



July 2010

LOCAL 506



Municipal News

THE STAKES ARE HIGH IN THE 2010 ELECTION

Public sector workers in Connecticut and in every state in the US have seen vicious attacks from the media and some politicians. They are blaming public worker wages and benefits, as the reason for the bad economy. Some candidates running for office are fueling the anger and frustration of our citizens with rhetoric and misinformation. They are turning the public against the very people who provide essential services in our communities. We must elect candidates who have respect for workers and the critical services we provide. This election year is extremely important to our members and their families. Stay informed on the issues, make sure you are registered to vote, and vote on August 10, 2010 (Primary) and on November 2, 2010. Keep in mind that recent elections have been decided by less than 100 votes. Your vote can and will make a difference.

ELECTIONS 2010

Primary August 10, 2010

Remember that polls will be open to those active voters registered with a major party on Primary Day on Tuesday, August 10, 2010 from 6 A.M. to 8 P.M. Only registered Democrats can vote in the Democratic primary and only registered Republicans can vote in the Republican primary.

If you are not registered to vote or have recently moved (even within the same city or town) you must register to vote. Registration forms are available at the Union office or your City or Town hall. The deadline for voter registration is August 9, 2010 at (12 noon) for registering in person.

Voting by Absentee Ballot

Those who are ill; physically disabled; serving in the military; those who will be out of town on election day; those providing service as a poll worker in polling places other than their own; or those whose religion forbids secular activity on election day. You can obtain an application at any Town Clerk's Office beginning on Tuesday July 20, 2010. Information on the Election process is available from the Secretary of State's website <http://www.ct.gov/sots/site/default.asp> or by contacting:

Secretary of the State's Office

Legislation and Elections Administration Division
30 Trinity Street
Hartford, CT 06106
Telephone: (860) 509-6100

CEUI/MEUI ENDORSED CANDIDATES FOR THE 2010 PRIMARY

CEUI/MEUI's committee on political education (COPE) consists of 18 members from throughout the state from many different municipalities and job classifications who volunteer their time to meet throughout the year. They have the responsibility of educating members on political issues that impact labor and our families. The endorsement process consists of the committee reviewing candidate questionnaires and meeting with candidates to determine who will best represent the interests of our membership on labor issues, regardless of party status. The endorsements are then forwarded to the Executive Board for approval.

CEUI/MEUI HAS ENDORSED THE FOLLOWING CANDIDATES IN THE CONNECTICUT AUGUST 10, 2010 PRIMARY

Governor: DAN MALLOY (D)

Lt. Governor: NANCY WYMAN (D)

Secretary of State: DENISE MERRILL (D)

Comptroller: KEVIN LEMBO (D)

Senate 1st District: JOHN FONFARA (D)
(Hartford, Wethersfield)

State Rep 92nd District: PAT DILLON (D) (New Haven)

Judge of Probate: JODI THOMAS (D)
(Colchester, Windham, Marlborough)

The Union plans to take an active role in these campaigns and will need the help of our members to elect the endorsed candidates. If you would like to volunteer or are interested in joining our COPE Committee, please contact our Political Director Jim Vigue at: office 860-343-8736, cell: 860-638-7525, e-mail: jvigue@ceui.org

CALL TO CONVENTION

Secretary Meg Scata has issued a call for the 27th Annual MEUI Convention. Delegates will be selected at membership meetings. The convention will be held as follows:

Wednesday, October 20, 2010
East Hampton Middle School
5:15pm Registration
6:00pm Opening of Convention

MEUI Bargaining Unit Updates

MEUI Staff Representatives have been quite busy since the beginning of this year! Here are a few of the highlights:

Canterbury: The Union has been busy negotiating two contracts in the town of Canterbury. The Custodial bargaining unit has recently ratified an agreement. The Secretarial bargaining unit has reached a tentative agreement in mediation and full ratification is still pending.

East Hampton: The East Hampton custodial and café bargaining unit has had an eventful spring, as seems to be typical in East Hampton whenever a contract is expiring. The Union was approached by management and signed off on an agreement to not open contract negotiations and live under the current contract for one more year. When management realized the contract had mandatory step movement they were not satisfied with their own offer and requested to modify the contract offer to include no step movement. The Union rejected this modification, and negotiations commenced. The Union has since ratified a one year contract, a better settlement for the Union than the one management rejected earlier in the spring, and is awaiting management's ratification of the contract.

Portland: The Portland Board of Education Secretaries, Board of Education Nurses, Town Clerical, Supervisory, and Library Staff, were all glad to see the budget pass after being asked for and rejecting concessions.

Granby-Negotiations Town of Granby, Public Works and Dispatchers have recently concluded arbitration for their new contract. Last Best Offers have been exchanged and briefs will be due in a few weeks. An award by the arbitrator is due before the end of September.

Granby-Pension In the Town of Granby, the Pension Agreement between the Town of Granby & Granby Board of Education and G.E.B.A.C. "Granby Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition" was extended two years. The G.E.B.A.C. Coalition consists of MEUI Board of Education Custodians & Maintenance staff, MEUI Public Works & Dispatch and another SEUI local consisting of Board of Education Secretaries. The extension agreement starts July 1, 2010 and expires on June 30, 2012.

NORWICH SUPERVISORS: The Union filed a complaint with the Labor Board citing performance of bargaining unit work by non-bargaining unit members. The pre-trial conference was held on March 5, 2010. The Labor Board determined there was merit to the complaint and a formal hearing was scheduled for March 17, 2010. Prior to the formal hearing, the parties were able to resolve the issue. The City has posted the job and the incumbent shall be a MEUI member.

NORWICH BOE CUSTODIANS: Maintainers, who were members of another union, wanted to join MEUI to have strength in numbers. All parties involved reached an agreement and now the Maintainers are members of the MEUI Custodial bargaining unit. Additionally, the Custodians agreed to a one (1) year contract extension which includes a wage freeze; however, any Custodian who is off step shall receive their step increase effective July 1, 2010, they agreed to a 1% health insurance cost share increase, and they will receive an additional holiday off.

ROCKY HILL: Supervisors who were members of another union wanted to join MEUI. All parties involved reached an agreement and now they are members of our Town Hall Supervisory bargaining unit.

GRISWOLD BOE SECRETARIES: An Agreement for a three (3) year contract was reached. We agreed to no wage increase in the first year, a one and three quarter percent (1.75%) in the second year and a two percent (2%) in the third year. Their health insurance cost share decreased a one half percent (.5%) in year one (1) at fourteen percent (14%), it will go to fourteen and one half percent (14.5%) in year two (2) and fifteen percent (15%) in year three (3).

LISBON BOE INSTRUCTIONAL AIDES /INSTRUCIONAL ASISTANT: An informal hearing was held at the State Labor Board on Friday, June 11, 2010 regarding the BOE's use of permanent substitutes to perform our bargaining unit work.

COLCHESTER ADMINISTRATORS: We agreed to a one (1) year contract extension which includes a wage freeze and no other changes to the remainder of the Agreement.

WINDHAM SUPERVISORY AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF: The Windham Ethics Commission did not comply with the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act when conducting meetings; therefore, we filed a complaint with the Freedom of Information Commission and were able to resolve the issue prior to a hearing being scheduled. The Windham Ethics Commission acknowledged that a mistake had been made; they are seeking training and are committed to follow the Act.

REGIONAL 4 BOE PARA-EDUCATORS: We have an informal hearing scheduled with the State Labor Board on Wednesday, July 21, 2010. The BOE laid off LTA's last year and feels that it is acceptable to use parent volunteers in the library as well as in the class room and on field trips. They need to rehire the LTA's or stop using the parent volunteers from performing our bargaining unit work.

Political Updates

MEUI member and Town Assessor, John Chaponis, worked with MEUI Political Director and Lobbyist, Jim Vigue, to get some very important legislation passed this legislative session.

Prior to this legislation, most Town Assessors in Connecticut required re-appointment every 2-4 years depending on the municipality and/or town charter. In order to circumvent this, many assessors joined unions in order to secure "just cause" protection prior to being terminated from employment. However, a few years ago, some towns argued that "not re-appointing" assessors was not a disciplinary action and therefore not covered by the "just cause" provisions of labor contracts. Five Connecticut Assessors lost their jobs in a 2 1/2 year period under the guise that they were "not being re-appointed".

Chaponis said the old law had not been changed since the 1940's. The law was antiquated and mostly referred to a time period when assessors were elected officials. Assessors have not been elected for a very long time now.

Chaponis and Vigue successfully lobbied to change the law this year. The result was the passage of House Bill 5059 "An Act Concerning the Appointment of Municipal Assessors" which the Governor signed into law on May 26, 2010 as Public Act 10-84. This new law eliminates a municipality's option to elect an assessor and only allows appointment to such office. Furthermore, the bill eliminated a municipality's right to "set terms of office" and "terminating terms of assessors in office".

Chaponis, a past president of the CAAO (Connecticut Association of Assessing Officers), indicated that the CAAO hired a lobbyist years ago to try to get this law changed and were unsuccessful. He stated that the closest he ever came was having a bill raised in 2008 that failed to get voted out of the Planning and Development Committee.

"I am 100% positive that without the direct involvement and intervention of Political Director Jim Vigue, this law would never have been changed" Chaponis stated. CAAO was amazed at the respect Vigue commanded at the Capitol and the power of Union Membership. "Jim clearly carries a big stick and is viewed as a large block of voters at the Capital. It has given me a new found respect for Union Membership and its benefits. But in all honestly, Jim went way above and beyond the job description on this. For three and a half months, I spoke to him 2-4 times per day, including late at night and on weekends. He was extremely dedicated and passionate. He accomplished in one year what we couldn't come close to in several. Every assessor in the state was affected by this new legislation and thanks Political Director Jim Vigue for his involvement" Chaponis stated.