

MINUTES OF THE WASHTECH PLANNING COUNCIL (PC)
May 12, 2009, 6:30 PM

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Rick Saling, Executive Vice President. Also present were Jim Burdick, Brian Roberts, Les French, Anna Bloomquist, Mitchell McMurry, Bill Montgomery, and Rennie Sawade.

Reading of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of 4/14/09 were read with one addition. Under Call to Order should be added: "Mitchell McMurry could not be present because he was WashTech's delegate to the CWA Financial Committee meeting in Washington, DC."

President's Report (Les French)

Les attended CASO's quarterly meeting and lobbied on The Hill on behalf of EFCA.

Les introduced Malachy Sreenan, our new organizer, who will be working with us for 3 months to help organize the AT&T Network Operations Center (NOC).

Finance Committee Report (Mitchell McMurry, Treasurer)

Mitchell passed out the monthly balance sheet and updated profit-and-loss statement. He praised our new bookkeeper, Marsha, for having improved all our financial procedures. She has straightened out our accounting for payroll taxes, which was a big deficiency.

He said that dues payments have slowed because contract arrangements are not yet settled, and he hopes this situation will be regularized this week. He said he expects us to run about \$50,000 under budget for the fiscal year.

District 7 has approved the temporary organizer position for us for 3 months, which will be 100% financed by the district. Les commented that if the NOC organizing effort succeeds, this opens the door to having a permanent organizer, funded 75% by the district. Also, if we organize the NOC, we will get about \$3500 per month more in dues.

AT&T CBU Vice President's Report (Jim Burdick)

Jim said we have lost the NBS and Select Enrollment departments of AT&T because of reorganizations by the company; this was about 10 to 15 people.

Mitchell asked if we are handling any grievances. Jim replied that he is working on two termination grievances. He was subpoenaed to testify in one, and AT&T wants the union to waive pay for the 1.5 hours of time it took him. Mitchell said he expects that issue to go to arbitration. Les said we'll also go to arbitration on the other wrongful termination, where the employee had an excellent record and we produced a preponderance of evidence that the firing was unfair.

Legislative Committee Report (Les French in Place of Vacant Chair)

Les reported that the Washington State Labor Council convention will be August 6-8 in Wenatchee. There is a \$100 registration fee for each delegate. We can send 4 people minimum, probably 5 or 6, all for under \$1000. The deadline to commit is July 2.

Mitchell moved that we send 4 people and reserve 3 lodging rooms for them; Brian seconded.

- **Action:** The motion passed. WashTech will send 4 delegates to the WSLC convention in Wenatchee.

The designation of the 4 delegates was deferred to the next PC meeting.

Les reported that the Washington Fair Trade Council called to ask us to oppose the Panama Free Trade Agreement proposed in Congress. There was considerable discussion centering around questions about whether we know enough about this bill and whether there is time to go on record. Mitchell pointed out that some members don't like their dues going to support political issues outside of COPE. Les answered that the CWA triangle requires us to support labor issues, such as this, that are beyond the local level. Mitchell moved that we address this request through Get Active, and Rick seconded.

- **Action:** The motion passed. WashTech will work through Get Active to oppose the proposed Panama Free Trade Agreement.

Membership Committee Report (Les French in Place of Vacant Chair)

Les presented the chart of statistics for April, showing membership remaining roughly the same. Figures for Jan.-April are not in yet from AT&T because of slow reporting by the company. About 100 AT&T people resigned from the union after the contract ended, and this will probably be reflected in those numbers when we get them.

Technology Committee Report (Rennie Sawade, Chair)

Rennie reported that the server is now backed up using the Carbonite system and is running great; everything is now backed up. Carbonite does the backup in real time.

Les asked if Carbonite backs up our financial data; Rennie replied that Marsha backs those data up on QuickBooks. Carbonite doesn't back up unless there's a change or addition to the server data, which doesn't normally happen with financial data. If we wanted daily financial backup, we would have to assign a new file name for each new date. Les said he would talk to Marsha about how to get the financial data onto the server.

Rennie said we could open more Carbonite accounts, even down to the level of supporting one laptop. Les, however, said he didn't see the need for multiple backup files.

Bill asked if there is a capacity limit. Rennie replied no, we now have 20 to 30 gigabytes backed up.

Mitchell said there is a problem with junk e-mail and asked if we can filter it. Rennie said this comes from the Contacts page on our web site. We could use bots that scan for certain e-mail addresses, and then use a Java procedure that obscures addresses found by these bots. This might be cost effective.

- **Action:** Rennie will report back to the next PC meeting on how to address the junk mail problem.

Communications Committee Report (Rennie Sawade, Member and Acting Chair)

Rennie has been making the web site more visually appealing, adding in dropdown menus and other features. A sneak peek at the new look is available on joomla.washtech.org.

Rennie recently was interviewed, via podcast, by a representative of an Indian labor union.

Brian's e-mail has been bouncing. The problem, said Rennie, is that his ISP, Comcast, blacklists Bluehost. Bill said Comcast is not a good resource. Rennie will try rerouting messages to Brian.

- **Action:** Rennie will try rerouting messages to Brian.

Regarding Comcast, they approached Rennie to see if we want to use them for advertising. Their salesman said they will match the amounts spent by nonprofits, and it didn't bother them that we are a union and they are a nonunion business. Rennie thinks this is something to think about; we could use some of the Ford foundation grant money.

- **Action:** Rennie will talk with Malachy about using this resource.

Les and Rennie participated in a conference call with Lee Conrad of IBM Alliance in regard to revamping TechsUnite. Lee thinks the time is right for recruiting tech workers and wants us to look at sharing content with them on TechsUnite. Lee doesn't think CWA really understands the plight of the tech workers.

Old Business

Charter Renewal: Les reported that we've had no response yet from District 7 about the charter change we submitted to them.

Policies and Procedures: Les proposed sending out sections for review as we get them drafted. Brian is working on it.

King County Labor Council: Brian said we are authorized 4 members and currently have one, Rick. He asked if more could be appointed. Bill and Les were nominated and said they'd be willing to serve.

- **Action:** Bill and Les were appointed by consensus of the PC. Brian will write a letter introducing them to the KCLC.

Snohomish County Labor Council: Brian asked if we are going to appoint anyone to replace Curt. Anna was nominated and said she'd be willing to serve.

- **Action:** Anna was appointed by consensus of the PC. Brian will write a letter introducing her to the SCLC.

New Business

Pacific Northwest Labor History Conference: This will be held June 12-13 at the Seattle Labor Temple, and WashTech specifically has been asked to participate because the keynoter is David Kusnet, who wrote at length about us in his book, "Love the Work, Hate the Job." Brian volunteered to attend the conference.

- **Action:** Brian was appointed WashTech's delegate to the conference. Les will participate in the panel discussion with Kusnet on Friday, June 12.

Per Diem Change: We need to document a policy for per diem. Mitchell found out the CWA National doesn't pay per diem for travel.. There is no full-day per diem when someone else buys your meals. Mitchell has asked Marsha to get National's voucher forms so we can be in compliance with ethical requirements of the Secretary of Labor. He said that everyone who goes to a conference must sign an expense report upon returning.

Proposed Task Force to Recruit Labor Candidates: Brian read a proposal from Dan Gillespie that we set up a task force to recruit political candidates to challenge the state Democratic leadership, which has reneged on its campaign promises to labor. There was much discussion, centering around whether we need a task force for this and whether it should be taken up first by the Legislative Committee. Mitchell moved, and Jim seconded, that we turn this down since we do not have a functioning Legislative Committee.

- **Action:** The motion passed. The proposal will not be considered at this time.

It was suggested that the president decide how to deal with this political problem. Les said this effort can easily be a subset of the Legislative Committee.

Good and Welfare of the Body

Les said he needs information to go ahead with our planned memoriams.

The Leadership Awards will be engraved for presentation at the next PC meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM. The next meeting will be at 6:30 PM, Tuesday, June 9, 2009, at Suite 200, 2900 Eastlake Ave. E., Seattle, WA, unless otherwise notified.

Brian Roberts, Secretary