

## **SEIU Local 140 Newsletter 2.10.24**

### **Take Action!**

- Send a [letter](#) to the PPS school board demanding they condemn the genocide in Gaza and offer support to Palestinian students and families.
- Join AFSCME Local 1790 to rally for a free Palestine Sunday, 2/11 from 10a-2pm at Pioneer Square

### **Union Updates**

#### **Contract Officially Ratified!**

Members voted to approve our contract by a vote of 258 to 16 or 94% voting yes. Chris Walters [spoke](#) about the TA prior to the school board voting to approve our new contract by a vote of 5 to 1. Gary Hollands chose to vote no, claiming that he was concerned the contract did not bring all employees to \$20/hr. He stated, “I felt that on both sides that should have been a priority, and I wasn’t at the table so I don’t know.” (SEIU began bargaining with a proposal to bring the lowest paid workers up to \$25/hr minimum.)

With the approval of both members and the board, our new contract is now officially in effect. We hope to receive at least part of our retro pay by the end of this month. If you have any questions about the new contract including your new wage or step, feel free to reach out to a union representative or member of the bargaining team. An online version of the finalized contract should be available soon. In the meantime, a pdf of the signed tentative agreement is available [here](#).

We are hoping to plan a celebration of all the work that went into making this new contract a reality. While this contract will not fix all our problems of low pay, short staffing, and abusive management, it is a step in the right direction and will give us additional tools to be able to advocate and fight for our rights. We hope to come together to appreciate the commitment and effort of all our members and our bargaining team in helping to win this new contract. If you would like to help us plan for this event, please reach out!

#### **Albina Vision Trust Meeting**

Three members of the executive committee recently met with JT Flowers and Winta Yohannes of the Albina Vision Trust (AVT) to discuss their plans for purchasing the site currently occupied by the district’s PEC headquarters. They claim the purchase will lead to housing development for working class community members and help reconstruct the historically Black Albina neighborhood. PAT recently signed a letter endorsing the AVT plan to purchase and redevelop the PEC site. In the meeting, Flowers and Yohannes asked if our union would consider signing a letter in support of the project, and here is a

[presentation](#) from AVT regarding their plans. We would like input from the rank and file on this opportunity and what next steps to take.

Last week's newsletter included an article covering the links between AVT and the 1803 Fund which is in turn connected to Nike founder Phil Knight who has made billions exploiting Black and Brown workers around the world while creating one of most profitable brands in the world. When asked about their ties to private business interests like Nike, AVT representatives claimed there was no alternative to accomplish their goals but to accept money from philanthropists like Phil Knight. AVT was also unable to confirm whether or not they are currently using union contractors for the construction of their inaugural housing project, [Albina One](#). AVT will likely be bringing a resolution to the next board meeting to form a public-private partnership with PPS in order to relocate the PEC and allow AVT to develop the site.

AVT is also the fiscal sponsor of the district's "Center for Black Student Excellence," a [concept](#) funded by a 2020 bond which also provides funds for the modernization of Jefferson High.

## **Local Solidarity**

### **PPS Workers for Palestine**

Following the Superintendent's report at Tuesday's board meeting, PPS workers in attendance [stood up](#) to demand the board to speak out about the ongoing genocide in Palestine which has killed over 12,000 children to date. In October, PPS released a [statement](#) which referenced "a horrific attack in Israel," but failed to name Gaza or Palestine, let alone condemn the mounting deaths of Palestinian children in the besieged territory. A rank and file group of PPS workers has launched an [email campaign](#) to demand the school board (1) condemn the genocide against Palestinians, (2) provide educational resources on the history of settler-colonialism in Palestine, and (3) listen to the voices of Palestinian and Southwest Asian and North African families and community members.

Supporters of the campaign disrupted the board meeting by chanting "PPS is hiding while children are dying," and "silence is violence." In response, the board relocated to a separate room where they held the remainder of the meeting virtually. Rather than break their silence on the mass murder of Palestinians, the board resumed [showering praise](#) on Superintendent Guerrero before he leaves the district next week.

### **Creston Mold Situation and Schools Closed for Repairs**

Creston Elementary School staff issued an open letter this week after worries emerged about mold [contamination](#) in certain parts of the school. The letter described an open work order relating to damaged steam pipes that released moisture which has apparently caused mold to spread throughout some parts of the structure. This incident alone is alarming, but particularly as part of a broader pattern of the district's maintenance backlog and recent maintenance woes.

Markham Elementary School and Robert Gray Middle School are currently closed, with students from Markham going to Maplewood, Hayhurst, Rieke and Capitol Hill and students from Robert Gray going to Jackson Middle School. It's unclear exactly how long the repairs will take at both buildings. The letter from Creston staff conveys how PPS did a test for mold in December there but that it was done with windows open and air filters running at their highest settings which don't reflect typical conditions. The dire state of our public school buildings is a sign that the district administration doesn't prioritize safe learning conditions for students.

## **PFSP Approves Contract**

PFSP members have approved a new contract by a vote of 601 to 74 with 89% voting yes. This was the third TA brought before the membership after the two previous TAs were voted down. The agreement provides for raises of 6.25%, 4%, and 3% for each year of the contract.

## **International Solidarity**

### **Philippine Labor Fights Back Webinar**

Last week, SEIU members joined a webinar on US counter-insurgency and international solidarity in the context of the Philippine labor movement. You can stream the recording [here](#).

Labor leaders Kara Taggaoa and Ferdinand Gaité shared on the dire economic conditions facing Filipino workers as well as the intensifying political repression from the US-backed Marcos Jr regime. Suzanne Adely of the National Lawyers Guild exposed the far-reaching effects of US counter-insurgency doctrine which aims to discredit and suppress legitimate people's movements around the world standing up against the violence and exploitation of US imperialism. The webinar closed with empowering messages of solidarity from union members across the US, including Thuy Huyen, SEIU 503 statewide treasurer.

The struggle for living wages, consistent jobs, and the end to violent repression in the Philippines is closely linked to the struggle for living wages and well funded public services in the US. The following are some ways to show solidarity with workers in the Philippines:

- Join a labor delegation to the Philippines with ICHRP in 2024! Sign our ICHRP-US interest form to let us know you are interested: [bit.ly/ichrp-interest](https://bit.ly/ichrp-interest)
- Sign the letter to US Congress demanding [Justice for Jude Fernandez](#)
- Lobby your Congressional Representatives to support the [Philippine Human Rights Act](#)