

MINUTES OF THE WASHTECH PLANNING COUNCIL (PC)
August 11, 2009, 6:30 PM

Call to Order

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

Reading of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of 6/9/09 and 7/14/09 were read and approved.

Secretary's Report (Brian Roberts)

Today is the last day for comments from the PC about the proposed new Operating Procedures Manual (OPM). Anna said she was confused about section 14.5.2 because there was no mention of reimbursement for travel time on a day when one is not normally working. She believed this is authorized under the AT&T contract, and will check on it and report back. Les said he believed the US Department of Labor doesn't allow this. Aside from that issue, Les moved that the OPM be accepted in its present form, and Derek seconded.

- **Action:** The motion passed. The OPM will be reproduced in several copies and made available to PC members.

Finance Committee Report (Mitchell McMurry, Treasurer)

Mitchell presented the Finance Committee's monthly report. He noted that the question came up in the last General Assembly meeting whether we are reducing our affiliation obligations. We are taking a hard look at them because of the decline in our at-large membership.

Anna moved that the financial report be accepted; Jim seconded.

- **Action:** The motion passed. The Finance Committee's report is accepted.

President's Report (Les French)

Les reported that we still have two vacant standing committee chairs: Technology and Legislative. We have a volunteer for Technology, whom Les is considering. It was then moved by Mitchell and seconded by Derek that the Legislative chair be filled by having Ian transfer to that chair from his present chair on the Education Committee.

- **Action:** The motion passed. Ian Jacobson is now chair of the Legislative Committee, and the Education Committee has no chair. However, Ian remains a member of the Education Committee.

Les told Ian he would have to reestablish our connection to Olympia, which was lost when Curt Eidem resigned.

The subject of the Planning Council retreat was discussed. Jim asked where it will be held, and Les answered "Right here." Several options had been discussed, he said, and holding it in the office currently seemed the best, budgetwise. Rick recommended leaving the arrangements to Les.

Les asked if there were any objections to holding the next PC meeting on Sept. 15, which is important because we have to approve the FY2010 budget prior to the General Assembly meeting of Sept. 30; none were raised.

Membership Committee Report (Derek Stanford, Chair)

Derek presented the chart of statistics through the end of July, showing at-large membership about the same as before. Our top priority, he said, is to get a trifold brochure put together to attract more at-large members. Les agreed that it is a good idea to draft a letter (which Derek will do) soliciting COPE contributions from the at-large members. Les also said we are looking at being the focal point for assistance to laid-off IT workers—perhaps aiming at the whole USA. This would be a real attractor and could be in the brochure. Mitchell asked if Derek could plan out the brochure and other outreach efforts for inclusion in the budget.

Bill asked what progress we are making toward organizing the AT&T Network Operations Center (NOC). Les replied that we have 56 cards signed out of about 70 that we need, and we are doing well.

Legislative Committee Report (Ian Jacobson, Chair)

Ian said that, regarding DIME-PAC (the WSLC's new legislative contribution mechanism), we sit on its board through our membership in the King County Central Labor Council. They are trying to tighten down on the evaluation process for deciding which politicians are most worthy of support.

The political endorsement process, he noted, didn't end at the primary. That narrowed the field and cleared out the clutter, and it's appropriate for us at our next meeting to consider endorsements for the serious candidates remaining. Jim recommended we use the information on candidates that's been given out by the WSLC.

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

Rennie said that BluHost stopped supporting our spam blocker Box Trapper and is now pushing the more expensive Postini blocker. Rick said he uses Postini and likes it. Rennie said okay, he may try Postini for a couple of mailboxes and see how it goes. Derek asked about the status of the web site upgrade, and Rennie replied that there a couple of issues he's looking into, including document management to make it easier to post meeting minutes.

Rennie said we need to implement membership and subscription forms on the new version of the web site.

Communications Committee Report (Rennie Sawade, Chair)

Rennie said he had posted more articles on our site. He also participated in a radio program, "Voices of Diversity," which in his opinion didn't go too well. The subject was the negative impact of free trade agreements. The opposing voices did not show up, so Rennie and Kristen from the Fair Trade Association had to fill up nearly the whole hour. Despite that, time ran out before Rennie could respond to a caller who brought up the subject of Bill Gates and the H-1B workers.

Education Committee Report (Ian Jacobson, Member and Acting Chair)

Ian commented that Hunter (candidate for mayor of Seattle) probably won't make it through the primary, but Mallahan will. Our U.S. Representative Dave Reichert (R) is a problem because he is actively against the health care initiative.

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

Bill said the State Labor Council convention was beneficial because it brought up the employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) and the health initiative, encouraging locals to seek out local politicians. He encouraged us all to attend our local town meetings on health care reform and get in the message that we want it to be right for labor; for example, we don't want to be taxed on our benefits. Now is the time as a local to look at our organizing targets—T-Mobile, Comcast, etc.—and tell other locals to back off.

Ian asked if it is correct that the current version of EFCA has no provision for card check. Les responded that that's correct.

Bill said Fred Meyer and Wal-Mart are on our "naughty list" for their employee discipline policies; Fred Meyer, for instance, fires employees the first time they under- or overcharge a customer. Ian added that Trader Joe's is also on the naughty list.

Bill said we have now seen the first person fired at AT&T under the new attendance policy. They have a 72-hour limit for accepting a doctor's note. Unfortunately this employee refused to grieve the firing. Jim said we need to push grievances for this sort of action, and maybe get the policy overturned, because the purpose is to deny us from using our sick time. Under the AT&T interpretation of the Family Medical Leave Act, he said, AT&T employees get paid for sick time but not for a doctor visit.

AT&T CBU Vice President's Report (Anna Bloomquist)

Anna said she and our organizer Malachy Sreenan had spent a day at the T-Mobile call center, and she could see we have a tough row to hoe there: only 4 people took any information. She had met on Thursday with United Way to see if we can get the union involved in their work.

She asked if, after the WSLC conference, we can do a "dime drive" to get donations of dimes for DIME-PAC. Jim moved, and Mitchell seconded, that the proposal be moved to New Business; the motion passed.

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

Jim reported that he learned a lot about FMLA and COPE at the WSLC convention in Wenatchee. The WSLC is looking at extending workers compensation to employee parking lots, where there is currently no coverage.

Resolutions

Senate Bill S.877, H-1B and L-1 Visa Reform Act of 2009: This bill would limit the fraud in the H-1B program as now practiced. The WSLC failed to endorse a resolution supporting it, perhaps because the delegates felt it conflicted with the Administration's overall immigration policy, which the WSLC

supports. Les said he felt WashTech should support this bill because it relates to one of this union's founding principles. Ian moved that WashTech so resolve, and Jim seconded. Mitchell asked for a comparison with the resolution that the WSLC actually passed. After more discussion, the motion was amended to reconsider our resolution at the next PC meeting.

- **Action:** The amended motion was passed. The PC will devote ½ hour at its next meeting to discuss what the bill actually says, what the WSLC resolution actually says, and what issues community groups are raising about S.877, and will then vote whether to make a resolution in favor of the bill.

Unfinished Business

Leadership Award: Les said he has the plaque but still needs to get it inscribed.

New Business

Equity Task Force: Les said we have two good candidates to chair this task force and they should both be interviewed.

National Women's Conference, St. Louis, Sep. 10-12: Les thought we should send a delegate and thought we could do it for \$1,500.00. Anna moved we change our budget to pay for it. Mitchell said that would require General Assembly approval. Anna then proposed we take it from the Ford Foundation grant. Rick moved we do so, and Anna seconded.

- **Action:** The motion passed. WashTech will send one delegate to the St. Louis convention, expenses funded from our Ford Foundation grant.

Anna then moved that Rose Hurban, our Women's Task Force chair, be the delegate. Ian seconded.

- **Action:** The motion passed. Rose was delegated subject to her acceptance. She accepted by telephone.

Dime Drive: Anna's motion, which had been moved to New Business, was not discussed further.

Good and Welfare of the Body

Mitchell told Rick we need information from his family as to what would be a suitable gift for them in their bereavement. Rick suggested a donation to the Mountaineers.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM. The next meeting will be at 6:30 PM, Tuesday, September 15, 2009, at Suite 200, 2900 Eastlake Ave. E., Seattle, WA, unless otherwise notified.

Brian Roberts, Secretary