



AEEF News and Views

Newsletter of the Association of Employees of the Educational Foundation



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SPECIAL EDITION

WGBH Presses AEEF for Additional Wage Concessions

Claiming a reduced Fiscal Year 2010 budget compared to the previous year, WGBH management is asking AEEF members to negotiate an adjustment to their FY10 annual wage increases. The request was made by WGBH Executive Vice President Ben Godley and Manager and Counsel for Employee and Labor Relations Laurie Hurtt at a June 29 meeting with AEEF officers. WGBH's FY10 starts Sept. 1, 2009 and management is seeking a definitive answer from AEEF members by the end of August.

In requesting what will likely be a suspension of the FY10 wage increase, management invoked article 12.6 of the WGBH-AEEF contract which provides for such negotiations when, due to "unusual budget fluctuations", WGBH "establishes a budget target number of negative 3% or lower". The contract requires that any negotiated wage adjustments be ratified by the AEEF membership but does not obligate the union membership to agree to any such adjustment.

In addition to the wage adjustment, management is also asking the union to negotiate over the Foundation's matching contribution to the 403(b) retirement plan, though both parties acknowledge that AEEF has no obligation to do so.

In response to management's request, AEEF is requiring that WGBH first provide adequate financial information to illustrate that the FY10 budget is at least 3% less than FY09. "AEEF members have already made substantial sacrifices" says President Jordan Weinstein. "In less than a year our members have given up nearly all of their FY09 pay raise, suffered the loss of 10 jobs in the Design Department, endured massive wage cuts in Media Access, and seen numerous layoffs and reductions in other departments. A third of our members have met management's call to take unpaid furloughs and several have temporarily given up retirement contributions. Despite these sacrifices, we are prepared to meet with management to consider their latest proposals. But we have to seriously consider just how much of the Foundation's ongoing financial crisis our members should be asked to shoulder."

While our members have been making these sacrifices, since the start of Fiscal Year 2008, the cost of living has increased by as much as 6% (in the Northeast as calculated by the Bureau of Labor Standards

Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners) during the middle of last year. Unless a reduction is agreed to, the FY10 wage increase of 3.25% plus an additional progression component of between 0.5% and 2.0% where applicable, is scheduled to take effect on October 26, 2009.

The parties plan to meet on Wednesday, July 8 to discuss the financial outlook for FY10. Stay tuned for more information and check www.AEEF.org for updates.

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