

MINUTES OF THE WASHTECH PLANNING COUNCIL (PC)
July 8, 2008

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Les French, President. Six other members were present in person. Emily Baty, Curt Eidem, Bill Montgomery, and Brian Globerman were absent.

Reading of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes from 6/10/08 were read and approved.

President's Report (Les French)

Les noted that there have been some conflicts among staff, officers, and committee chairs, and requested that any conflicts be brought to his attention to resolve. He described himself as the “bridge” between the various elements of WashTech.

There was discussion of whether staff should be able to telecommute, and the related problem of not having someone in the office at all times during business hours. Mitch McMurry pointed out that The Newspaper Guild office next door always has someone there to answer the phone, so there is an identifiable “voice of TNG” to talk to anyone who calls.

Les gave the highlights of the recent convention.

Executive Committee Report (Brian Roberts, Secretary)

Brian presented a proposed revision to the bylaws that would lower the requirement of 300 at-large members in order to fill the office of At-Large Vice President. Currently the number has fallen below 300, so incumbent Barbara Rader cannot be reelected. The proposal would reduce the threshold to 50.

Action Item:

- Brian is to confer with Rick Sorensen of CWA District 7 about the appropriateness and wording of the proposed change and report back to the next Planning Council meeting.

Finance Committee Report (Rick Saling, Treasurer)

Our expenses YTD are \$12,226.68 under budget, but our income is \$13,343.51 under budget, so our current YTD report shows us over budget by \$1,116.83. We received a check from CWA for \$54,370.18 for our subsidy plus reimbursement for some SIF expenses; this eliminated most of our prior deficit of some \$58,000.

Our income from AT&T CBU Membership Dues is \$12,167.86 over budget, continuing the trend for most of this budget year.

There was discussion about the few items that are over budget. Our Affiliation Obligations amount is technically over budget although this happened only because an amount of \$3,348, which was approved for the prior year’s budget, was not spent until this budget year. We were asked to approve a raise in Books and Reference Materials to cover the handouts we prepare for orienting new hires in the AT&T

CBU. CWA has stopped providing these to us for free, but we still need them because of the predictable high turnover rate at AT&T. We were also asked to approve a higher budget for the Conferences category to cover the CWA convention and the WSLC event in Vancouver, Washington. This category is currently over budget by \$8,795.03, although \$6,508.38 of that will be reimbursed by CWA.

Regarding Affiliation Obligations, Mitch asked if the groups we are affiliated with (labor councils, etc.) can raise our dues without consulting us. Les replied that, by agreement with us, they cannot.

Rennie Sawade reported that CWA gave us some money for advertising that we haven't used and asked if we could buy some ads with it. Les replied that we will use it that way and can also use some of the leftover Ford Foundation grant money, and may also use these funds to retool our Web site.

It was proposed that the President, Executive Vice President, Treasurer, and staff person Loretta Crawford Kissel be the authorized signers on the Bank of America account, with each check to be signed by any two of these.

Action Items/Resolutions:

- Approved a \$3,000 increase in the Conferences budget category.
- Approved a retroactive increase in the Books and Reference Materials category, to \$1,200 to cover the rest of the year.
- Approved an increase of \$3,500 in the Affiliation Obligations category to account for the aforementioned expense that was approved last budget but not spent until the current budget year.
- Approved the 4 signers on the bank account as described above.

Membership Committee Report (Dan Gillespie, Chair)

Dan presented Jennie Gray of American Income Life Insurance Company (AIL), who described AIL's program for labor unions, which for some year has been a member benefit for WashTech, and passed out copies of the brochure that is to be sent to our members. Dan said the first mailing is in print and is expected to be mailed about the third week of August. Les said these are the kinds of things we need to get out to our members to show them the benefits of belonging.

Membership and subscribership data for June show the benefits of the radio advertising: 19 new members (15 out of state) and 45 new subscribers (35 out of state).

Upcoming events that we might encourage our members to participate in are the Tristate Conference, 9/11-13; the EEOC Seattle Conference; the Beckendorf charity bowling tournament of the Pierce County Labor Council; and the labor council golf tournament.

A date has been set for the annual picnic (8/23), but no site is selected yet.

Barbara Rader was proposed to head the Election Committee. The bylaws allow her to serve, even though she is a Vice President, because she cannot run for reelection. She accepted the nomination.

Action Items/Resolutions:

- Dan will arrange for a site for the picnic.
- The date will be publicized in the Unity newsletter.
- Barbara Rader was named Election Committee Chair and charged with selecting two other WashTech members to fill out her committee.

Communications Committee Report (Rennie Sawade, Chair)

Rennie reported that our radio ads have been completed; they ran 4 weeks at a cost of \$750. Rennie wanted to know if we should buy another month, or if we should look at national advertising (Marcus Courtney had suggested advertising in The Nation). Les asked if Rennie had impact data, and he replied that he had anecdotal reports only. Mitch asked what was left in the ad budget for the year, and Rick replied that it was \$1,185. Les asked if it can be spread out. Rennie replied that if we buy a 30-second radio ad, it can be broadcast for 2 months.

Mitch asked if we put our ad message on our answering machine. Dan asked if we can use the voice of Tom Hartman (the radio personality who recorded our message) for that. Rennie replied that he thought so.

Action Items:

- Rennie is to go ahead and use the remaining \$1,185 as discussed.
- Les will talk to the telephone people about the feasibility of putting our ad message on our answering machine.

Other Committee Reports

There were no other committee reports.

AT&T CBU Vice President's Report (Mitch McMurry)

Mitch reported that the current AT&T-union negotiations in the East are making people realize the value of union membership in regard to health care and other issues. Everyone was taken aback when AT&T's final offer turned out to be worse than their first offer.

Les said he wants to get a survey out to the membership to solicit their feedback on what's most important to them. The negotiations are not looking good because AT&T is refusing to bargain and wants to go to mediation. After that, the next level is arbitration. Unfortunately any understanding reached in mediation does not carry forward into arbitration; it starts all over again from square one.

Mitch said there is much confusion about mediation vs. arbitration, and suggested that the difference be explained to the rank and file via the Unity newsletter and the union billboards.

Unfinished Business

The election training session to be held in Olympia on 7/10/08 has been canceled. In other old business, these action items carry over from the previous meeting:

Action Items:

- Staff all committees by 12/31/08 (PC).
- Develop 50 new CATs, using SIF training, by 8/1/08 (Dave/Bill/Emily/Curt).
- Develop PowerPoint presentation by 8/1.
- Survey at-large members about their representation issues by 12/31 (Barbara Rader).
- Recruit organizer by 12/31.

New Business

Because Les is now President and under the CWA Constitution cannot serve at the same time as Executive Vice President, this vacated the latter office. Rick Saling was nominated to fill that office, but if approved, he could not continue as Treasurer for the same reason. Accordingly, it was proposed that Mitch McMurry, a member of the Finance Committee, succeed Rick as Treasurer. Both nominees accepted their nominations.

Resolutions/Action Items:

- Approved Rick Saling to take the office of Executive Vice President, effective immediately, to complete the unexpired term of Les French, thereby vacating the office of Treasurer.
- Approved Mitch McMurry to take the office of Treasurer, effective immediately, to complete the unexpired term of Rick Saling.
- Prepared a report of these actions, signed by the Secretary, for presentation to Bank of America, who requested it for proof that these persons are duly authorized to sign for WashTech on our bank accounts.

Good of the Order

Les encouraged the members to accompany him to the Zig Zigar “Get Motivated” seminar on August 25. Speakers will include Gen. Colin Powell, and the price is excellent at \$19 apiece.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 PM. The next meeting will be August 12, 2008, unless otherwise notified.

Brian Roberts
Secretary