

MINUTES OF THE WASHTECH PLANNING COUNCIL

April 8, 2008, 6:30 PM

Chair: Les French, Executive Vice President; 6 other members present in person; Bill Montgomery present via dial-in; Marcus Courtney, Curt Eidem, Emily Baty, and Brian Globerman absent

President's Report (Marcus Courtney)

No President's Report from Marcus this month. Les reported that Marcus's resignation is effective July 1, 2008, and his last day at work will be June 20.

Executive Committee Report (Brian Roberts, Secretary)

Under the Bylaws, Article 13F, vacancies in any elected position shall be filled by appointment by the Planning Council. Because Marcus will be effectively leaving June 20, the council may vote at its May meeting, or should vote at its June meeting at the latest, to appoint his replacement.

A comment was made during the meeting that a presidential vacancy is filled by the ExecutiveVP, but this is not true. The Planning Council may fill the vacancy with any member in good standing, subject to consensus of the general membership.

The Secretary has sent out letters to the 90 workers whose cards were mishandled by the postal system, emphasizing that this did not happen while in our custody and that there is little (although some) danger of data theft.

Finance Committee Report (Rick Saling, Treasurer)

We are back under budget again, primarily due to receiving our subsidy from CWA in March. Areas that are off budget for the month include:

- Credit card dues are under budget
- CB Unit dues are \$2761 under
- CWA subsidy is \$4084 under
- Registration for the collective bargaining conference, which was already approved

A number of areas were significantly under, especially Wages & Benefits, and General Operating Expenses. For YTD we are back in the black by about \$3700. We have several YTD categories that are significantly over budget (but not over the year's budget):

- General Operating Expenses
- ATT Unit Expenses
- Local Elections

Overall, because of our frugality at spending, we look in pretty good shape.

Staff Salaries: Priyanka Joshi wants a formal offer letter, salary equivalent to \$22/hour, with benefits of vacation, sick leave, 403B, and pension.

Review of Expenses to Be Authorized:

- **Phone System:** We need a detailed proposal (we had an ad for \$200 times 4) that takes into account the new people and new office layout.
- **New Filing Cabinet:** We had an ad for a \$900 fireproof one, which seems excessive and not necessary. First we need a proposal that includes the redesigned office layout.
- **Fax machine and line for Dan Gillespie:** To facilitate Dan's working from home, we will buy a fax machine (\$100+) and subsidize his data phone bill by \$50 a month.
- **New Office Door Mail Slot:** Our mail gets left out in unsecured locations. We should get a bid on cutting a mail slot into our office door.
- **New computer:** Priyanka will need a new laptop. We will be getting Todd Tollefson's computer back, and Dan can use it. When the new organizer is hired, we will need another computer.
- **Data Phone:** We will provide the new president with a \$50/month subsidy for data phone service because of the need to access email during the day at work.
- **Phone Recorder:** Priyanka needs one for phone interviews. This is a standard item in the journalism field. We will get price quotes.
- **New Printer:** We will get a quote for one, to be factored into next year's budget.
- **Travel Agent:** We will find out what one costs, it would free up staff time re conferences.

Update on Financial Procedure Recommendations ("Good Practices"):

- **Investment of Extra Cash:** Rick was tasked 3/11 to immediately put \$25,000 into a 3-month CD. He finds that Frontier Bank currently has the best rates of local banks of any size, and has a Wallingford branch.
- **Dual Checking Account signatures:** Rick was tasked 3/11 to make a recommendation. He recommends that Rick, Les, and the Exec. VP should be signers on the account, but that we postpone the change until Marcus is gone so we don't have to redo the forms.
- **Debit/Credit Cards:** The committee met but had trouble figuring out a policy.

Merchant Card Services: Credit card dues collections have been under budget because our point-of-sale (POS) system failed. We switched to QuickBooks, but it won't accept annual payments. Propose that Loretta ask Bank of America about their merchant services, or we may reinstate our old system.

Ford Foundation: We have \$12K left in our foundation grant, which we can use to increase at-large membership or redesign the web site. Priyanka, Barbara, Rennie, and Marcus will discuss.

Hiring a temp to help Loretta: Loretta will develop a proposal, for after the office reorganization.

Fair Trade Coalition: We propose to donate \$250 to them.

New Budget: The committee has scheduled May meetings to start working on the new one.

Action Items re Finance Committee:

- Staff Salaries: Financial administrator Loretta Kissel will prepare and deliver the formal offer to Priyanka. Loretta will also prepare an updated salary expenses spreadsheet

accounting for the latest developments, particularly Priyanka, Marcus leaving, an organizer coming, stewards, VP lost time wages, etc.

- Expenses to Be Authorized: All are authorized as proposed except:
 - **Phone System**: Referred to Technology Committee to review the entire office plan and needs and will investigate a modular phone system.
 - **Fax machine and line for Dan**: Referred to the Technology Committee.
 - **New computer**: Give Todd's computer to Priyanka, let Dan use the one he has for now.
 - **Data Phone**: Les does not want the subsidy. He will discuss this with Marcus.
 - **Travel Agent**: Dan's action item. Les wondered if we can get a donation of relevant software (Expedia?) from Microsoft.
- Good Practices:
 - **Investment of Extra Cash**: Rick will figure out how to open a \$25,000 CD at Frontier Bank.
 - **Dual Checking Account signatures**: To be postponed as proposed.
 - **Debit/Credit Cards**: Loretta will call Rick Sorenson at District 7 and ask their advice.
- Merchant Card Services: Mitch McMurry proposed we shop for a new main bank with good merchant CD services and investigate putting our other accounts in the same bank. He volunteered to do this by July 1. The council agreed, and he is so tasked.
- Ford Foundation: Marcus's action item. Dan proposed that Loretta be included in the discussion.
- Hiring a temp to help Loretta: Loretta's action item. The office reorganization is set for April 25.
- Fair Trade Coalition: Tabled.

Communications Committee Report (Rennie Sawade, Chair)

Rennie has been trying to set up a meeting with Mitch at KTPK to discuss an advertising plan. Author Dan Sirota will be in Seattle in mid-June on a nationwide tour to promote his new book *The Uprising* and would like us to announce this to our members. The book has a chapter on labor organizations in the Pacific Northwest, including WashTech. Suggested media are the website, the newsletter, and a presentation by Sirota to our members. Dan proposed that we at least publicize it on the website.

Action Item re Communications Committee:

- Rennie will figure out venues for publicizing Sirota's book..

Membership Committee Report (Dan Gillespie, Chair)

Since Priyanka started writing for the website, there has been a marked increase in participation: we had 10 new subscribers and one new member in the first 2 days.

Legislative Committee Report (Curt Eidem, Chair)

No report this month.

Education Committee Report

No report this month.

Technology Committee Report (Brian Globerman, Chair)

No report this month. However, there was discussion of technological issues. Regarding the travel agent, Les wondered if relevant software would be available from Microsoft. A proposal was made that we buy at least 2 desktop PCs immediately for the office.

Action Items re Technology Committee:

- Brian is to investigate getting travel agent software (Expedia?) from Microsoft.
- The committee is to report to the PC at its next meeting with a bid or bids for new PCs for the office.

New Business

Dan presented a proposal to amend the bylaws to the effect that WashTech staff would be ineligible to hold elected officer positions. He said he was putting it on the table now for consideration, and it could be further discussed later.

There was discussion of the role of the new organizer. Les said he will ask District 7 whether the organizer reports to the local or to the district, or both. Rick wondered whether organizers should be members of the Planning Council.

On the topic of organization, Barbara Rader has been tasked with composing a questionnaire for members of the AT&T unit that Todd was trying to organize. She asked for help in identifying people she can interview.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM. The next meeting will be May 13 unless otherwise notified.

Communications Committee Postscript

On April 10 Priyanka talked to the news director radio station KUO and told him about WashTech, and how she was hearing stories every day of home-grown Americans affected by H1B and outsourcing. She shared a story idea with him, and he liked it so much that he proposed we do a series of stories on KUOW exploring the H1B-Outsourcing-Washtech association. He suggested she buy the radio equipment and then talk in detail about the series. KUOW is affiliated with National Public Radio, so this would get us the ear of many NPR listeners and heighten our profile considerably. This made the phone recorder a very high priority item, and Priyanka asked for immediate approval to spend \$400-\$600 to buy a good one as recommended by KUOW. Rennie contacted Rick, and Rick polled the council members by e-mail, asking them to authorize up to \$750 for the phone recorder, shipping, taxes, headphones, and mikes.

Action Item re Phone Recorder:

- By April 18 a majority of the members voted yes to buy the equipment immediately. Rick tasked Loretta to work with Priyanka to order what she needs..

Brian Roberts
Secretary