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Legislative Hearings Begin on Salary Package

The collective bargaining contract negotiated by OSEA and the Executive Department, which sets forth a $50 million pay and fringe benefits package for 24,000 state employes in the coming biennium, was scheduled to be heard by a salary subcommittee of the legislature's Joint Ways and Means Committee as this issue of The OSEA News went to press.

The contract, which is the first ever negotiated that affects virtually all of the state's classified work force, must be submitted to the legislature for funding and implementation.

It will be explained to legislators by OSEA and Executive Department representatives. President Richard F. Young, Executive Secretary Thomas C. Enright and Assistant Executive Secretary Everett B. Stiles will speak for OSEA. The department will be represented by Director Cleighton L. Penwell and Martin Kenny, a Personnel Division wage and salary analyst.

If approved by the legislature, the contract will go into effect July 1. It calls for the following pay raises and increases in fringe benefits for the state's classified work force:

- A $30 a month pay raise for all employes working in job classifications which are paid within the first seven salary ranges. That group includes some 5,000 workers in 64 classifications. The percentage amount of the increase ranges from 9.8 per cent for employes at the first step of pay range one to 5.7 per cent for employes at the top step of pay range seven.
- A one-half of one per cent increase for about 40 employes in five classifications.
- A 4.06 per cent wage hike for about 785 employes in 37 classifications.
- A 9.06 per cent salary boost for approximately 110 employes in eight classifications.
- A 10.5 per cent pay raise for some 2,300 employes in 130 classifications.
- A 15.5 per cent increase for approximately 17 employes in six classifications.
- A 5.5 per cent salary increase for all other state employes who work in collective bargaining units represented by OSEA. That number totals about 18,000 workers in 850 job classifications.
- A new salary administration program based upon a performance appraisal system uniformly applied throughout the classified service. Employe job performance will be evaluated using classification specifications, position descriptions and work plans. The contract does not permit any numerical limitation on the number of employes who may receive an annual performance pay raise.
- An incentive award program in which up to 10 per cent of the employes in every state agency shall be eligible for a lump sum payment equal to three per cent of annual salary. Incentive pay awards will be made once each year and will be based on job performance.
- A sum of money equal to 5.5 per cent of the state's payroll will be earmarked for classified state employe compensation on July 1, 1974—the mid-point of the 1973-75 biennium.
- A $5.00 per month increase—from $10 to $15—in the state's contribution toward employe health insurance. If the monthly contribution exceeds the employe's premium, the excess shall apply to dependent coverage.
- Payment of accrued sick leave in the form of an increased pension for employes who leave state service as the result of retirement, disability, or death, or who terminate and leave their annuity account with the PERS.
- A one day per year increase in vacation leave. In addition, employes will be eligible for vacation leave after six months of service (rather than one year), and the Executive Department will support a law change to allow employes to accumulate 250 hours (rather than 200 hours) of vacation leave.
- An increase from 9 cents to 11 cents a mile in the mileage reimbursement rate for private automobiles used for state business. The reimbursement rate for private autos used for the convenience of employes will be increased to 7.5 cents a mile.
- A $2.00 a day increase—from $15 to $17—in the state's per diem rate. Lodging will go to $9, breakfast to $1.75, lunch to $1.75, and dinner to $4.50 per day.

"In view of the economic forecasts that wages will increase in excess of six per cent during the next 12 months, we feel this pay and benefits package is entirely justified," Stiles said in remarks prepared for the salary subcommittee.

"It will keep state government abreast of other wage increases, but it will not improve Oregon's position with respect to competing employment," he said.

Faculty Bargaining Gets OSEA Priority

OSEA will give top priority during the next two months to establishment of collective bargaining for faculty employes who work at Oregon's three major universities and four regional colleges.

That decision was made by the Board of Directors at the request of the Association's Academic and Unclassified Services Committee. It is headed by Robert E. Nye, a University of Oregon professor, and composed of faculty members from the various schools.

He asked the board to take the action after faculty members at Southern Oregon College in Ashland filed a petition with the Public Employe Relations Board requesting creation of a bargaining unit at the school.

The committee recommended and the board agreed that collective bargaining procedures for faculty employes should be established that would insure: (1) a single bargaining unit composed of all faculty employes who work under the State System of Higher Education, rather than seven or more individual bargaining units made up of faculty employes at each institution, and (2) bargaining with the Board of Higher Education or its administrative staff, rather than with each individual institution in higher education.

OSEA will oppose creation of a bargaining unit at SOC on the grounds that a statewide unit would be the appropriate unit.

Before OSEA seeks election as the representative of a statewide unit of faculty employes, it must have a membership of close to 50 per cent of the employes in the unit, according to the policy adopted by the board.

A single bargaining unit for faculty employes would number about 4,500. OSEA presently has 1,400 faculty members throughout the state. That means it would have to nearly double its membership before it would become actively involved in collective bargaining for academic employes.

The Association currently is conducting a membership drive at the state's seven universities and colleges.

"It would behoove OSEA and all state employes to stand behind it and support it at the polls," Senate President Jason Boe (D-Reedsport) told the Board of Directors recently as he sought support of the tax plan adopted by the legislature and referred to the people for a vote on May 1. Officers shown with Boe are President Richard F. Young, Vice-President Lester B. Strickler and Past-President Chalmers L. Jones. The board voted unanimously to support the plan.

Board Votes to Support Tax Plan

OSEA has been put on record by its Board of Directors as favoring the tax plan adopted by the legislature and scheduled to be voted upon by the people May 1.

The action came shortly after Senate President Jason Boe (D-Reedsport) addressed the board at its last meeting in Salem.

"About 95 per cent of all state employes will benefit from this tax plan," Boe told the board. "They will come out ahead in their total tax bill under this plan." The reason for that, he said, is because those persons whose incomes are $16,000 or less a year will pay less tax under the plan.

Boe said the tax plan "takes the burden of financing schools" from the property tax and places it on the income tax. Of all taxes, he said, the income tax is the fairest because it is based upon the ability to pay.

"Oregon has always had a good, progressive income tax program up to about $25,000 or $30,000, and there it flattens out," he said. "People who make over that amount haven't been paying their fair share of the tax load. This tax plan will solve that problem."

"The hour is late for this tax plan," Boe warned OSEA's board. "We have all fought the disastrous tax proposals that have been made in the recent past, such as the 1½ per cent property tax limitation and Ballot Measure Nine. We know certain forces are waiting in the wings with other radical proposals if this tax plan fails at the polls."

The Reedsport Democrat said the tax plan is non-partisan and called it "the best we can come up with." He said it is "imperative" that it pass on May 1.

"It would behoove OSEA and all state employes to stand behind it and support it at the polls," he said.

For more about the tax plan, see pages 5-6-7-8.