

Autoworker Caravan Conference Call Minutes, August 26, 2012

Chair: Dick Danjin, Local 909

Present: Nick Waun 1112, Terri Houdieson 551, Debi Muncy 600, Frank Hammer 909, Ron Lare 600, Judy Wraight 600, Angela Dulaney 551 Wendy Thompson 22, Scott Houldieson 551, Alex Wassell 869, Reggie Kendrick 600, Dianne Feeley 22, Martha Grevatt 869, George Windau 12

September 9 Speakout Outreach

Locals where we have people to take leaflets into the plants: 1700, 909, 869, 12, 212, 412, 551, 600,892, 3000, 140, 1112, and possibly others. We want to get out about 500 to the UAW contingent in the Labor Day March. A news release is being worked on. If anyone can find out the shift change time at Chrysler Dundee Engine and leaflet that would be helpful, as the media has covered their overwhelming rejection of a local agreement. Local 551 may not be able to send anyone but will send a video. Some of the issues that will be addressed are the Equality of Sacrifice grievance loss, Overtime, heat, skilled appeal, two tier, Alternative Work Schedules. We will ask Diana Carolina to talk about the fight of GM workers in Colombia and solicit international messages. The meeting will be videotaped for the Real News. We need to come away with a sense of direction. It shouldn't be just a gripe session. The temporary workers at Saline are sick of how they are being treated and want to file NLRB charges. We might want to pass a resolution on One Member, One Vote. We need to discuss shop floor action, like groups of workers visiting the committeeperson or supervisor. We need to build resistance and build in plant caucuses and AWC chapters. The point to be made is that "all is not well for the auto industry worker." There is discontent. People are tired of forced Saturdays. The absentee procedure is an issue. In some Ford plants workers are being sent home by medical and then being fired for being awol. We need to plug the newsletter, appeal to attendees to become volunteer distributors and reporters. At Saline there is a point system on attendance, 6 points you are out, not working OT is half a point. Many are being moved out of Saline, and told if they don't transfer they will be under the awful Faurecia contract. At Ford in Chicago they will not give pre-excused days to anyone who has used up their personal days and most second tier workers don't have any personal days. Seniority workers are targeted by the absentee procedure because they can be replaced by lower paid workers. Send suggestions for topics to the Speakout planning committee [Dianne, Frank, Martha, Scott, Rosendo, Greg Warzecha, Debi, Ron, Jeff]

Chrysler Skilled Appeal

George had a conversation with the Shop Chair at Toledo Jeep who he asked if the contract had ever been signed. He didn't know, but said that at a meeting in Detroit an International rep said that they still hadn't figured out what to do about the skilled appeal. George, the lead appellant, has received no communication from the International. Frank suggested that we need outside pressure and should contact the Association for Union Democracy. George agreed to contact them. The International has been sitting on this for almost a year. Someone suggested we ask AUD to write a letter for us. George will make a request to see all of the verbatim minutes of the IEB meetings since we filed our appeal to see if it has been discussed.

Structure

We discussed the need for more structure. We need a treasurer. Wendy is willing to continue for now. We need a constitution. Should we form a non-profit? It is a lot of paperwork to become a 501 C-3 and the only advantage is someone can make a tax-deductible donation. We'll review the bylaws of Teamsters for a Democratic Union and New Directions Movement, but we are not at that level organizationally. We are out of money. There was a surplus when people reimbursed Nick for web expenses, but that will go to Dianne and Martha to help with their printing expenses. We need a bank account, but now the banks ask for a charter, bylaws, etc. Wendy will check with a credit union about opening a "club" account. We need a decision-making process between calls. That should be a steering committee, it can be somewhat loose. We need to define membership and what constitutes a chapter. We need to pay the church \$150 for use of the hall for the Speakout. We need some very simple bylaws. We need to be more "vigilant" about asking for money.

Solidarity with GM workers in Colombia

The support for the fired injured workers, who have held an encampment outside the US embassy for over a year and just ended a hunger strike that lasted over three weeks, has been terrific. We participated in a demonstration outside GM headquarters and a second at Hart Plaza. It was moved from the Ren Cen after GM agreed to mediation and asked that there be no demonstrations at their facilities. We should be prepared for the possibility that negotiations will break down and we will have to be back out demonstrating. Ron spoke at the Hart Plaza for AWC [and Frank and Martha spoke at the earlier protest]. The UAW is sending people [from Health and Safety and the GM department we later learned] to Colombia to be part of the mediation. All of this happened through US and international activists applying pressure. A question was asked if the rep assigned from the UAW DC office to handle international issues was facilitating this and what is the status of that position—who is in charge of international relations now for the UAW?

Next meeting call will be Sunday, September 23 at 3 PM to be chaired by Judy Wraight.

Meeting adjourned

Martha Grevatt, August 30, 2012