

# The Votes Are In – More Details

## Bargaining and coming to the MOU

Last December, your WSNA officers approached the employer after receiving a county-wide email informing them that a labor coalition and unrepresented staff were receiving additional holidays, a "retention bonus," and a General Wage Increase (GWI) of 3.5%.

Immediately the County responded with a list of items they requested for the WSNA bargaining units to bargain with them. The County made it clear that its position is to make it as "unattractive as possible" for bargaining units not part of the labor coalition and that the County was in any rush to agree.

The employer initially proposed adding new holidays but tied them to takeaways in the holiday contract language. After seven months of significant negotiations between your WSNA officers and the employer, the employer finally agreed to give both units Juneteenth and Indigenous Peoples Day without the negative changes in the contract language.

The County continued with crucial takeaway language tied to the GWI and insisted on deducting the ratification bonus from the "recognition bonus" previously given to employees for a timely ratification vote. Unfortunately, the County was unwilling to compromise on either issue despite multiple conversations that they were not affording their nurses the respect and gratitude they deserved.

To be clear, your officers were never in support of a "recognition bonus" that intentionally hurt nurses who have been loyal and stayed with the County throughout the entire pandemic. Your WSNA team fought hard for **EVERY** nurse to receive the total amount. The County wanted significant and valuable parts of both contracts removed for that to happen.

## The Vote

Ultimately, your officers decided to end negotiations on the GWI and bring the "recognition bonus" to a unit-wide vote, so both units would have the opportunity to share their voices on this issue. After two full days of voting, with locations at three separate locations, the votes have been counted.

**The staff bargaining unit voted YES by a majority, approving the bonus MOU.** This MOU will move forward to be signed.

**The supervisor bargaining unit had a majority of NO votes, rejecting the bonus MOU.** This MOU will not move forward but will be addressed again in contract negotiations.

## One last chance for the employer to do the right thing

After spending time with all who attended the local unit meetings and voting stations, we returned to the employer one last time. We warned the employer how negatively this entire process and offer were perceived. We gave them one more opportunity to see if they would pay all nurses the "appreciation bonus" without deducting any past and unrelated amounts.

We are disappointed to find our employer doesn't appreciate nursing. Dedication and loyalty to the County through COVID and prior apparently doesn't impact the County like we think it should.

## What does this mean moving forward?

We heard loud and clear from BOTH staff and supervisors that this was a difficult decision, and regardless of how your fellow nurses voted, they were not pleased with the County. This MOU signaled that the employer does not respect or value their nursing staff.

Your officers are preparing for contract negotiations, which will begin soon with a survey that will come to you that is vital in guiding our bargaining efforts. Be on the lookout for this in your email inbox in the coming weeks. This will be followed by unit meetings to discuss the findings from the survey. The tactics the employer used over the past seven months are the same they will use moving forward. We need **EVERY SINGLE NURSE** to show up in solidarity, prepared for collective action.

### Please save the date:

We will have a joint staff-supervisor event on September 10<sup>th</sup>

In solidarity,

Your Staff and Supervisor Officers

**Staff** *Tyler Breier, Chair; Tami Nesler and Carolyn Clark, Grievance Officer*

**Supervisors** *Sean Dumas and Nicole Klein, Co-Chair; Louise Peterson, Secretary/Treasurer*

**We are union strong!** We will not be bullied and will fight for the respect we deserve from our employer. For questions and concerns reach out to your local unit officers or to **staff Nurse Representatives** Michelle Moore [mmoore@wsna.org](mailto:mmoore@wsna.org) or **supervisors Nurse Representative Bret Percival** [bpercival@wsna.org](mailto:bpercival@wsna.org).