

MINUTES OF THE WASHTECH PLANNING COUNCIL (PC)

May 13, 2008, 6:30 PM

Chair: Les French, Executive Vice President; 10 other members present in person; Emily Baty absent; Jana Smith-Carr, CWA District 7 organizer, attended as an observer

Reading of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes from 4/8/08 were read and approved with one correction: the words "..., 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" were removed from the Executive Committee Report section.

President's Report (Marcus Courtney)

We currently have 4 step 1 grievances, 3 step 2, and 8 step 3, with one arbitration and one request for arbitration. Membership is 1405, 1157 of whom are under contract, and we have 14,460 subscribers. TechsUnite has published 4 stories on the web, along with several take actions.

Marcus referred to the PC a letter from Rick Sorensen of CWA District 7, 5/12/08, pointing out that our bylaws are not consistent with the CWA Constitution, which states that the local vice president takes on the local president's responsibilities in the event of a vacancy in the office of president. Our bylaws merely state that a vacancy in any elected office is to be filled by appointment by the PC.

Marcus introduced WashTech member Erik Langdahl, who is District Healthcare Coordinator for CWA. Erik gave a Power Point presentation on the Strategic Initiative Fund (SIF), which is the CWA campaign to secure comprehensive health care reform and passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. The Newspaper Guild local also sat in on the presentation. He requested the local to host and attend 4-hour workshops on the campaign, which he would conduct.

There was discussion about the drawbacks of comprehensive health care systems such as are in use in Canada, Japan, and Norway. Mitch McMurry asked if any statistics were available on the actual usage of such systems, and Erik replied that he would provide those data.

Action Item:

- The PC committed to host the workshops, at times and places to be determined, starting probably next month.

Executive Committee Report (Brian Roberts, Secretary)

Brian proposed two resolutions for the PC to make to solve the problem brought up by the Sorensen letter: (1) make an interim rule that the Executive Vice President fills the anticipated vacancy in the president's office; and (2) change the bylaws to make this the practice whenever the office of president is vacant.

There was a long discussion. Some members felt the resolutions were unnecessary because the last paragraph of the Sorensen letter Planning Council seemed to say that we could do this already:

In this case, you have a position of Executive Vice President, which is above the Vice President's positions and acts as the person for assuming the responsibility of the duties of President if the President's position is vacated.

Brian pointed out that it was unclear whether the letter was endorsing this procedure, and it was unclear whether "assuming the responsibility" means that the Exec VP actually takes the office of president. The PC ended up approving one resolution with changes and tabling the other till the General Membership meeting.

Action Item:

- The PC resolved that, contingent on Marcus Courtney resigning as president of this local in June 2008, the then-incumbent Executive Vice President shall succeed to the office of president.

Finance Committee Report (Rick Saling, Treasurer)

We are over budget, primarily due to not receiving 3 months of subsidy from CWA in March. The overage is \$33,475.37, but we have about that much in subsidy requests pending, so we should be okay in the long term.

Loretta has prepared an updated salary expenses spreadsheet which takes into account the latest, particularly Priyanka, Marcus leaving, an organizer, + stewards and VP lost time wages, etc. We will see if we can move Dan off the CWA-subsidized portion of the budget. We will ask CWA for a \$168,000 subsidy for next fiscal year; otherwise we won't be able to pay all of Loretta's and Dan's wages. We are now doing an estimate and will present the new budget to the General Membership meeting in September.

Rick has opened a \$25,000 CD account at the Wallingford branch of Frontier Bank.

Action Items:

- Prepare new budget (see above).
- Call Rick Sorensen at District 7 and ask their advice about handling debit/credit cards, since we had trouble figuring out a policy (Loretta Kissel, carried over from 4/8).
- Discuss and decide how to use \$12K left in our Ford Foundation grant (Marcus Courtney, carried over from 4/8).
- Implement pending authorized expenses that were approved 4/8 (except filing cabinet, which we got for a very reasonable \$150).
- Ask Bank of America about their merchant card services as a possible alternative to QuickBooks (Loretta, carried over from 4/8).

Communications Committee Report (Rennie Sawade, Chair)

Rennie has had a couple of meetings with AM 1090 regarding the advertising campaign. For \$1000 for 2 months, Tom Hartman will record an ad for WashTech and will air it during the Tom Hartman Show, 9-12:00 AM.

There will be no special WashTech meeting with author Dan Sirota (*The Uprising*), but we and SEIU are co-sponsoring a cocktail party for him before his scheduled book signing at the Elliott Bay Bookstore in Seattle. This will be on Wednesday, June 12, a penthouse on First Avenue.

Membership Committee Report (Dan Gillespie, Chair)

Dan stated that the website subscribers have expressed interest in having an interest group they can meet with. He proposed organizing one to meet in the WashTech office and thereby increase our effect on subscribers and help us draw them into membership.

Dan also asked if the Communications Committee would review and update all of our contact letters. Secretary Roberts stated that he should be involved, if only in a review capacity, because under the bylaws the secretary is responsible for correspondence.

Dan reminded the PC that years ago the American Income Life (AIL) insurance company had made available accidental death and dismemberment insurance to WashTech members, and lately new members were not being signed up for it. He will coordinate with AIL to ensure that all members are made aware of it and given the chance to sign up.

Action Items:

- Organize a subscribers' interest group and arrange for it to meet in the WashTech office (Dan).
- Communicate with all members about the availability of the death/dismemberment policy (Dan).

Legislative Committee Report (Curt Eidem, Chair)

Curt was at the CWA legislative conference with Marcus last month in Washington, DC. They met with the staffs of all the Washington state Democrats and met Sen. Patty Murray in person. There was heavy discussion with the Inslee, Baird, and Smith people about their positions on the trade agreement. The hope is that EFCA will pass in the first 100 days of the next administration.

Curt wants to start organizing a political action committee very soon because we need to deal with candidates who will be seeking our endorsements.

Checks have been given by the State Labor Council to the campaigns of Inslee, Larson, McDermott, and Dicks that include our COPE contributions to these candidates. Marcus said that our contributions were included, apportioned as we requested.

Education Committee Report

No report this month.

Technology Committee Report (Brian Globerman, Chair)

Brian described the specifications and capabilities of the laptop for Priyanka Joshi that he proposed to buy from a union-friendly manufacturer, Union Built. After much discussion, especially about security features, compatibility, ease of use, warranties, and ongoing support, the PC approved the proposed configuration.

Brian then discussed the options for providing our computers with Microsoft Office. He said a 3-license pack of Office 2000 Professional could be bought for \$839.99. It was suggested that maybe we could just upgrade what we have, and Marcus said he thought we now have 5 licenses. It was also suggested that we might have the AT&T shop stewards buy the software using their company discounts, but there was a question whether this is ethical. More information was desired.

Action Items:

- Buy the laptop, in the configuration described by Brian, from Union Built (Dan Gillespie).
- Report back with firm information on how many Office licenses we have, which need upgrades, the upgrade paths, the feasibility of a site license, and what discounts we might take advantage of (Brian Globerman).

New Business

Les proposed that Marcus be allowed to keep his laptop when he resigns. It was explained that he will continue as a WashTech member and it would be convenient for him to have the data available if any questions come up about actions WashTech took during his term in office.

Brian reminded the PC that we still have no Election Committee, and we need to have one in place well ahead of the September General Membership meeting. Les replied that he has two people semi-committed to serving on that committee.

Action Items:

- The PC resolved that Marcus Courtney may keep his laptop.
- Les will report back to the next PC meeting as to who is available to serve on the Election Committee.

Good and Welfare of the Body

Curt announced that WashTech received 4 awards at the CWA conference in Utah. One was for our contribution to the Pediatric AIDS Foundation, one for the Union to Union program, and one for achieving 10 percent signup of our membership for COPE contributions.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM. The next meeting will be Jun 10 unless otherwise notified.

Brian Roberts
Secretary