

MINUTES OF THE WASHTECH PLANNING COUNCIL (PC)
September 15, 2009, 6:34 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, Bill Montgomery, Derek Stanford, and Jim Burdick. Rose Hurban attended as chair of the ad hoc Women's Task Force, a nonvoting position.

Reading of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of 8/11/09 were read and approved.

Secretary's Report (Brian Roberts)

Brian reported that the corrections to our new Operating Procedures Manual (OPM) have been made and the master copy is on the reference shelf in the WashTech offices.

Finance Committee Report (Les French for Mitchell McMurry, Treasurer)

Les presented the Finance Committee's monthly report and the proposed new budget for FY 2010 (starting 10/1/2009) compared with the current budget. Brian noted the predicted drop in AT&T member dues, and Les explained that there is currently a budget crunch at AT&T that is likely to continue; the increased income from the NOC should more than compensate for it. Derek moved that the FY2010 budget be approved, and Bill seconded.

- **Action:** The motion passed. The proposed FY2010 budget is accepted and will be presented to the General membership for ratification at the next GM meeting, 9/30/09.

Brian noted that, although it has always been our practice to get general membership ratification before going overlimit on any budget line item, there is no written authority for this in the bylaws or the OPM. He moved we write such a procedure. Anna seconded.

- **Action:** The motion passed. Brian will write the procedure and present it to the Executive Committee for approval.

Bill asked if Les's wages as president were included in the budget, in advance of the general members' ratification of the PC's authorization to pay him. Les replied that yes, they were, but approval of the general members wasn't needed. He said he had "sensed some reluctance" of the PC to go to the members about this, so an alternate method was used: the Executive Committee convened and voted to hire him as an organizer. This was the operating model when Marcus Courtney was president, which worked well, and the impact on the budget was very little if any. The Wages and Benefits line item is still far lower than in the FY2009 budget.

President's Report (Les French)

Les reported that we won the NOC! (The AT&T Network Operations Center) The PC congratulated him and our organizer Malachy Sreenan. Les said we will continue our organizing efforts; we are viewed in a good light by District and International, and they want us to do some serious organizing. Les reported that the Washington State Labor Council says it won't donate any COPE money to any Washington legislators this year.

Membership Committee Report (Derek Stanford, Chair)

Derek's monthly membership chart was presented; at-large membership is down by 10. Les said he would relieve Malachy as far as building membership in CBUs; and that Derek and Rennie Sawade should develop the outreach plan for the at-large.

Legislative Committee Report (Les French for Ian Jacobson, Chair)

Les said he would attend the Washington/N. Idaho CLC annual Conference, which starts tomorrow. This body controls our COPE expenditures, and he will report back on how things stand in regard to our COPE monies. Jim asked if we have all the delegates we are allowed for that conference; Les replied that he'll talk to Rennie about that.

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

Les recommended we look at the cost of using Bluehost, but that we probably would use it.

Communications Committee Report (no report; chair absent)

Anna said she had talked to editor Caeli Kane about the Unity newsletter, and she wants articles. Les said she can use all the stuff posted on labor council sites. Brian asked if articles on labor history would be good, and Anna answered yes.

Education Committee Report (no report; chair absent)

Brian asked if we will reappoint representatives to the technical college advisory committees. Les asked him to give him the information; Dan Gillespie has said he's interested.

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 resolution was carried over from the last PC meeting for discussion. After the discussion, Les moved that WashTech endorse this bill and work for its passage. When asked to clarify, Les replied that working for its passage would involve advocating for it on our Web site and TechsUnite. Rick seconded the motion.

- **Action:** The motion passed. WashTech resolves to endorse S.877 in the language quoted below and to work for its passage, including advocating for it on our Web site and TechsUnite:

"WHEREAS, temporary work programs for high-tech workers are very large in scale, providing over 700,000 foreign workers under the H-1B program, several hundred thousand more under the L-1 program, and thousands more high-tech workers under other temporary visa and immigration programs; and

"WHEREAS, the number of foreign temporary high-tech workers in the H-1B and L-1 programs greatly exceeds the total graduation rate of all engineering and science programs in the United States; and

"WHEREAS, this number of foreign workers is large enough to distort Our domestic labor markets, particularly in entrylevel jobs where many of the foreign workers are placed, depressing wage growth, and sending strong market signals to students to avoid these areas of study; and

"WHEREAS, many students making decisions about their careers must take on significant personal debt and are seeing engineering and science as poor career choices with weak job security and limited prospects where they will compete against subsidized foreign workers; and

"WHEREAS, the H-1B and L-I visas are used in practice to rain foreign workers and to acquire skills and experience with work packages in the U.S., in preparation to off-shoring that work to low-cost countries, further de-industrializing our economy; and

"WHEREAS, S.877, the H-1B and L-1 Visa Reform Act of 2009 was introduced in the Senate with bipartisan sponsorship by Charles Grassley and Dick Durbin, providing reasonable and basic protections for domestic workers; and

WHEREAS, the provisions in S.877 will resolve problems with workers seeking employment, protect workers from replacement by foreign temporary workers with H-1B visas, and strengthens enforcement by the Department of Labor; now, therefore, be it

"RESOLVED, that WashTech endorses the S.877, the H-1B and L-1 Visa Reform Act of 2009, and will advocate for its passage by Congress."

Unfinished Business

PC Governance: Les passed out copies of the PC governance document resulting from the retreat.

Reimbursement for Travel on a Day Off: Les said he has to review the contract on that issue.

Leadership Award: Les has delivered the plaque to Rose Hurban to get it inscribed.

DIME-PAC: Les said he would look into how we could participate in that, but he believes we'd do better to increase our COPE contributions.

New Business

Equity Task Force: Les announced that the Equity Task Force chair has been chosen and has accepted. His name is Anthony Vogelsang.

Women's Task Force Report: Rose has allied her task force with Dress for Success—Seattle and wishes to contribute to their Closet for Jobseekers. To that end, the task force will be seeking donations of clothing, toiletries, and jewelry.

Good and Welfare of the Body

Anna proposed a memorial to the Alzheimer's Foundation in memory of her grandmother, who has passed away.

Derek announced that he wants to hold a social event for the stewards at his home in Bothell. Bill suggested it could be a "welcome aboard" for the new stewards coming out of training. Derek said he would pursue the idea and set a date.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM. The next meeting will be at 6:30 PM, Tuesday, October 13, 2009, at Suite 200, 2900 Eastlake Ave. E., Seattle, WA, unless otherwise notified.

Brian Roberts, Secretary