

OPEIU Local 12 NEWS

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Union Dues Changes

OPEIU Local 12 Membership ratified the Local’s constitution at the November General Membership meeting. Notably, the new constitution includes changes to the dues cap. The cap will be increased to \$56 per month in 2023, in 2024 it will be increased to \$59 and in 2025 it will be increased to \$62. The structure of the dues will remain the same where it will be 2 times your hourly rate rounded up to the nearest dollar plus \$9.50.



This year we will not see this change until February 1 due to the administrative needs, but in future years the changes will be effective on January 1.

Other notable changes includes Steward language, we added language for a staff director should the local ever hire one, and language for a personell committee for hiring new staff. We also added language in the constiution in the event that there is an Executive Board vacancy due to lack of nominees in an election to get those positions filled.

The Secretary Treasurer and President were also given the authority to spend up to 500 dollars for union business related expenses that require immediate need with out prior ratification from the Executive Board, though these purchase will need to be ratified at the following Executive board meeting.

Members can view the constitution in it’s entirety at www.OPEIU12.org.

Our next General membership meeting is set for January 18th at 6pm via zoom and you can register for the meeting at our website if you have any questions regarding these changes.

All checks for union dues can be made payable to OPEIU Local 12 and sent to 2277 Hwy 36W Ste 301 Roseville, MN 55113.

A Letter from the President



For those of you who don't know me I wanted to share what made me get involved in the union. My hope is that my story will inspire members reading this to step up and not feel as alone in the fight for workers rights as I did when I first started in the labor movement. I have been a union member most of my working life. I started out as a union member working at Cub Foods as a cashier in my early 20s as a member of UFCW and later as a waitress at the airport as a member of Unite Here. It wasn't until I started at HealthPartners that I paid attention to the union and really got involved in OPEIU. I started at HealthPartners in 2016 as a temp in the Appointment Center and was hired on in 2017. My time in the Appointment Center wasn't always enjoyable. Corporate professionalism didn't come easy for me as I worked in a bar most of my life and previously worked as a cashier. This didn't rub my leaders the right way and catching on to the job duties came slow for me. I worked hard and tried hard to learn them. I felt like no matter how hard I tried, no matter what I did, my leaders in the Appointment Center didn't think I was good enough. I became depressed, scary depressed but thankfully I had good insurance through my union benefits and I was able to seek help professionally. It wasn't until a contract vote that my life really started to turn around professionally and personally.

I walked into the room and was greeted by a number of stewards, and my rep. They told me about what my employer was proposing for the contract, what our union proposed and what was settled on. One steward, sat with me for hours and explained to me how the union worked and what my rights were. I shared how I felt like I was constantly being bullied and my job was at risk but I needed to stick it out because the benefits were too good to leave. The stewards there convinced me join them in the fight. After some thought, I agreed and dove in, buying books, going to trainings the union offered, and shadowing other stewards.

I also noticed that my leaders in the Appointment Center started changing their behavior towards me. Was it more respectful? I'm not sure. I was convinced that my work ethic and how I did things didn't change though. Perhaps, my title as a steward is what changed their demeanor? They knew I now knew my rights, and I would no longer stand for the bullying.

I still suffer from depression and anxiety. It never really goes away, but it's manageable. I feel like I have a purpose now. I'm helping people everyday. The union has given me a reason to get up in the morning and the members of OPEIU are truly wonderful people who deserve everything. My hope is that more people find a purpose like I did and get involved in some way with our union either by becoming a steward, joining your contract action team or bargaining team, running for a board seat, joining our organizing committee or Political Action Team, or even contributing to the Newsletter by sharing your story. Your voice matters. Help us help you have a seat at the table.

“Your voice matters. Help us help you have a seat at the table.”

— Kelsie Anderson,
President Local 12

Political Action Team

We have started a Political Action Team! Please join us as we work together with local and national government to pass legislation that will help workers both in our union and across the country. OPEIU International Political Director Cesar Levy intends to come visit us sometime in the spring to do a training on Political and Racial Justice. This training is very in depth and we feel it's very valuable to our members. Before we can set a definite date we need members committed and interested in attending.



Please email dhogan@opeiu12.org for more information on the Political Action Team and the training if you are interested.

Minneapolis Labor History — The 1934 General Strike

In 1934, a group calling themselves The Citizens' Alliance—somewhat akin to the modern-day Minneapolis Foundation—effectively ran the Twin Cities. They controlled the mayor, the police, the media, and to a lesser degree, the Governor, and they used this power to keep wages down and unions out (or tamed).

Despite all this, in the spring and summer of that year, the Citizens' Alliance was roundly defeated by the workers of Minneapolis in one of the most important labor fights of the 20th century. Though these few paragraphs can't do the moment justice, there are a number of documentaries, books, and articles that go considerably further (of which I recommend the film [Labor's Turning Point](#) and the book [Teamster Rebellion](#)). These paragraphs can tease readers with just a taste, though.

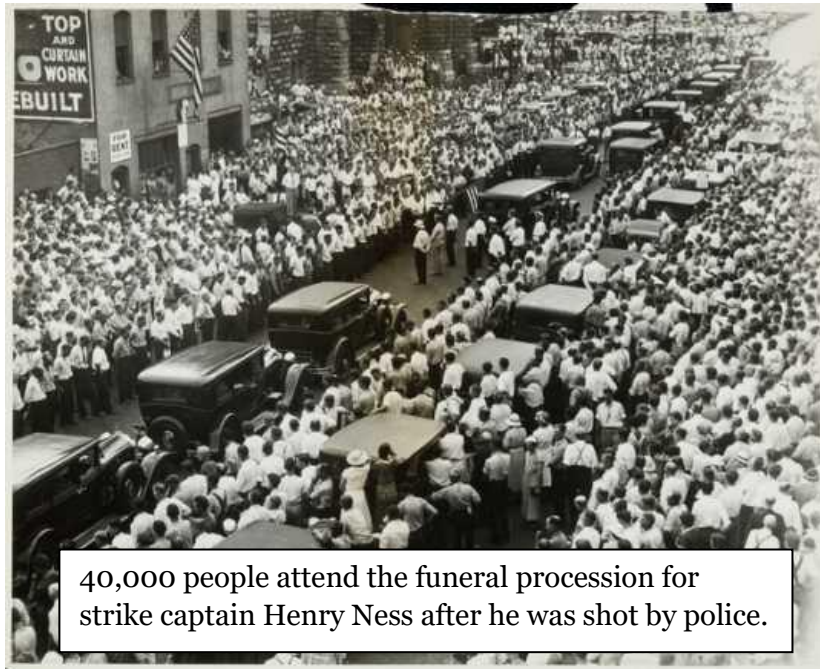
In the months before the strike, a handful of people began carefully building worker solidarity. They prepared workers to fight not only their bosses at work, but the union bosses who'd long been stifling any militancy and growth in the Twin Cities. As a small-scale opening salvo, the coal drivers struck for three days, winning significant wage increases and forcing the employers to back down from attempts to retaliate. (Ironically, the day after they won, they received a telegram from Daniel Tobin, the national president of the Teamsters, telling them they were not, under any circumstances, to go on strike.)

The most effective tool they had in this two-front battle against the employers and the union bureaucrats was active, grass-roots union democracy. At every turn, this group strove to ensure it was the workers themselves driving the direction of growth and action.

By the time the city-wide general strike began in May, they had succeeded in setting up a 100-person strike

committee. That committee included the executive board as members, but with only one vote each. This made it impossible for any individual or small group to sell out the strike.

See, here's key lesson number one: hired staff have an in-built conflict of interest. Strikes are the strongest weapons any workers have, but to union staffers who have fallen into the trap of seeing the union as a business, strikes are to be avoided at all costs. Strikes are doubly expensive, as dues stop coming in, and funds go out to strikers.



40,000 people attend the funeral procession for strike captain Henry Ness after he was shot by police.

In fact, staffers don't gain anything but longer hours from rank-and-file militancy. Preparing members for concessions makes bargaining quick and easy—at least until members push back. Union members either need staffers who are ideologically committed to fighting the boss, or they need strong grass-roots democracy.

In the Summer of 1934, Teamsters local 574 had both. Members voted

several rank-and-file militants—battle tested in the February coal strike—into leadership. That combination of ideologically committed leaders, and deep grassroots democracy, enabled them to beat the seemingly invincible combination of money, cops, and politicians. In fact, after Governor Olsen sent in the national guard to arrest local 574's leadership and occupy its headquarters, the members went right on striking. There were plenty of people willing and able to step up and keep things organized and running. When the strike only gained momentum after they'd "severed its head," the bosses finally broke.

Like The Great Depression of the 1930s, the COVID-19 Pandemic taught workers that the bosses believe their right to make millions supersedes our right to continue to live, much less simply support our families. But like then, the community is rising up and fighting back, and recognizing that the best way to do that is through collective action as workers in a union. Our solidarity defeats their dollars.

Member Spotlight



My name is Brittany Hanson. I have been a member of OPEIU Local 12 since June 2019, and I am an administrative assistant at the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades District Council 82. I previously worked in the hospitality industry as a server and

bartender for 12 years, so I enjoy jobs/careers that are at a fast pace. I can honestly say I enjoy the work that I do, and it is such a blessing to be able to say that. I truly enjoy the people I work with at IUPAT DC 82 and enjoy getting to know our membership. I have built some incredible relationships since starting at IUPAT DC82 three and a half years ago.

I recently became more involved with OPEIU Local 12, going to membership meetings on a consistent basis, being part of negotiations when our Collective Bargaining Agreement was up, and becoming a delegate to the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation. I really love the fact that our board members and business representatives have the best interest of the Local and membership in mind when making decisions, big and small, and they love when people are involved and want to build a brother and sister hood.

I am a mom of a 6-year-old boy, and in our free time we enjoy bowling, swimming, building Lego sets, arts and crafts, and learning new things. I also enjoy traveling when I can and my favorite place to travel thus far would have to be Amsterdam. It was incredibly beautiful over there and the way of life is so different from ours in the United States. It was awesome to just take it all in while I was there.

Labor 101- Nellie Stone Johnson



Nellie Stone Johnson at the Minnesota Capital

Nellie Stone Johnson recently had a statue erected in her honor at the Minnesota State capital. For those of you who don't know her, she was a historic figure of the Minnesota Labor movement. Nellie was a farmers daughter who grew up in Dakota County in the early 1900's . She had African American, French, Irish and Native American ancestry. Nellie started organizing at the age of 13 when she distributed literature for the Nonpartisan League on her way to school, and she joined the NAACP as a teenager.

After moving to Minneapolis in 1924, Nellie was working at the Minneapolis Athletic Club earning \$15 dollars a week as a elevator operator. She organizing the Minneapolis Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union after her wages were cut to \$12.50 per week.

Nellie was also a close mentor to Vice President Hubert Humphrey and mentored him on civil rights issues. She was on the committee that merged the Minnesota Democratic Party with the Farmer-Labor Party forming the DFL.

Nellie was the elected to the Library Board and became the first black person to be elected to a city wide office in Minneapolis in 1945.

Nellie remained active in political, racial justice, women's rights and the labor movement until she died in 2002 at the age of 96. The Minnesota AFL-CIO has a Scholarship fund named for her for people of color to apply for yearly.

The For Profit Motive in the Non-Profit World

Even as modern society seems set to run off the rails, caught as it is between climate change and the rise in anti-democratic movements, we continue to look for leadership from the very forces that got us here in the first place: big business. Almost every nonprofit and not-for-profit organization treats their CEOs as interchangeable with those of the corporate world, even though these organizations have a dramatically different central purpose.

What happens if you run an organization that should be serving people as if it should be serving the shareholders? Well, you get Health Partners, an institution that brags about posting record “excess revenue,” as if it’s proof of something other than misguided principals. Or you get directors at the Minneapolis Institute of Art who talk about art exhibitions as “money losing events,” as if our tax dollars were given to them for something else. Or you get leaders at every single advocacy-based non-profit expecting their members to live like monks as proof of their “commitment to the cause,” even as they quietly pay themselves six-figure salaries.

These folks are all cut from the same cloth as the people you’ll find at General Motors or General Mills. They went to the same schools where they got the same degrees and the same training, but you don’t have to question the profit motive to understand why that mentality has no place in organizations that *literally* exclude “profit” in their very classifications.

What happens when these groups get leaders trying to maximize profits?

For starters, it means Health Partner’s leaders don’t see communities in need of care, they see sources of revenue. They don’t see their own workers as good people committed to the cause of public health; they see cogs in their money-making machine. It means the same cost-cutting, revenue-increasing mantras of “just-in-time delivery” and “employee flexibility.” It means they don’t see the contradiction in going after employee benefits even as they announce another banner year. They don’t see the contradiction inherent in shutting down clinics in low-income communities of color even as they open expensive, brand-new facilities in the suburbs.

For publicly funded museums, it looks like board rooms full of people from Target and Cargill hiring executives to squeeze more work out of fewer workers, executives who then hollow the institutions out from the inside, gutting the work and the workers so they can pad their own salaries, salaries rapidly approaching seven figures.



For advocacy groups, it means they continue to behave as if “burning and churning” their employees is a great way to keep costs down, rather than a moral disaster that inhibits the organization’s effectiveness.

Imagine what it would look like if Health Partners were led by people whose concern was humanity and human decency. They’d realize that they should make sure everyone received the health care they needed, and that their employees were able to take care of their families. They wouldn’t see 250 million dollars in “excess revenue” as something to celebrate, they’d see it for the *injustice* that it is. They’d recognize that they had squeezed it out of their employees, and their patients, and their communities.

Imagine what museums could do if they weren’t cutting education programs as a “waste of money” while overpaid execs spend their time figuring out how to turn the institution into a playground for wealthy donors.

Imagine how much more effective non-profit advocacy and service institutions could be if they made sure they were taking care of the very people who have devoted their lives to taking care of others.

Every one of these institutions would be vastly improved if the people who did the work were put in charge of making the decisions.

These aren’t businesses, and they absolutely shouldn’t be run like one. Take the MBAs out of leadership and take the profit motive out of non-profits. Let’s make these institutions be true to their mission, not their imaginary shareholders.

Membership Meeting Information

Important Dates

January 18 6 pm [Click to Register](#)

March 18 6 Pm

May 17 6 PM

September 20 6PM

November 15 6pm

Book Club

We have been talking about wanting to start a Union Book Club where we read books about union history and the movement and meet to discuss. If you are interested, please reach out to cmontufar@opeiu12.org. This should be super fun!

Reach Your Representative

Lance Lindeman- Business Agent- lance.lindeman@opeiu12.org

Molly Thul- Business Agent- Mthul@opeiu12.org

Cesar Montufar Organizer- cmontufar@opeiu12.org

Kelsie Anderson- President- Kanderson@opeiu12.org

Devin Hogan- Vice President- Dhogan@opeiu12.org

Question or Comment?

Please share your comments about this edition. Send them to:

cmontufar@opeiu12.org

Download the free OPEIU app at the App Store and Google Play.

Receive text updates from your union by texting Local 12 to 97779. Message and data rates may apply.

Organizing Committee

Do you have a lead for organizing? Are you interested in helping our union grow? Do you think your work place could use a little internal organizing and don't really know where to start?

Local 12 is restarting an organizing committee! We are trying to change the model of our union from a service model to an organizing model and we need your help. Members need to become more engaged in their worksite and others and we'd like to connect with you on how to accomplish growth in our union.

Please reach out to Cesar Montufar our organizer or Devin Hogan our Organizing Committee Chair if you are interested in joining the Organizing Committee. Their emails are, cmontufar@opeiu12.org and dhogan@opeiu12.org. Can't wait to see you there!

Know Your Rights

You have the right to Union Representation anytime you face a meeting or discussion with a supervisor that could lead to discipline. Your employer usually has no obligation to inform you of your right to have a union representative present. **You must ask for your rights!** Your employer must give you time to contact a union representative and allow the representative to be present at the meeting.

Keep in Touch:

OPEIU International: www.opeiu.org

OPEIU Local 12L www.OPEIU12.org



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