mary McGehee to have a committee review; second by Holli Patrick with the Motion Passed.**

Volunteer Leave

Executive Director John Bridges explained that we need to research this topic more before moving forward. **Motion made by Matthew Thomas to investigate the issue more; second by Mary McGehee with the Motion Passed.**

Expanding Weight Loss Drug Coverage

Brock Baker explained GLP-1 shots do work but our insurance will not cover them. They cost out of pocket around \$1200-\$1500 per month with no coverage and many state employees just can't afford to spend that kind of money. State insurance will cover 1 bariatric surgery per lifetime and no revision surgeries. Matthew Thomas states there are many side effects to taking these types of medications. Jerry Jones stated this has been brought up to the EBD Board of Directors and they are studying possibly adding to the plan with certain criteria. **Board recommendation: discuss with EBD and obtain more research.**

Removing State Tax from APERS Pensions

Executive John Bridges stated an ex- legislature contacted him regarding this issue. Mary McGehee stated this is already in place or so she thought. An employee must mark the correct box on the form. Clayton Rogers thinks this would be great for retirees in the long run. Gary Wallace stated there are 39,298 retired APERS members, and in June 2024 \$54.7 million was paid out to retirees. **Board recommendation: obtain more information for future discussion and see if this moves forward and gains interest for a future session.**

Retirement Age to 65 to Match MAPD Plan

Holli Patrick explained the retirement age is 62 but most employees do not retire until at least age 65. She would like to see the age change to 65 so those employees would be eligible at that time for the less expensive MAPD plan offered by the state. This would save money the state and retirees money. The pre-65 plan is expensive for retirees. **Board recommendation: more research needed.**

President Dona Bowry announced the next ASEA Board of Director meeting is October 19, 2024, at 10:00am.

Executive Director John Bridges thanked all the members that joined via zoom to watch the virtual meeting. He will read over the questions and comments. He advised everyone is they have questions, concerns or ideas to email him.

Motion made by Mary McGehee to adjourn the meeting; second by Jeff Jackson with the Motion Passed.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00am.