

MINUTES OF THE WASHTECH PLANNING COUNCIL (PC)  
January 13, 2009, 6:30 PM

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**Call to Order**

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The meeting was called to order by Rick Saling, Executive Vice President. Present were Les French, Jim Burdick, Brian Roberts, Curt Eidem, Mitchell McMurry, Bill Montgomery, and Rennie Sawade. Absent were Emily Baty, Anna Bloomquist, and BJ Oriley.

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**Reading of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

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The minutes of 12/16/08 were read and approved with two corrections:

- On p. 1, change "budget overrun" to "budget underrun."
- On p. 2, change the Resolution under "Membership Committee Report" to "The PC referred the question of lowering the threshold for electing an At-Large VP to the Membership Committee to study."

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**President's Report (Les French)**

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Les provided an update on the officer training in late January, which he had said he wanted to limit to 3 persons. However, our subsidy from CWA International came through for January and February, with the result that our cash flow was better than he previously thought. He tentatively signed up 5 officers to participate: himself, Jim, Brian, Bill, and Anna. He moved that the PC approve spending up to \$6500 for the purpose, broken down as follows:

- Registration \$750 (5 persons @ \$150)
- Lodging \$2250 (3 rooms @ \$150/night for 5 nights)
- Per diem \$1125 (5 persons, 4½ days @ \$50 per day)
- Rental of minivan \$450 plus \$30 for gasoline
- Parking \$140 (5 nights at \$28 per night)
- Lost-time wages \$1536 (4 persons, 8 hours X 3 days @ \$16/hr average)
- Miscellaneous \$219

**Action:** The PC passed the motion to spend up to \$6500 for the officer training, to take place in Portland, OR, Jan. 20-25, 2009.

Les said the CWA District 7 conference would be in Denver, Colorado, March 29 through 31. He estimated we can send 7 persons at an expense of \$4500, taking it out of our conventions/conferences budget of \$17,000 for the year. Les said he was especially concerned to see attendance by the AT&T chief steward and the AT&T CBU Vice Presidents. After some discussion, Treasurer Mitchell McMurry moved that we authorize a \$5200 cap for this purpose and have no extraordinary expenses that would cause us to go beyond our \$17,000 conventions/conferences budget.

**Action:** The PC passed the motion to authorize a \$5200 cap for the District 7 conference and to keep within our \$17,000 conventions/conferences budget.

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**Finance Committee Report (Mitchell McMurry, Treasurer)**

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Mitchell presented his report for December, showing fiscal year-to-date income (as of 12/31/2008) of \$56,500 and expenditures of \$77,500, for an overage of \$21,000. We had budgeted \$97,000. There was \$23,000 in our checking account.

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**Membership Committee Report (BJ Oriley, Chair)**

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BJ was not present. There was no report on the issue of lowering the threshold for electing an At-Large VP.

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**Communications Committee Report**

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The committee chair, Mitch Miller, has resigned, citing personal reasons.

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**Technology Committee Report (Rennie Sawade, Chair)**

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Rennie reported that he has been working with staff member Dan Gillespie to select a new telephone system; a voiceover IT system is being considered. Les said that a consultant has looked at our needs, but there's no resolution yet. The Newspaper Guild has discussed sharing a system with us to save costs.

Les said that if we remain in our present building, we must use the limited options provided by Qwest. Rennie said we have only a T1 line here, and it may not be able to handle a big voice system. He has inquired about getting cable, but the cost is very high because no cable currently runs to this building.

Rennie reported that he put a certificate on our Dover server, and the popups have been eliminated.

Jim said he has problems getting e-mails and would like to use his home e-mail address. Les replied that it can be set up that way. Rennie said he has asked the general membership to e-mail him about any problems they have in getting e-mail from WashTech.

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**Legislative Committee Report (Curt Eidem, Chair)**

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Curt said he is going to meet with our lobbyist Gail Love in Olympia. The Washington Legislature has passed the Worker Privacy Act, and at the federal level both senators and all our representatives, except Dave Reichert, are behind the Employee Free Choice Act.

The King County Labor Council supports the recently announced earth tunnel, replacing the Alaskan Way Viaduct, as a public works project.

Curt noted that all new hires in the AT&T bargaining unit after 1/1/09 are on the 20% medical plan (that is, they pay 20% of the total cost) as opposed to the 11% plan provided to those hired earlier. Les commented that medical coverage gets more expensive each year and can escalate if costs skyrocket. Mitchell said that CWA must wait for the company's definition of plan terms before we can come up with our own proposed numbers.

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## AT&T CBU Vice President's Report (Bill Montgomery)

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Bill said he would have pictures of the officers and stewards up on the bulletin boards by the end of the month, secured in a way that makes it difficult to remove them. There has been a problem in the past with them being taken down. Mitchell recommended making specific stewards responsible for specific bulletin boards and telling the members who is the point of contact for each board. Bill said he'd do that.

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### Old Business

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The strike authorization ballots will be mailed 1/27 and are due back on 2/4. We must report the outcome to CWA National the same day. Jim said a lot of people are very worried about a strike already. Mitch asked how we are going to publicize what the strike vote means, e.g., using the press. Les replied that the negotiating team may not want us to talk to the press. Bill noted that we need to be ready to counter management's propaganda.

Curt asked if there'd be an advantage to having other unions rally in front to show support. Les thought that was worth looking into.

Regarding the Communications Committee post, the PC is looking for someone to replace Mitch Miller. Les said we need to broaden the search. Mitchell recommended having Rennie chair both this and the Technology Committee. Rick noted that all our committee descriptions need to be revamped.

Bill said we may have a similar problem with the Membership Committee. Les replied that this is a very complex committee and needs to be chaired by a strong person.

Mitch moved that we table this issue pending Les's recommendations.

**Action:**

- The PC voted to table the issue of committee chair replacements pending Les's recommendations.

Brian has not yet had the opportunity to review the CWA UOPM for guidance on the quorum question, or to make first drafts of officer's job descriptions. The officers training of Jan. 20-25 is expected to provide considerable guidance on these matters.

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### New Business

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Curt moved that we use Robert's Rules of Order to run PC meetings unless this runs counter to our bylaws.

**Action:**

- A voice vote was taken, and the motion failed.

Curt then moved that we amend the bylaws to specify that a quorum for PC meetings is a simple majority of the officers.

**Action:**

- The motion died for lack of a second.

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**Good and Welfare of the Body**

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Curt invited everyone to a party to watch the inauguration of President Barack Obama.

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**Adjournment**

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The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM. The next meeting will be at 6:30 PM, Tuesday, February 10, 2009, at Suite 200, 2900 Eastlake Ave. E., Seattle, WA, unless otherwise notified.

Brian Roberts, Secretary