

From: Coriell, Scott [Scott.Coriell@vermont.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2015 12:12 PM
To: Coriell, Scott
Subject: Gov. Shumlin Statement on VSEA Negotiations
Attachments: Letter 101415.pdf

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 14, 2015

Gov. Shumlin Statement on VSEA Negotiations

MONTPELIER – Gov. Peter Shumlin released the following statement following the decision of the Non-Management Bargaining Unit (NMU) of the Vermont State Employees Association (VSEA) to walk away from the bargaining table during contract negotiations. The Corrections and Supervisory Bargaining Units remain engaged in talks with the State.

“I am disappointed in the VSEA’s decision. Negotiation requires both sides to compromise. Unfortunately the NMU has refused to budge from their initial bargaining position regarding pay. That position asks for a 13.4 percent pay increase over two years, which would cost Vermont taxpayers \$70.6 million. It’s beyond me how anyone could find that position reasonable. At a time when many Vermonters are not seeing their wages rise, it would be unconscionable to agree to pay increases that are more than quadruple the rate of inflation and would add substantial pressure to an already tight budget. I will not ask Vermonters to pay higher taxes to fund a 13.4 percent raise for state employees.”

A letter from the State’s Chief Negotiator requesting that the NMU return to the table is attached.

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FIRST CLASS MAIL & HAND DELIVERY

Gary L. Hoadley, Director of Labor Relations
Vermont State Employees' Association
155 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05602

Re: Continued Bargaining

Dear Gary:

On behalf of the State of Vermont, I write to re-emphasize the point made at the end of yesterday's collective bargaining session with VSEA's Non-Management Unit. We were surprised and disappointed that this unit declared impasse in our negotiations, and indicated further that it would not engage in additional negotiation sessions with the State. Instead, it expressed the intention to move the dispute to the impasse procedures of our statutes.

The State respectfully but strongly disagrees with the position taken by VSEA. It emphatically disagrees that a genuine impasse has been reached. It indicated yesterday and re-emphasizes today that the State's negotiating team is fully prepared to bargain further and is prepared to modify its current positions in order to either secure agreement or to narrow the range of outstanding issues.

We also believe that the VSEA can or ought to be able to bargain further. An example of this is that VSEA has made no change whatsoever to its opening wage position of a 5% increase plus step continuation (an additional 1.7% new money cost) in each year of a proposed two year agreement, and also has offered no change to several of its other proposals, many of which have monetary impacts.

The State stands ready, willing and able to continue bargaining with the Non-Management Unit. We already have a room reserved for a session next Tuesday. We urge VSEA in the strongest possible manner to continue to exercise its statutory responsibility to bargain in good faith until agreement or a genuine impasse has been reached. Please confirm that you will be in attendance at our bargaining location next week Tuesday.

Very truly yours,

Joseph E. McNeil
Chief Negotiator – State of Vermont

c: Maribeth Spellman, Commissioner of Human Resources
John Berard, Director of Labor Relations