

On June 27, the newly elected FSO officers and executive committee met virtually for a labor-management meeting with FEA's new chief of staff. The meeting was cordial and productive. The chief of staff was receptive to criticism and responsive to the concerns expressed.

Recurring themes throughout the meeting included the need for better communication from managers and directors with staff and a need for FEA to take steps to address the increased workload as a result of eDues with a particular emphasis on associate staff workload.

The chief of staff acknowledged that there is room for improvement in communicating things in a timely manner and engaging staff on the front-end before decisions are made and made a commitment to work on these issues. Along those lines, whenever you run into an issue, please be sure to address it with your manager/director and document that communication. Management can't address issues they aren't aware of. And, of course, be sure to let FSO know as well.

During a discussion of expense reports it became clear that there have been inconsistent practices with regards to air travel. Some staff have been required by their manager/director to seek advanced approval from the chief of staff for air travel while others have been able to book and be reimbursed for air travel without seeking written approval. **Moving forward, management's expectation is that all travel other than by automobile must be approved in advance by the chief of staff.** This expectation is consistent with our contract. Article 42, Section 1 (h) reads in part, "travel other than automobile shall require advanced approval of the Chief of Staff, or in the absence of a Chief, the President of the Association.

With regards to the salary placement for new hires, management asserted that placement is a management right and that when placing someone on the salary schedule the decision can't be just "about what's on paper" but must also make considerations "about the person." Making salary placement based on personal considerations obviously raises some red flags and makes it that much more important for the salary placement committee to be vigilant.

There was also extensive discussion about the member organizer program. The six member organizers who have been hired went through a training last week and additional trainings are planned. As of yet, the contracts for these organizers have not been finalized. FSO reiterated it is essential that we receive a copy of contracts as soon as they are final. We also expressed concern of the increased workload faced by current field staff who are expected to mentor these member organizers without having any work taken off their plates. FSO expressed the importance of building long-term capacity in our locals not simply relying on pilot programs such as these member organizers.

Finally, FSO addressed an issue that popped up recently of a few members who have received formal, written letters from their manager and the chief of staff that contain directives but are non-disciplinary in nature. The long and short of it is the chief of staff insisted these letters are not disciplinary and have not been placed in personnel files. In the future if there ever were disciplinary action based on the letter, FSO would of course take immediate action. This serves as a reminder that it's good practice for each of us to periodically check our personnel files to ensure nothing is in there that shouldn't be.

The next labor management meeting is set for the afternoon of October 15.