

MINUTES OF THE WASHTECH GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
April 15, 2009, 6:00 PM
Minutes taken by Brian Roberts, Secretary

I. Call to Order

President Les French called the meeting to order. There was no call for a quorum count, and therefore the presence of a quorum was assumed.

II. Reading of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of 1/7/09 were read and approved.

III. Officer/Chair Reports

President's Report (Les French)

Les reported that the subsidy we get from CWA International has been canceled, which results in a \$116,000 per year shortfall in our income. The effect on us has been immediate: we had to let one staff person go, and we are looking at alternatives to our present rental arrangement in an effort to cut costs.

International explained the move by saying that its own income has gone down because of the current recession.

However, said Les, International is going to hire 500 additional organizers across the nation, and they may allocate one to us to help offset our loss.

Treasurer's Report (Mitchell McMurry)

Mitchell presented the report of the budget year to date. By cutting payroll, we saved about \$100,000 over a year. Our expenditures are running well under budget because we simply do not have, and are not going to get, the funds to implement everything we planned.

Regarding the year ahead, he noted that CWA International would like us to continue our organizing efforts on the AT&T Network Operations Center (NOC) and also start an effort to organize IDEARC. They have asked us to be on the creditors' oversight committee for the local branches of IDEARC in that company's bankruptcy action. We don't have funds to hire an organizer, so we expect that, if International is serious about this, the organizer's salary will be paid either by them or by District 7.

Mitchell will attend the CWA International Convention representing our financial arm.

Legislative Committee Report

Les announced that Curt Eidem had resigned as chair of this committee because he left his job at AT&T. He was also our delegate to the Snohomish County Labor Council, so he will have to be replaced in that post, as well as being replaced as Legislative Conference delegate.

Les said that he will extend his presence at the International Convention another 1.5 days so that he can act as our delegate to the Legislative Convention. As such, he will focus on the EFCA and health care. He will also visit legislators on The Hill as part of the CESO (Council of Engineers and Scientists Organizations), of which WashTech is a member.

Membership Committee Report

Les presented the chart of statistics for March, prepared by committee member Dan Gillespie, showing a slight uptick in overall membership. As requested last month, the chart gave the previous figures for comparison and distinguished members from fee payers.

The current figures for AT&T were left out because (as Jim Burdick explained it) there's a 2-month delay in our getting the information. Paul Colvin asked if the figures could be estimated, because the blank box requires explanation.

Technology Committee Report (Rennie Sawade, Chair)

Rennie reported that we got our name on the Seattle Post Globe web site because of Rennie's efforts in helping them set it up. Post Globe is composed of laid-off Seattle Post-Intelligencer staff who believe there is a place in Seattle for independent, non-corporate-owned news. They asked Les for technical help, and Rennie offered use of our server. Statistics for the opening day of the site (yesterday) showed 600,000 hits. They are using 8 gigabytes of our bandwidth; however, we have unlimited bandwidth.

Education Committee Report

Les announced that the Planning Committee has selected Ian Jacobson to chair the Education Committee for the remainder of the 3-year term.

Vice President Report (Jim Burdick)

Jim talked about the contract renewal bonus of AT&T. He said we have a schedule for payment of the bonus and should post it on the bulletin boards. Chief Steward Sharon Kent asked if the bonus would be paid by separate check. There was also a question whether employees who have terminated since the renewal date would also get the bonus. Jim said he would research these questions.

IV. Resolutions

Action: There being no objection from the membership, the appointment of Ian Jacobson as Education Committee chair was ratified by consensus.

V. New Business

We are allowed 3 delegates to the CWA National Convention, June 22-24. Les French, by virtue of being our president, is one delegates. Election of the other 2 delegates was set for this General Membership meeting, as the membership was advised. There were two nominations from the floor: Jim Burdick nominated Anna Bloomquist, and Anna nominated Jim. Paul Colvin moved that we conduct the election by acclamation, and Anna seconded.

Action: The motion passed unanimously, and the election was held. Jim Burdick and Anna Bloomquist will be WashTech delegates to the CWA National Convention, June 22-24..

VI. Good of the Order

There was general discussion about the future of this local. Les said we are looking for ways to increase membership and are continuing the campaign to organize the NOC. CWA, as part of its push to get the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) passed, is providing SIF funds to train volunteers from the collective bargaining units on how to organize. CWA International has also been talking to us about getting us an organizer in anticipation of EFCA being passed. Les said he would contribute 25 percent of his time to organizing.

There was discussion about the original focus of WashTech: organizing temp workers. Paul Colvin noted that Microsoft's workforce now is about 50 percent temps; and that the temp agencies are reducing the temps' pay rates. One abuse is billing the customer a higher rate for overtime but paying straight time to the temp. Paul thought Microsoft would be neutral and would not interfere if we try to organize its temps. Les replied that the biggest difficult in such an effort is defining the business unit. Paul suggested considering the temp agency as the business unit.

VII. Adjournment

Paul moved for adjournment, and Rennie seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.