



Vanguard Newsletter

PSU - Organized for Public Officers Empowerment, Employment Security and Increased Public Services

PSU 97th Annual General Meeting

Our 97th Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held in the Culture Capital, Dangriga Town, on 31st May to 1st June. The Theme for this year's AGM is '**PSU- Organized for Public Officers Empowerment, Employment Security and Increased Public Services**'. The Opening Ceremony will be held in the evening on Friday 31st May . The Business Session will be held at Ecumenical College on Saturday 1st June. As per the PSU Constitution, Section 35, Election Rota System, please note that the vacant posts at this AGM will be President, Second Vice President, Secretary General, and two Councilors. Food and Transportation will be provided. As has become the tradition for the last few years, the AGM has also become a Family Event. Members are encouraged to invite their family members to attend the AGM. Come and be informed. Vote for the future of YOUR union.

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Finances & Financial Members

Over the past few years, a number of PSU members have realized that they are no longer Financial Members. Members are reminded to check their payslips to confirm that their monthly dues are being deducted. Ask your Finance Officer for a copy of your Salary Register. New Members who are just signing up can deposit their first month's dues to our Scotiabank Account (91595-9137124) and email a copy of that deposit to belizepsu@btl.net. For members who also want to make a payment to their Loan or Sagicor Insurance, please note the following account numbers: **91595-9138396 Loans** and **91595-9142147 Sagicor**. It has also been noted that some members are still

paying \$10.00 for dues. This \$10.00 doesn't cover the benefits of the union. It is recommended that members increase their dues deduction to \$15 or \$20 for increased benefits. A breakdown of dues is as follows:

\$10.00	\$15.00	\$20.00	
\$6.67	\$6.67	\$6.67	HQ Expenses
\$3.33	\$3.33	\$3.33	Branch Rebate
	\$1.00	\$2.00	Strike Fund
	\$2.00	\$2.00	Education Fund
	\$1.00	\$2.00	Death Fund
	\$1.00	\$2.00	Housing Fund
		\$2.00	Admin

Devotional

In the Book of Psalm chapter 69, we read of David lamenting to God on how bad his situation is. He goes to God with his problem and asks the Lord for help. We, public officers, are always faced with situations that appear to be judgement or condemnation; in some cases, they may be justified and in other cases, they are unjust. The writer David shows us how to go in supplication to God about unjust problems. Notice that David does not complain to his neighbour nor does he take it to a co-worker. David gives us a great example of taking our lamentation to God first. God's word in James 1:19 says be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger. Sometimes out of anger we just want to tell someone as soon as a problem arise, but David shows us to take our lamentations to God first.

Anger tends to magnify any situation, as oppose to bringing clarity, so take heed. In verse 22-29 David goes on to invoke God's wrath on those who grieve him. Look closely, and notice that David is not just angry about anything, but he is angry that the righteous are being accused falsely. The PSU serves to stand up for the righteous that are being accused unjustly. Are we truly standing up for those who are being accused unjustly? Are you standing up like David praying for righteousness to prevail or are we part of the unrighteousness that happens in the Government work place?

Today the Lord wants us to look inside, take your lamentations to God for the righteous. David ends this chapter with joyful praise in the assurance that God will vindicate him. The word assures us that God redeems righteousness. I am not righteous Lord, but you are righteous, clothe me in your righteousness. May the Lord give you ears to hear and eyes to see the truth in the Living Word, Amen.

Highlights - Belize Public Service Regulations (2014)

Public Officers are hereby reminded of the Employee Assistance Programme that is afforded to all Public Officer under the Belize Constitution (Public Service) Regulations, 2014, Regulation 206 (1) and (2).

Employee Assistance Programme.

206.(1) The Ministry shall institute an Employee Assistance Programme entailing a confidential framework to provide public officers with voluntary referral and counseling services on health and lifestyle issues which may have a negative impact on job performance including –

- (a) occupational health;
- (b) physical fitness;
- (c) sexually transmitted diseases;
- (d) domestic violence;
- (e) mental health;
- (f) stress management;
- (g) depression;
- (h) substance abuse;
- (i) violence in the workplace;
- (j) parenting skills;
- (k) life skills;
- (l) personal hygiene;
- (m) personal financial management.

(2) A **public officer** shall receive *prompt medical attention and treatment* that is available at any government health institution *without any cost* to that public officer.

(Public Officers are hereby reminded that such medical attention and treatment is limited to the public officer only and does not extend to family members who are not public officers.)

Website/App/Database

The Public Service Union of Belize (PSU) has contracted the services of Mr. Gabriel Casey, Owner of Belize Info Tech Computer Solutions, to develop an App, a Website and a Database for the PSU. An ad hoc Steering Committee has been created to assist and guide the Developer in the details of what we want for our website and app. The Database has already been created. The website and app will be launched and fully functional before the end of the year. If you'd like to join the committee or make any suggestions or input, please contact the National Treasurer, Shane Reneau, at nationaltreasurerpsu@gmail.com or psuvan-guard2019@gmail.com.

Objectives of PSU

- (1) to ensure the complete organization in the Union of all persons employed by the Government of Belize or any of its Statutory Bodies in a Civil capacity and such other persons as are described in Article (5) of this constitution;
- (2) to promote and protect the interest and welfare of its members including the obtaining and maintaining of just and proper rates of remuneration, hours of work and other conditions of employment;
- (3) to promote goodwill and harmony throughout the Public Service;
- (4) to uplift the status of the Public Service of Belize, the improvement and maintenance of efficiency in the service and contentment among members of the Union;
- (5) to regulate an effective bargaining body to negotiate on behalf of its members;
- (6) to regulate by amicable means wherever possible, the relations between and Government/ Management or between members and members;
- (7) to promote mutual respect and goodwill

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

In less than 7 days, the price of fuel increased by \$0.39 and \$0.40 cents respective for both regular and premium fuel in this country. (We do not do anything but absorb these prices)

It is also one of the busiest times of the year, when all Belizeans take to the roads within and outside of Belize and by extension pay the current price for fuel at the pumps.

The Government of Belize (GOB) needs to do something about this given these increases that can ensure a lasting solution to these spikes and swings in fuel prices that affect the price of all the goods and services in this country.

While looking at the fuel prices increases, we also need to take a look at the Tax Structure in Belize because this fuel tax is not helping any of us and it's affecting the quality of life of all of us in this country.

Greater efficiency of our fuel usage and vehicles that we can all afford that are more fuel efficient need more effort and work. This comes with certain changes in Government policies that will enable all of us to afford newer vehicles that are safer and more fuel efficient. What happens to flex vehicles and other options for solving this problem.

I am certain these have already been proposed and the Government is currently not doing anything to solve this problem. Something needs to give and we at PSU are requesting some solutions to this problem as soon as humanly possible, now.

I understand the needs of Government

for revenue but the Government of Belize (GOB) needs to spend our pennies a lot more effectively and more efficiently to ensure that some solutions can be implemented for the benefit of all of us.

I also understand that these increase does not affect Cabinet because they are driving Government vehicles and we pay the taxes to ensure that they can drive as much as they like without any consideration. Something needs to change in this equation given that, "he who feels it know it", and they are protected and immune from these increases.

The Ministry of Finance needs to publish a report on how fuel is being used by the entire Public Service including Cabinet. Also, an explanation to the Belizean people for us to understand why these increases are taking place on a regular basis and the taxes that being charges on all fuels including Butane.

We need to understand the taxes being charges on all fuels, regular, diesel, premium and butane. I am waiting to hear from the Ministry of Finance, especially the Financial Secretary. Once his report has been completed and shared with the Public, then we need to hear from the Minister of Finance on this issue.

Sincerely,

Death by Fuel

The Primary Mandates of the Public Service Union

The Public Service Union of Belize (PSU) plays a very pivotal role in the employment welfare of not only its Members, but ALL public officers. It influences the majority of lives of individuals who desire to become career public officers. PSU can educate potential public officers on the terms and conditions of the public service in order for them to be aware of their rights and the regulations that guide them. After they decide to join the Public Service and by extension PSU, PSU continues the education and protection of public officers. When public officers resign or retire and are pensionable, PSU ensures that public officers be compensated for their years of service to the people of Belize.

The Public Service Union therefore operates under the following main mandates:

- ◆ Addressing the grievances of public officers through departmental liaison officers, branch executives and the Industrial Relations Officer.
- ◆ Apart from nominating a representative to the Public Service Commission (PSC), the PSU sits on: the Joint Staff Relations Council, the Administrative and Accounts Posts Panel, the Public Service Reform Council, and the Human Resource Development Committee. The PSU's presence on these bodies ensures the protection of workers' rights and allows it to bargain for better terms and conditions of service for public officers.
- ◆ Lobbying for legislation and ratification of International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions through its affiliation with the (National Trade Union Congress of Belize (NTUCB). One important piece of legislation, which is geared to guarantee trade unions the right to collective bargaining with employers, is the Trade Unions and Employers' Organizations (Registration, Recognition and Status) Act of 2011.
- ◆ Safeguarding public officers by informing them about matters like health and safety and social security, which have the potential to adversely affect them.
- ◆ Salary increases and introduction and increase of allowances for both Permanently Established and Open Vote workers
- ◆ Ensuring eligibility for pension and gratuity.
- ◆ Development of grievance machinery for expediency.

The Union has always stressed the fact that it is not a political third party, and similarly has always called on government to respect the principles and processes of good industrial relations. The Union's involvement and interventions on behalf of its members are incalculable. The leadership of the PSU must ensure that these mandates remain the focus of the PSU for ALL public officers, whether they are Members or "potential" Members. The PSU must function as a non-political Union without fear or favour in ensuring that public officers are treated with respect and most of all FAIRPLAY!

Objectives of PSU ctd

amongst the various branches and districts in the Public Service of Belize, and to encourage loyalty and cooperation in the best interest of the Public Servants and the Public;

(8) to provide Trade Union Benefits for members;

(9) to promote the general improvement of Public Service;

(10) to promote legislation in the interest of its members;

(11) to further (financially or otherwise) the work or purpose of any Association or body having for its object the promotion of the interest of Government employees or Trade Unionism;

(12) to establish, carry-on, or participate (financially or otherwise), in the business of publishing any journal, book, pamphlet or publication or any undertakings (Industrial Business or otherwise) in the interest of and with the main purpose of furthering the interest of the Union.

(13) To establish, participate in, or hold shares in cooperative ventures or companies in the interest of and with the main purpose of furthering the interest of its members.

NOTICE BOARD

What's Happening, PSU?



4th May — Council of Management Meeting

6th - 12th May — Nurses Week

10th May— Mother's Day, celebrated on the 2nd Sunday of May

16th May— Branch Meeting (Cayo Branch)

22nd May— PSR Revision Working Session Workshop (BMP Branch)

29th May— PSR Revision Working Session Workshop (BMP Branch)

29th May— Branch Meeting (Belize Branch)

31st May— PSU Annual General Meeting Opening Ceremony, Dangriga Town Board;

1st June— PSU Annual General Meeting, Ecumenical College, Dangriga Town

We take this time to wish all Mothers a very Happy, Blessed and Enjoyable Mother's Day!

To our Nurses, you do the jobs no one else wants to do. Happy Nurses week to you all!

Where would we be without our Moms and Nurses?

We acknowledge you, we respect you, we thank you!

Message from the Acting Secretary General, Bro Berisford Codd Jr

Dear Comrades,

As the 2018-2019 PSU year winds down, it is now a good time to take a step back and reflect on the happenings of the year that leaves me hopeful for a brighter day for the Union. PSU AGMs always brings hope for a fresh start, with five executive members possibly being rotated out for new blood and more importantly new ideas. Last year's AGM brought on board four new members and the return of the "national hero" Bro Shane Reneau as Treasurer. Having ran uncontested for the post of Assistant Secretary General, I came in with a sense of purpose that I must help this year's iteration of PSU to deliver on the confidence showed by the general membership.

The first promising observation made throughout my first year was the vigour in which members of the Council of Management (COM) lobbied for the implementation of new policies and measures to revamp the PSU. Arguably the most important accomplishment in this regard is the passage of the PSU Financial Management Policy. This policy signals a commitment by PSU to ensure the financial sustainability of the organization to benefit workers for generations to come. In addition to the Financial Management Policy, substantial work has been done to prepare an Election Policy for both branch and national elections and the long awaited revision of the Constitution. While it does not seem likely that these additional works will be completed by the AGM, I remain optimistic that these outstanding documents will be completed before the middle of the new PSU Year.

Although new policies are important, they pale in comparison to having a more intimate connection with general membership. To bridge this gap, COM, with the blessing of general membership, has commissioned the assistance of Mr. Gabriel Casey to develop a website, database and mobile app for the PSU. The thinking behind this bold step in integrating technology into the Union, is that much of today's communication and interaction has gone virtual. Some of the interesting features being developed include online forms for registration, loans, sharing of information to branch chairs on grievances and mass notifications for PSU events (meetings, workshops, socials). Entering into the world of technology will usher in new life for PSU, who has often times struggled with engendering participation from its members who often fear victimization. While it will be a staple of PSU going forward, it will also signal to COM members that there is no excuse to not engage with members around the country, who will now be expecting to see our faces early and often in the new PSU year.

Thanks once again for the confidence bestowed in the COM brothers and sisters. The work is far from finished into building the Union that we want and need in these challenging times that we face. Our record is not without losses, but our resolve remains strong!

"PSU – Organized for Public Officers Empowerment, Employment Security and Increased Public Services"

Public Service Union of Belize

P.O. Box 458, Hilltop, Belmopan City, Belize,
C.A.

Internationally affiliated with PTTI, PSI and CPSA

REF: ADM/7/01/19 (04)

Dated: 17th April, 2019

PRESS RELEASE

The Public Service Union of Belize takes this opportunity to inform the general public on its position relating to an unfortunate sequence of events, currently circulating in the media, with regards to a grievance matter affecting some of our members employed at the Elections and Boundaries Department

The Union categorically confirms that it has received supporting documentation from the affected public officers and has responded to the Chief Elections Officer, on behalf of its members, refuting her baseless allegation of any form of misconduct i.e. *failure to carry out a directive and omitting applicants from the Register of Electors and Monthly Supplementary list in the Caribbean Shores Division by some of our members.*

The Union demands from the Chief Elections Officer to desist from publicly making unproven statements regarding any misconduct by our members without producing and providing documentary evidence to substantiate same. There is a disciplinary and grievance procedure that is clearly articulated in the Belize Constitution (Public Service) Regulations, 2014 that guides Public officers in addressing any form of alleged misconduct

Based on the credible information and documentation within the Union possession we remain adamant and satisfied that the respective public officers did comply with established policies and directives issued. Additionally, it specifically confirms and provides reassurance that the said Registering Officers were adhering to instructions issued by the management of the Elections and Boundaries Department. It will be instructive to note that management had circulated correspondences stating and advising Registering Officers that they **should disallow** all *applicants whose name could not be verified at the Vital Statistics Unit or Immigration Department on the grounds that documentation on their Nationality cannot be verified.* They further instructed that a *Notice of Disallowance Form No. 7 should be attached to the disallowance letter encouraging the person to bring in their relevant document as proof of citizenship and therefore to reapply.*

In view of such instruction, Registering Officers had no difficulty in adhering and complying hence there is no way that the officers, so unjustly implicated, could be deemed as purposefully omitting applicants from the Register of Electors and Monthly Supplementary list. The Union hereby reminds the Chief Elections Officer that the professionalism of Public Officers in the election process has always been of the highest standard. Therefore, the PSU will not sit idly by and allow officers to be victimized, especially if such officers are carrying out their duties in strict accordance with established policies, procedures and legally established directives.

To this end the Union unreservedly endorses our Public Officers position and decision not to follow any illegal instruction to place applicants on any register who did not meet the qualifying re- registration conditions. On the contrary, the Union stands ready to offer all its support and solidarity to our public officers, in this instant case our affected members, not to adhere to same since it could only result in their employment status severely impaired and resultant imprisonment.

It is also interesting to note and the Union hereby denounce the apparent trend in the de-meaning treatment of Public Officers, as second-rate and with outright disrespect by certain Heads of Department. Consequently, the Union specifically states that it is aware and very familiar with the continuous interference and threats by political operatives within various Ministries and Departments resulting in the transfer of various Public Officers by virtue of standing up for what is right, value their integrity and function within the code of conduct of the public service regulations.

It is in the spirit of the principles of natural justice, adherence to the laws governing the re- registration of elector's process, and supporting public officers to ensure good governance of the nation's public administrative affairs that we extend the Union's position on this particular unfortunate matter.

The Public Service Union hereby reassures its members that the Union makes us strong and through its established grievance procedure, the Union shall ensure justice for all its members as we continue to transform misery and despair into hope and progress.

"SOLIDARITY FOREVER"

END



Death Fund Policy & Benefit

PSU - MEMO # 1 OF 2015

FROM: SECRETARY GENERAL PSU

TO: CHAIRPERSONS/PSU BRANCHES

SUBJECT: DEATH FUND POLICY AND BENEFIT

January 15th, 2015

CONTRIBUTION: *The funds for the Death Fund will be contributed by paying members of the union who are paying twenty (20) dollars and fifteen (15) dollars.*

Benefits: Each member who pays \$1.00 per month to the death fund (those members paying \$15.00) will be able to claim a sum of \$200.00 up to two times upon the death of a close relative (parent, sister/brother, child, spouse). Upon the death of the paying member, his/her beneficiary will receive \$600.00. The total death benefit of a member paying \$15.00 is \$1,000.00. To qualify for death benefit, the member must have been paying for at least six (6) months.

Each member who pays \$2.00 per month to the death fund (those members paying \$20.00) will be able to claim a sum of \$300.00 up to three times upon the death of a close relative (parent, sister/brother, child, spouse). Upon the death of the paying member, his/her beneficiary will receive \$1,100.00. The total death benefit of a member paying \$20.00 is \$2,000.00. To qualify for death benefit, the member must have been paying for at least six (6) months.

When making claim the below are required for claim to be honored:

- ⇒ At time of death of family/member and claim application for (Member, Parent, Siblings, Child, Spouse) The member needs to be a financial paying member to the Union with the updated dues of \$15.00 and \$20.00.
- ⇒ Claim needs to be submitted to PSU Headquarters within 90 days of the deceased.
- ⇒ Copy of the Medical Certificate of causes of death having the medical stamp.
- ⇒ A copy of the Social Security Card of member placing claim.

PSU Past Events



May 1st, 2019

Happy Labour Day!

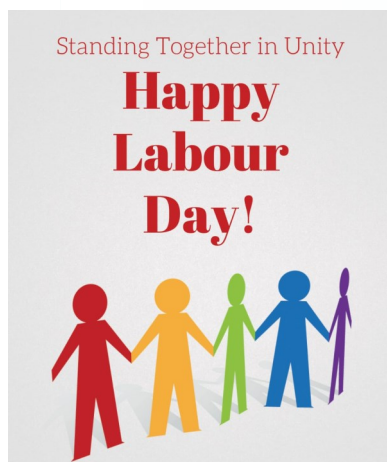
Labour Day is an annual holiday to celebrate the achievements of workers. Labour Day has its origins in the labour union movement, specifically the eight-hour day movement, which advocated eight hours for work, eight hours for recreation, and eight hours for rest.

For most countries, Labour Day is synonymous with, or linked with, International Workers' Day, which occurs on 1 May. For other countries, Labour Day is celebrated on a different date, often one with special significance for the labour movement in that country. Labour Day is a public holiday in many countries.

International Workers' Day, also known as Workers' Day, Labour Day in some countries and often referred to as May Day, is a celebration of labourers and the working classes that is promoted by the international labour movement which occurs every year on May Day (1 May), an ancient European spring festival.

The date was chosen by a pan-national organization of socialist and communist political parties to commemorate the Haymarket affair, which occurred in Chicago on 4 May 1886. The 1904 Sixth Conference of the Second International, called on "all Social Democratic Party organisations and trade unions of all countries to demonstrate energetically on the First of May for the legal establishment of the 8-hour day, for the class demands of the proletariat, and for universal peace."

Source: www.wikipedia.com



Articles/Pictures

Send your articles and/or pictures to be included in the monthly Vanguard by the 15th of each month to email: psuvanguard2019@gmail.com .

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psuvanguard2019@gmail.com

