

# Minutes of the Autoworker Conference call of July 22, 2012

**Chair:** Wendy

**Notetaker:** Dianne

**Present:** Brett (1700), Dean (699), Dianne (235), Dick (909), Eric (600), Frank (909), Gary (600), George (12), Jeff (3000), Jerrod (149), Lindsay (707), Mary (2000), Martha (869), Peggy (1112), Reggie (600), Ron (600), Scott (551), Wendy (22)

## 1. **Arbitrator's decision against the UAW grievance regarding "equality of sacrifice" at Ford.**

This grievance was a face-saving move on the part of the UAW International. Because of the grievance many Ford workers voted yes on the contract, thinking they would get a big settlement (\$30,000). Without that grievance the contract could well have been voted down.

Most on the call expected a negative outcome because the grievance didn't have any legs to stand on. All that the language required was that the company "report" to the union. The contract language from the 2007 agreement was modified in 2009 and then terminated under the 2011 agreement, when concessions were made permanent.

What this decision demonstrates is the failure of the leadership's strategy. Relying on arbitrators is not going to work. There must be a fightback strategy that develops on the shop floor. We can't allow ourselves to be snookered by the leaders, who promise to fix everything down the line. We need to respect ourselves and recognize that we need to discuss, decide and then vote. As Reggie notes, we still have due process.

There is a petition to reopen the contract that Scott, Jeff and Paula have been circulating. In Jeff & Paula's plant, more than half the work force has signed! Since the arbitrator's decision Jeff is getting messages and calls from people who want to circulate it in their plant.

Some report workers believe there will be retaliation and are scared to sign a petition or take action. Others on the call report success. It's clear there is some anger on the floor.

What are people willing to do? Will circulating the petition and getting signatures encourage further action?

Ford workers on the call agree to a) put together a press release about the decision and b) circulate the petition. Drafting committee for press release: Gary, Jeff, Jerrod, Lindsey, Mary, Reggie, Ron, Scott. (Scott is drafting a leaflet to put out in his plant and this will be ready Monday or Tuesday so committee can use this as the basis for the press release.)

UPDATE: Both Scott & Gary put out leaflets on the issue. The drafting committee decided it would be best to put both up on the Autoworker Caravan website and not issue another statement.

## 2. **Local agreements**

Seems like a record number of local agreements have not signed a year after the national agreement. In one plant the negotiations were suspended last year and have not resumed. In another case, they were just broken off. In some plants the agreement was voted down once or twice and there has been no further attempt to address the issues.

Lindsey reported on the Canadian situation, where the contract is coming up this September and the CAW leadership has already signaled the need for concessions. The feeling is that the auto work force in Canada is small and will be squeezed because it is outnumbered. Chrysler will be first in line, which is not a good situation given management's aggressive tone. Many are actually predicting that by the 2015 contract there may be a lockout. The CAW may merge with CEP.

3. **The speak out on working conditions in auto** is set for Sunday, September 9 at 2PM. The subcommittee working on the planning sent out a draft leaflet. Recommendation is to print between 2,000-4,000 leaflets depending on what people in the area between Saginaw and Toledo feel they can distribute. We can also distribute leaflets at the Labor Day Parade in Detroit Monday, September 3.

After discussion, agree to add two more points to our list of issues: lack of local agreements & equality of sacrifice issue.

Think there is the possibility of having delegations come from beyond the Detroit area. We might also think about videotaping testimony.

Dianne will get a price on the leaflet and we'd like to go for the higher number.

We will also send the leaflet out to lists and post on websites with and without labor donated so that people can print out and use in their area as needed.

September 9 subcommittee is Debi, Dianne, Frank, Greg (Lake Orion), Martha, Reggie, Ron, Rosando, & Scott

## 4. **Newsletter**

Feedback on our first newsletter is positive. Important to have articles about what is happening on the shop floor. Plan to get another issue out before the speakout.

Copy on hand includes a walkout at Ford (Ron), a one person, one vote resolution for the next convention (Scott) and an interview with an Italian Fiat worker (and one with a Polish Fiat worker for the next issue.) (George).

Would like to have an article on the equality of sacrifice/reopen the contract petition (Jeff) and one on September 9 speakout. Mary will write up heat issue and how that particularly affects those on alternative work schedules and older workers.

Newsletter committee is Dianne, Frank, Martha & Scott

5. **Next conference call:** Sunday, August 26 at 6PM. Please mark on your calendar!

6. **Report on Jerry Tucker** (which was not given at meeting because of meeting length):

Dianne talked to Jerry earlier in the day. He is in a nursing home and at the end of a 32-day radiation cycle. He is doing better than he had been and is gaining strength and a little weight (after losing 75 lbs.). After he finishes his radiation, he will need chemotherapy. But he has pancreatic cancer so there must be surgery, and then follow up radiation and chemotherapy.

You can send cards to his house and he will definitely get them: Jerry Tucker, 940 Oak Knoll Manor, Webster Grove, MO 63119.