On The Move
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# Breaking News

A whistleblower has exposed another SEPTA scandal. This one involves SEPTA's welder certification program. It turns out that the guy in charge of certifying welders, when they get hired and at the expiration of their certification, has been working without a license to certify welders since 2005. Think about that for a second, *the guy certifying welders is not certified to do so*.

Now here's the kicker. Following the exposure of this fraud, do you think SEPTA fired the culprit for ***falsifying*** numerous welder certification certificates? **No, they promoted him!!**

How could this happen? Let's starts at the top. Stephanie Deiger is SEPTA's Chief Officer for hiring and training. She has held the position since around 2020. Yet she failed to establish the means to verify whether her chief Welding Instructor, Thurman Hogan, was certified to certify SEPTA welders. And when the facts came out, she had a hand in promoting him instead of firing him. Deiger previously held the position of Chief Labor Relations Officer. In that job, she helped fire many TWU members for falsification.

Next, we have Thurman Hogan, the instructor who failed to maintain his license to certify welders when it expired in 2005. Bear in mind, this was not an oversight on his part. A certified welder instructor uses an American Welding Society ("AWS") red stamp with their name and license number to verify that they have tested and qualified welders in training to perform this safety sensitive job. When Hogan certified those under his tutelage, he signed his name, vouching that he was a Certified Welding Instructor, but with no stamp, or active license number. In other words, every time Hogan signed his name as a "Certified Welding Instructor," he knowingly committed a fraud. But as it turns out, that's the way you get promoted at SEPTA.

## Sorry to say but SEPTA is a hotbed of scandals

The scandal in SEPTA's welding school follows numerous financial scandals, committed by those at the top of SEPTA's managerial food chain, many involving the blatant misuse of public money.

- Over a period of years, managers in the Buildings Department **stole** hundreds of thousands of dollars by paying off venders to process falsified credit card purchases in SEPTA's name. The ringleaders of this scandal wound up in jail, but it took SEPTA years to figure out what was going on.

• In another case, the manager in charge of maintaining the Authority's video equipment was indicted in a bribery and extortion scheme involving his passing of inside information that enabled a corrupt vender to win bids for what should have been Local 234 work.

• As reported in the Inquirer, some highly placed SEPTA managers out of favor at the top, received Golden Parachute Agreements instead of having their employment terminated. Under these agreements, SEPTA paid their salaries and benefits for a time in exchange for them walking away from the job amicably. Some got other jobs, but still received big paychecks and benefits from SEPTA, a total waste of taxpayer money.

• Similarly, SEPTA is spending millions on outside contractors to perform work that should be performed in-house. Take the "Bus Revolution" for example. The consultants for this job got paid big bucks to map out a new bus network, but it's taken in-house employees to address the widespread public criticism over the consultant's proposal.

• SEPTA contracts for the repair of vehicles and equipment are a unnecessary drain of taxpayer funds and a slap in the face of our members. Rather than perform the work in-house, SEPTA uses semi-skilled workers who have a hard time getting the work right, so we wind up doing the rework.

• In the King of Prussia rail debacle, SEPTA doled out over $40 million to a contractor to perform a feasibility study that could have and should have been done in-house. In the end, SEPTA abandoned the project because they couldn't get the funds for a rail line to King of Prussia.

• And let's not forget about the elimination of tokens and the introduction of a key-card system that failed to deliver from day one, while losing a countless number of riders in the process.

These are just a few examples of managerial incompetence at SEPTA. If these failings had occurred in a for-profit business, those responsible would have been long gone. At SEPTA, those responsible get promoted and receive huge pay increases to boot.

## Jumping off the fiscal cliff

SEPTA is telling anyone who will listen that the Authority can't afford wage and benefit increases for frontline workers because SEPTA is supposedly at the edge of a "fiscal cliff." Yet on the eve of contract negotiations with Local 234, the SEPTA Board approved a $75,000 (21%) raise for the General Manager. Adding insult to injury, the guy sitting across from us at the bargaining table got a $30,000 (20%) raise, yet he is crying poor when it comes to the economic well-being of our members. Let's get real.

If SEPTA refuses to address Local 234's demands for a just and fair contract, the unnecessary strike that follows might prove to be the straw that breaks management's back.

# We Must and We Will