

# On Your Side: Recent Council 2 Contract Wins

Council 2 is on your side fighting for higher wages, better benefits, and strong contracts for its members. Even as the pandemic rages on, Council 2 will continue to fight for the best interests of city and county employees. Some recent wins include:

**Pierce County Wastewater, Local 120-W:** Council 2’s bargaining team went to the table in mid-2019, as Jason Main, Mark Newport, and Abbie Zulock worked hard for many months, bargaining with a County whose bargaining style is to say ‘no’ rather than work to come to the middle or compromise on issues. The bargaining season dragged on, with threats that included denying retroactive COLAs to members if a deal wasn’t settled in January, 2020.

Union members, with resounding confidence, voted “NO” on what was thought to be the best and final agreement.

So, the Council 2 team worked with a coalition of other Pierce County Unions to put pressure on the County, went back to the table, and were able to secure pay equity for our Maintenance Workers – a high priority in this contract negotiation season. Members approved the offer, and were able to do so in the nick of time without losing retroactive COLAs and without compromising the wins of this contract by bargaining through the pandemic.

**Skagit Transit, Local 176-T:** Following months of negotiations between Local 176-T and Skagit Transit, a new contract has been ratified and executed. This new CBA was reached following extensive meetings between the Local 176-T negotiating team and Skagit Transit management over several days of negotiations, which led to PERC mediation. Following two rounds of the PERC mediation the parties arrived at a tentative agreement, now enacted. This new CBA includes 2% COLA in 2020, 2021, and 2022; \$500 VEBA for all three years, and full time health insurance benefits for all members.

**Tacoma Public Library, Local 120-TPL:** Council 2’s bargaining team worked collaboratively with the new administration in Tacoma Public Library during this contract negotiation season. Council 2 highlighted important issues facing its members: lack of robust staffing for coverage when members are out on leave, lack of bargained language around temporary promotion setups (called ‘Acting Appointments’ by the library), and the dismal wages for Pages in the library.

Council 2 and management worked through many of the issues — in manners both friendly and sometimes ferocious — earning three key wins at the table:

- The creation of a substitute pool, not to replace full time employees, that will ensure coverage in case of member absences from the workplace;
- Bargained language for acting appointments, since they impact wages, benefits, and working conditions;
- A signed letter of agreement to ensure that Pages stay above minimum wage and an additional step on their wage scale

Council 2 also won healthy COLAs for the Tacoma Public Library members, which ensures that they can maintain some economic security in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.



L to R: Elijah Morgan - 1857, Julia Singer - 1652 R, Amrit Basra - 21 DC, Fred Pfeistner 2084 CASA, King County Executive Dow Constantine, Suzette Dickerson, Jason Canfield - 2084 SC, Yvonne Clement-Smith - 2084 SC, Carrie Rolph - 1857, Michael Garcia - 1857



**Local 1619, Port Angeles City Employees:** Members attended and spoke at a City Council meeting to encourage support for fully funding the Union’s proposals for wage increases. Membership then ratified the CBA last October. (PC: Aaron Cole)



**Local 1262, Cowlitz County Courthouse:** Members arrived to work early to greet their County Commissioners during contract negotiations, show support for their negotiations team, and bring attention to contract proposals. The CBA was ratified by the Union last month. (PC: Rich Johnson)



Ed Whalen, a Personal Recognizant Investigator for the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention, Local 21AD, shows off his Council 2 “Union Strong” facemask. Even in a pandemic — Council 2 members are still showing their union pride!

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# County and City Employee

WASHINGTON STATE COUNCIL OF COUNTY AND CITY EMPLOYEES — AFSCME AFL-CIO

# Council 2 Workers Step Up During COVID-19 Pandemic

## Spokane County Corrections employees lead the way

**SPokane** – Council 2 workers across Washington and Idaho are keeping local government moving during the COVID-19 pandemic. Whether working from home or adopting new safety precautions, workers are putting community first during this trying time. One important example are employees at the Spokane County Jail, who have successfully balanced their work with public health recommendations and personal safety.

As of early May, not a single employee or inmate at the Spokane County Jail had been diagnosed with COVID-19 — a testament to the proactive and collaborative leadership of its employees and Council 2.

After social distancing requirements were announced, workers at the jail discussed them with management — knowing it was a tough task to enforce six foot distancing, among other requirements, in an overcrowded jail. The jail houses inmates waiting for trial in Spokane County, federal inmates awaiting trial, and some state inmates, and also serves as a transfer hub, meaning there were about 1000 inmates at the time of the initial statewide COVID-19 outbreak.

Fred Bozanich, Chief Shop Steward at Local 492 and Council 2 Executive Board Member, said that their efforts have been successful because employees were collaborative and forward thinking, working together not just with management, but “with prosecutors, defenders, and judges” to reduce the jail population down to about 600 inmates, and implementing strong safety measures to protect employees and inmates both.

While it took time to work out a system that addressed incoming flow and who could be moved from jail, Council 2 prioritized safety of the staff, with special consideration

for employees and workers who are considered high risk for COVID-19.

And, when Spokane County Commissioners opposed necessary safety precautions, along with practical steps to keep employees and inmates safe, Council 2 contacted other elected officials including the Governor, Attorney General, and members of Congress, leading the County Commissioners to reverse their stance.

Employees entering the jail go through a screening process, where screeners, who wear goggles, N95 masks, gloves, and other forms of PPE, use no contact thermometers and ask questions recommended by the CDC to determine potential symptoms. Because of this effort, no employees or inmates have been diagnosed with COVID-19.

And while management initially pushed for greatly reduced staffing, Council 2 worked to develop a plan that would ensure full staffing to begin and phased levels of decreased staffing if needed. Because of the safety precautions employees have taken, there has been no need to move beyond the first phase — full staffing.

Staff is still showing up in force, with no noticeable decline in attendance, due to the workers strong commitment to their job and because of a trust in the safety process that was developed with their input — a model for other departments facing similar situations.

COVID-19 has introduced new challenges, such as keeping communication strong when roll calls are impractical, as well as inmate specific issues like maintaining hygiene, reassuring inmates that their health will be protected, and improving engagement even as visitation is not allowed.

While some other correctional

facilities have faced serious morale issues, Spokane has succeeded in actually improving morale for inmates at the facility, Bozanich said. With fewer inmates, Council 2 members have successfully kept inmates from getting sick, implementing isolation precautions for new inmates, and also running the facility “like it was designed” with a lower inmate population — giving remaining inmates greater freedom within the jail.

Bozanich says that jail employees have risen to the challenge, “The commitment by all the union members — including our sergeants and lieutenants — everyone has really worked for everybody’s safety, and done the best they can to protect one another and the people that we care for.”

The jail will likely take lessons from the COVID-19 outbreak. At a minimum, better hygiene and requirements for inmates, derived from experience as employees have doubled their sanitation efforts and are using better materials and more effective cleaning solvents. Additionally, the jail will be better prepared for future outbreaks or crises, with procedures in place and a clear understanding that staff health must be prioritized in tandem with inmates.

Bozanich also thanked Council 2 for helping ensure safe and effective procedures, “Without Council 2’s support and insight, I don’t know that we would have been as successful as we were in achieving the benefits we were able to secure for everyone in uniform.”



Local 492 members Allison Gladhart (L) screening Local 492’s Secretary Treasurer Tom Frantz (R)

19th Annual Council 2 Scholarship Golf Tournament

WHEN: October 2, 2020 at 12pm

WHERE: Harbour Pointe Golf Club, Mukilteo, WA

FORMAT: Get your four-some together for a scramble tournament.

COST: Member, spouse or dependent of member: \$150.00 | Guest: \$175.00

Contact Jayme Graham (jayg@council2.com) to sign up!

Visit [Council2.com/Events](http://Council2.com/Events) for more info!

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# Getting Through COVID-19



**CHRIS DUGOVICH**

It's starting to look like deja vu all over again — except maybe worse than the Great Recession of 2008 and 2009. This time, it wasn't the greed of Wall Street that pushed us into this crisis, though it's true that practices like stock buybacks and wealth disparities have made the situation worse for working families and vulnerable people. This pandemic is damaging our health and wellbeing in ways not seen since the Great Depression.

## Letter from the President

As of the date of this newsletter, we are holding our own with almost all of our membership in paid status. A large portion of our membership — over 180 jurisdictions — are working from home. Those members determined to be essential include correctional officers and road and street maintenance crews across the state.

The number one priority is to do our best to make sure that if you are in an essential position that your work environment is as safe as possible. As workers return under modified new rules, we will need to make sure our City Halls and Courthouses are well stocked with protective equipment.

Overall, prior to the official shutdown in mid-March, we found that most city and county jurisdictions had fairly healthy fund balances going into this COVID-19 pandemic. Washington's economy was moving along at a good pace and revenue in terms of specifically sales tax was better than expected. Then it stopped!

It's extremely likely that if the jurisdictions where you are employed are saying they face critical financial shortfalls, it's because they had problems that they never dealt with prior to the COVID-19 crisis.

The City of Everett, where Council 2 is headquartered, is clearly in this category. In this case, the situation is made worse because the city never dealt with their structural financial problems. Now, using the COVID-19 crisis as a cover, they have laid off 45 of our members at the Library and Parks and Recreation. Additionally, 62 people are required to take a 6 to 8-week furlough (work days without pay), though thankfully they maintain health insurance benefits.

The scapegoating behavior of Mayor Cassie Franklin and the almost nonexistent oversight by the Everett City Council is an embarrassment; Everett had years to address their underlying issues, and now our members are paying the price. Adding insult to injury, the police and fire department did not receive any cuts! That is not right — any cuts need to be across the board.

We learned in the late 2000's that the most important thing during a recession is to be here when it's over. Meaning we must save jobs. It's unconscionable to lay people off in this environment where the loss of health care coverage could be devastating.

While not to the same degree as Everett, there are a dozen or so jurisdictions that have also laid off our members across the state. We are demanding any jurisdictions who voice budgetary concerns be upfront and credible with their numbers. We must do our best to keep individuals in paid status with full benefit packages.

And, if in the coming months cuts are necessary in a jurisdiction, we will do everything possible to make sure the employer is justified in their request, and we will negotiate to minimize any impact on our members who provide these needed public services.

Our members are courageously continuing to work through this pandemic, serving the communities we call home. Council 2 is here for you in these challenging times. Only by sticking together will we make it through this pandemic.

# Telecommuting Allows Members to Continue to Provide Public Services

By Miguel Mora

On March 23rd, Governor Jay Inslee issued a stay at home order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This decision has greatly impacted the way that Council 2 members have performed work and provided services to their communities.

Shifting towards remote work and telecommuting creates new and difficult challenges, but in Snohomish County, some departments were already prepared.

Snohomish County's Planning and Development Services (PDS) began preparing for transition towards telecommuting in September 2018 as the department shifted to 100% electronic work for permitting and land use process. "Because there was no official countywide policies or operating guidelines at that time, the PDS leadership team partnered with AFSCME during our monthly labor management meetings to collaboratively work on a Work from Home pilot," PDS Director Barb Mock said in a statement.

Sean Hare, President of Local 109E, which represents the members of the Snohomish County PDS Department, described the process as collaborative and felt the initial telecommuting policy was established to "support the needs of the members," while still allowing for high quality public services to be delivered.

Having a proactive approach toward telecommuting allowed PDS to make a quick transition following Governor Inslee's stay at home order. "Leveraging the experience and lessons learned from the joint pilot project, PDS was able to deploy nearly 95% percent of its 132 employees from home in only eight days," Mock said.

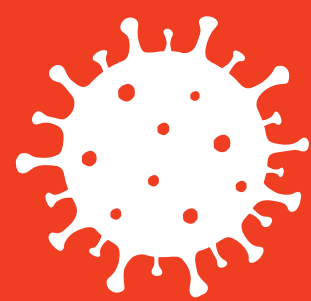
Telecommuting is not without drawbacks, especially during this pandemic. Amy Overland, Vice-President of Local 109E and an employee in the Snohomish County PDS noted, "I miss my coworkers. I miss people in general," but also highlighted the benefits of not spending time on crowded freeways.

Mock added, "Our staff have been providing a high level of service for the past six weeks, comparable to our service levels before the pandemic. We are accepting applications, collecting fees, and processing permits all on-line. In some cases, we have a higher level of service because our creative employees found a way to port our switchboard to their homes. As a result, we are not missing as many calls now. All customer service calls, public records requests, and business meetings are being conducted using various technology solutions. Even our inspectors are using video calls to perform inspections in occupied buildings."

Hare said that the pro-active discussions around telecommuting allowed the department to "better weather the impacts of COVID to continue to allow people to work and be productive for the public."

"The Work from Home pilot we implemented with our employees, supervisors and union over 18 months before the pandemic paved the way for our success this year," said Mock.

Telecommuting is a concept that faces some resistance from employers that make presumptions about loss of productivity and accountability, but over time, our members of Council 2 are coming together to refute those stereotypes and continue providing great public service.



## COVID-19 Resources

Please visit [Council2.com](http://Council2.com) to find the latest information on COVID-19 and learn more about resources available for you and your family.



# Chris Dugovich Re-elected to an Eighth, 4-year Term as Council 2 President

*17,000 member union reaffirms leadership of longstanding executive team's approach and strategy for growth and stability*

In early February, Chris Dugovich, President and Executive Director of the Washington State Council of County and City Employees, AFSCME Council 2 AFL-CIO, was re-elected to an unprecedented 8th, four-year term as leader of the 17,000-member union representing county and city employees throughout the State of Washington.

The convention, attended by over 200 members representing nearly all of the union's 180 locals, voted by near-acclimation for Dugovich. Vice President Ron Fredin and Secretary Treasurer Kathleen McConnell were retained without opposition.

Throughout Dugovich's tenure — among the longest of any labor leader on the West Coast — Council 2 has grown in both membership and financial strength, becoming one of the most stable unions in the region despite attacks from anti-union ideologues and a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling that sought to undermine the strength of public sector unions.



Dugovich noted his pride that Council 2 dues are less than half of many other comparable unions, reflecting a focus on member services and careful management of union finances.

"I am proud to continue working on behalf of the men and women of our union," said Dugovich. "Our philosophy has always been to provide value and strong support for our members, delivering on wage and benefits, pension and other basics while never giving in to bullying tactics by anti-union special interests."

Dugovich looks forward to the coming term to continue building a strong foundation for organizing and worker rights in a changing landscape for working families and unions.

"I look forward to the coming term as we continue mentoring a new generation of leaders, and a stronger organization for working families in our state," said Dugovich.

# Council 2 Is Fighting for Your Privacy



## An Update from General Counsel Ed Stemler

An array of unions, including Council 2, brought a lawsuit to prevent the Dept. of Retirement Services, Office of Financial Management and other public employers from giving certain personal information about public workers to the anti-union 'Freedom Foundation.'

The Freedom Foundation has been using public disclosure requests to collect loads of information about all public employees in Washington. They are particularly interested in pensions — their goal is to eliminate your pension as a public employee.

Beyond details of your pension and wages, information the Freedom Foundation has requested include personal information about you, your birth date, your work location, and more that you may not be comfortable sharing.

A Thurston County judge ordered the employers not to respond to the Freedom Foundation request until employees and their unions have a chance to identify individuals who may qualify for a very narrow exemption in the public disclosure law.

Pursuant to court order, on April 21, we provided a list of employees who let Council 2 know they may qualify for an exemption. These include vulnerable members, such as victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, whose private information should be protected from release.

Further, Council 2 also fought in the Legislature to modify the Public Disclosure Act to provide additional protections for public employee privacy. HB1888, which overwhelmingly passed this legislative session, provides all public employees the same protection previously granted to law enforcement, meaning only day of birth but not month or year can be released to public requestors.

Unfortunately, there is still more work to do — our state has a public disclosure law that fails to find the



## Stay Connected

Have a story to share or want to learn more about what members of Council 2 are up to?

Visit our website to stay informed on the most current trainings, events, political action, and what members are up to in their communities.

[www.Council2.com](http://www.Council2.com)



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## COUNTY AND CITY EMPLOYEE

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