**Andrew Puleo February 12, 2016**

**PEF Region 2 1/3**

**S/W PAC Report**

**Date: January 23, 2016 –** Town Hall Public Meeting in Hornell, NY was attend by Region 2 PAC Co-Chair Ruth Hart and member Howie Nisbet III. I requested a written report from my PAC members and am sharing same as an example of accountability in member engagement. I am very proud to present the following unedited report from Howie.

On January 23, 2016 I attended a Town Hall Public Meeting hosted by John Buckley, R, Deputy Mayor of the City of Hornell. Invited speakers were State Sen. Tom O’Mara, R, Elmira, NY and Assemblyman William Nojay, R, Rochester, NY. The City of Hornell is included in both representatives’ districts.

In Mr. O’Mara’s opening remarks he stated that he is still sponsoring repeal of the Safe Act and he does not think the proposed $15/hour minimum wage is competitive and sustainable for our area. Pennsylvania border is to close and Pa. has a minimum wage of $7.25/hour. The Governors proposal should be more geographic toward New York City.

In Mr. Nojay’s opening remarks he stated he feels the teamwork of our upstate/western NY elected officials of both the Senate and Assembly is second to none. Great communication and cooperation is the key to this delegation working good together.

Mr. Nojay then started the roundtable by stating some frustration with the Governors office on NYSDOT Funding. He gave two examples, in one an unnamed DOT Engineer told him that despite the appearances of increased Capital Funding to the public, reality is regional budgets have had monies taken away to fund the Tappan Zee Bridge Project. The second was also with a different DOT engineer he met with over what Mr. Nojay thought was a RR crossing and intersection in need of work. He said the DOT engineer told him this was not a priority as he had dozens of bridges that were in a worse state than the Schoharie County NYS Thruway bridge that collapsed over a decade ago was, all his available funds was going to do “triage” on these other bridges to keep them standing. Both engineers asked to remain anonymous as they were afraid of retribution, as they stated that existed in our work environment.

The next topic was voter apathy, how to get people registered to vote and then get them to the polls. Lots of roundtable discussion but no concrete solutions.

Mr. O’Mara then stated there is still an issue over the legality of The Wage Board being legal and if can legally raise the minimum wage. He does not think the $15 will pass the state senate in the budget process and some lower wage will be agreed upon.

Next topic was school aid. Doug Wyant, Superintendant of Hornell City Schools spoke with both at length about specifics, including the effect of minimum wage. The 0.12% Tax Cap this year is not realisti

Next topic was prisons, understaffed, building conditions, the amount of mental illness not being treated and whether tax money should be used for college for inmates. Most said it should not. More staffing needed and mental illness facilities should not be being cut or closed.

 **February 12, 2016**

 **cont. 2/3**

Upstate manufacturing and connections to infrastructure was a much discussed topic. Keeping companies like Kraft in Campbell, NY open. How important good roads and bridges are to Executives that are on tour and are be courted to invest in upstate. Our infrastructure is not the best advertisement in its present state.

Last topic was the ‘vicarious liability laws’ and the seemingly endless pages of regulations and rules that inhibit growth and spending by both business and individuals. Our whole system needs review and updating, some regulations are outdated by decades and maybe even a century or more. The issue is no one seems to want to tackle the problem and improve our system.

In closing remarks, both speakers agree that our future in this area of the state should be bright. We have several huge assets over other parts of the country, first being fresh water, second being our labor force, both stated that when they travel to sister facilities of some we have here, the management raves how lucky we are in this area to have a labor force that we do. In other areas of the country, problems like tardiness, attendance in general, worker apathy, lower wages to name a few that lead to a lower productive work force. The last positive is our base infrastructure, the base is in place, we have the interstates, etc. we just need to maintain them at a higher level.

**January 28, 2016** – I attended the Steuben Livingston County Labor Council meeting in Bath NY. This night’s meeting began with the notification that Erin Young, Lead Field Organizer, was resigning from RGV ALF, her replacement Amorette Shaw, was then introduced. A call for PEF Delegates to the Chemung County Labor Council was made by Steve Panton, RGV ALF, Southern Tier Filed Coordinator. A discussion on Friedrichs occurred with opinions shared and advisement that talk of a National Strike was in play at some level as that all options/scenarios were under consideration. Literature distributed included the **attached** and undated 8 Point NYS AFL-CIO document titled, *” Avenues of Public Sector Support in Preparing for the Potential Impact(s) of Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association”.*

**February 5, 2016 –** Ruth Hart, Howie Nisbet III and myself attended the Hornell City Republican Committee 74th Lincolns Day Dinner. The Keynote speaker was Congressman Chris Gibson, who announced that he is going to form an exploratory committee to look into running for governor of New York State. This event’s assembly also included over 10 other regionally elected officials. These included Senator O’Mara, Congressman Tom Reed, Assemblymen Palmesano, Nojay, and several others too numerous to recall. I spoke with Mr. Palmesano regarding the Freidrichs case and advised Mr. Gibson that PEF was looking forward to a Governor that respected State employees. Mr. Gibson shared that he did have a good working relationship with the past PEF administration and indicated his desire for the same with this administration.

 Also present was Local/Regional newspaper reporter, Jason Jordan, of The Evening Tribune & Sunday Spectator, whom I invited to attend our PEF Region 2 meeting an March 16, 2016 with advisement that PEF President Wayne Spence is confirmed for attendance and that AFT National President Randi Weingarten is scheduled to attend.

 **February 12, 2016**

 **cont. 3/3**

In closing I remind this body that I previously opined that PEF should be responding to Times Union blogs whenever misinformation and opinions based on same are posted. For example, a recent TU blog by a claimed PEF member cites that PEF should stay out of Politics, per:

*Mike the Engineer says:*

[*February 4, 2016 at 1:27 pm*](http://blog.timesunion.com/capitol/archives/245871/pefs-brate-to-head-up-friedrichs-effort/#comment-935797)

*While I’m not a huge union fan, I can speak from personal experience regarding NYSDOT employment as both a PEF and an M/C represented employee. During my entire time as a PEF represented employee I was a dues paying non-member. I never had any issues whatsoever. However, during my time as an M/C represented employee I was continuously attacked by one of my staff. With no union protection I was faced with severe punishment on very minimal issues. After I accepted the punishment (I had no choice). The attacks continued until I was forced to retire earlier than I intended rather than suffer further punishment (again, I had no choice). Had I been a member of a union (in this case – PEF) none of what I had to endure would have been allowed to happen. I know this for a fact because I was told that by a high ranking union official. From my personal experience, if I had to do it again, even though I thoroughly enjoyed my M/C position, I would have remained a PEF represented employee. I worked very hard at my job, worked hundreds of unpaid hours, sacrificed time with my family, and went without an increase in pay for over 5 years. None of that made any difference. When you have no protection, you place yourself in a position where you can be treated in any fashion management sees fit. Although I’m not a particular fan of unions, they do have a place. As long as they restrict their activities to protecting their membership and stay away from political issues/positions, they have a vital and important role in society.*

‘Mike the Engineer’ presents well, so much so that his last point may be all that the uninformed member will remember. The above post is screaming for an official PEF retort, not unlike those offered in the Communicator in the letters to the editor section, which convey professional, succinct, and most importantly accurate accounting of facts. A simple reminder to all that the 8 hour work day was won though political action is simple qualifier for those in need of justification for Union PAC. Such qualifier should then be driven home with a current, and where applicable, agency specific examples so as to ensure our members “get it”.