



March 27, 2009

Negotiations Team

Negotiations/Team MAPE

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MAPE NEGOTIATIONS SUMMARY REPORT #7

March 25-26

MAPE's negotiators spent the first part of Wednesday reviewing the language of the team's tracking document and making sure it represents the full language in the team's proposal. The team also spent time reviewing and refining the rationale behind MAPE's proposals.

In the early afternoon, MAPE Executive Director Jim Monroe welcomed the governor's team. The governor's team gave a partial response to MAPE's proposal for articles 4, 6-14 and 16. First, they went through all the articles that appeared to have no changes. They are articles 1, 2, 3, 5, 15, 20, 21, 28, 31, 32 and 33.

On the second day, the governor's team responded to our proposals for articles 17, 18, 22, 23, 27 and 29. Article 24 is deferred to the wage discussion.

MAPE Assistant Executive Director Bob Haag discussed the recall list and the process.

The MAPE team made an effort to move the process forward by "packaging" several proposals both from our team and the governor's team.

We met with the governor's team in the afternoon to continue negotiations.

REMEMBER

- First – the governor's proposal went after MAPE members with a laundry list of take backs that they have done for the past three contracts – changes to grievances, holiday pay, expense allowances, severance eligibility as well as layoffs and recalls.
- Then the governor dropped a bomb:
 - Due to a \$6.4 billion budget deficit in Minnesota, Governor Pawlenty wants to force a furlough onto MAPE members for up to 24 days each year of our contract which is a total of 48 days for our next contract.
 - Minnesota's historic deficit mess is due to Pawlenty's short-sightedness with his pledge for "no new taxes" – and now as the chickens come home to roost, he is willing to cut important state services rather than admit he was wrong.
- Furloughs will mean that the governor will have the ability, with no rhyme or reason, to give management the right to arbitrarily decide who gets furloughed and how long they are furloughed.
- The preliminary financial impact of the furlough will be a 10 percent pay cut and 10 percent reduction in retirement savings.
- Furloughs can be used in a way to undermine every union protection we have. Staff will have no say about the furlough process – anyone can be targeted at any time, which will cause workplace stress for employees due to a hostile work

process – anyone can be targeted at any time, which will cause workplace stress for employees due to a hostile work environment. It is certainly no way to run any business or state government.

- Let us give you some insight as to the seriousness of the furlough issue – the governor’s lead negotiator said when it comes to furloughs, “. . . we believe that we already have the right to do it now . . . we believe this is just a clarification . . .” and then she had the nerve to say that the governor wanted to formalize the furloughs in order to “protect” MAPE members.
- In terms of whether or not currently the governor has the legal authority to furlough – it does not matter because Governor Pawlenty says he believes he already has the authority, he has issued a veiled challenge to get MAPE to file a lawsuit. Any lawsuit would take years to settle, given the possibilities for multiple court appeals. That would be very hard on MAPE.
- Make no mistakes, the governor’s team wants to use furloughs and take backs as ways to save state budget money. The governor wants to be able to use close to \$250 million in proposed cuts to essential state services provided by MAPE and AFSCME in the next two years. That way, he can still boast that he hasn’t raised taxes. But he will not boast to Minnesotans about all the services he is willing to cut.
- This is a severe assault on the livelihoods of our members. These furloughs will not save any MAPE members their jobs. Unemployment already hit a historic high of 8.1 percent in February for the state. Like many Minnesotans, we have members who live paycheck-to-paycheck just to make their house payments and put food on the table.
- Even members whose jobs are federally funded should know their jobs are not safe – don’t forget Pawlenty is using the stimulus money to balance the budget in the short term. In these tough economic times, with record deficits and record unemployment rates, there are no guarantees for employment.
- What this boils down to is cuts, cuts and more cuts. That’s the way the governor’s team plans to try to solve the state’s \$6.4 billion budget deficit. It won’t work. We can’t cut our way out of this budget mess.
- We already have the 10th smallest workforce in the country – do you realize that we have approximately the same number of state employees as the state of Mississippi, but Minnesota has close to double the population? It’s time for the governor to consider additional revenue as one of the solutions to the budget crisis, not by shrinking the services we provide.
- And it is time for MAPE members to pull together and fight the governor’s proposal – not to try and find ways to accept it as if the proposal was reality.
- MAPE needs its members to pull together and unite to fight the governor’s proposed contract offer. Talk to your coworkers about the furlough. Let your supervisors know of your opposition to this.
- Direct all members of your local to www.teammapa.org/index.php to enter their home e-mail addresses. As the negotiation process continues, it is the only way members will get regular, accurate updates. We want to inform members of the process and motivate them to take action.

FUTURE MEETING DATES:

All meetings start at 8:30 a.m. unless stated otherwise.

- March 31-April 1; negotiations with governor’s team.
- April 6; insurance meeting.
- April 7; training day – Bloomington Sheraton.
- April 8; negotiations with governor’s team.
- April 13 - 14; insurance meeting.
- April 14; negotiations team.
- April 15-16; negotiations with governor’s team.
- April 17; move to Ramada Airport Hotel.
- April 18-22; push week.