

Autoworker Caravan Conference Call Minutes June 10, 2012

Attending: Chair Martha G. L 869, Minutes Scott H. L 551, Ron L. L 600, Judy W. L 600, Frank H. L 909, George W. L 12, Wendy T. L 22, Diane F. L 235, Peggy C. L 1112, Jeff B. L 3000, Dick D. L 909. Reggie K. L 600, Ray C. L 600

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 with Martha agreeing to chair and Scott and Peggy agreeing to take minutes and compare them.

Agenda item 1) Newsletter

Martha said the newsletter committee was Diane, Frank, Scott and Martha.

She said Scott developed the lay out. Diane and Martha did proof reading and suggested edits. Frank was unavailable for much of the editing process because he was out of town.

Scott speaking about the newsletter. This was our first issue and we are looking for feedback/ criticism for ways to improve the newsletter.

Martha asked if anyone has distributed copies of the newsletter.

Ron has sent it out to the independent Local 600 rank and file e-mail list.

Wendy will be sending it out to several e-mail lists.

Scott and Peggy both plan to get copies at a union printer for distribution in their plants.

Frank said it is a great 1st effort. He is wondering how well it's been received.

Martha suggested we set a date for the next issue.

Dianne suggested every other month.

Peggy suggested every month.

Reggie suggested whatever the frequency that we be nimble enough to add "special issues" when a hot issue surfaces.

The consensus seemed to be every other month with the final decision left to the newsletter committee.

We decided that the next issue should come out a few weeks in advance of the Speak out.

The Detroit members of the newsletter committee, Frank, Dianne and Martha want to know how many people in the area can use so they know how many to print

Agenda item 2) Speakout

Martha reported that the date for a speakout has been postponed several times. It was originally set for June 24th, but since most of us forgot about the May 12th Conference call when details were to be finalized

it has been necessary to postpone. Martha inquired with the priest about dates at the end of July, but the consensus from e-mails was to postpone the speakout until September.

Scott suggested September 9th

Peggy suggested September 16th

Wendy prefers September 9th because it is the weekend following the Labor Day Parade. We could put pamphlets out at the parade.

George informed us that his Jeep Plant will have a six month shutdown beginning August 18th. It will be important to have the flier for the speakout available before then.

Martha said there is a layout [actually it is the text that was ready, the layout still needed to be done] ready so they will be ready in plenty of time.

Ron said that we traditionally have a gathering at the Anchor Bar after the Labor Day Parade. He wondered if that would be too close in time to the speakout, or could be an occasion to build for the speakout.

Wendy said that would be an opportunity to further announce or advertise for the speakout.

Martha motioned to shoot for September 9th, with September 16th as a backup date if the 9th is not available. She thought the priest may be annoyed by the recent frequent changes in dates for the speakout.

Frank agreed to check availability of the church for the speakout on those dates.

Martha said she Rosendo D. Greg W. and Frank are the Committee for the speakout and asked if anyone else would be interested in helping.

Dianne agreed to help on the speakout committee.

Reggie agreed to help with the committee once his overtime is reduced.

Ron offered to fill in for Reggie when he's too busy. Ron also suggested including Debbie M. [Debi, and she has since agreed to be on the committee] since she brought the most new members to the last speakout.

Agenda item 3) Subjects for Speakout : Working Conditions

Peggy said GM is claiming to create new jobs when what they are really doing is moving jobs around. They open a plant talking about the new jobs they created while they cut jobs at other plants. In her area of the plant they eliminated three jobs over the winter. They do that in all the areas.

Reggie talked about eliminating trades people. They have one person doing the work that used to be done by two. This can be a dangerous situation when you are doing maintenance work.

There was rumor of workers being offered a lump sum at Saline to stay with the new company. No one was sure how much or if the workers that stay were keeping their same wage or taking a pay cut with the lump sum.

Reggie said that we need to convince people that lump sum bonuses, buy outs, and signing bonuses are against their best interest.

Scott talked about the new AWS for trades that has been implemented at his plant. Trades are working mandatory twelve hour shifts. Three days one week four days the next. Twelve hours is too long for mandatory hours. Fatigue becomes a safety problem when people have to work twelve hour shifts. Overtime means additional twelve hour shifts.

George said they are in local negotiations and AWS is a major feature of the negotiations. He said production is faced with line speed ups, job overloading, and adverse mix problems.

Diane noted there is a 1949 ruling that states if there is an adverse mix the company must either slow the line down or give additional manpower to the effected jobs during the mix problem.

Frank affirmed that that ruling is still in effect.

George said line speed ups are in response to increased customer demand.

Frank said we should also include a discussion on the bad working conditions at plants in other countries. For instance Columbia GM is cutting injured workers without compensation, Fiat in Italy is affected by contracts negotiated by the UAW. Concessions here lead to demands for concessions there. We need to let people know this is a global struggle against corporate greed.

Ron affirmed that he and Judy made use of the adverse mix letter at the rouge plant.

Dick talked about the Equinox going to Spring Hill. The agreement the UAW approved has outsourced most of the trades. There are only a handful left on each shift. Hours of work and assignment of overtime will be handled at the International level, rather than the local level.

Martha said we need to find ways to make the new AWS's unworkable. When they switch to an AWS and find they can't run as well they may start to reverse this trend.

They are threatening to implement an AWS if they can't get enough workers to voluntarily work Saturdays at Martha's plant.

Agenda item 4) One Member One Vote

George said he liked the pledge sheet. He said it is a nice piece of work.

Martha likes the concept but is concerned with the AFL-CIO graphics on it. She thinks there may be problems similar to the use of the UAW wheel on the newsletter. She suggested using a cartoon or something like that instead.

Wendy informed us of the meeting at Labor Notes she and Scott had with attorney Barbara Harvey to discuss the one member one vote. Wendy said Barbara suggested rather than going with the constitutional language that we have a general resolution.

Wendy looked at past resolutions and they have been of both types: General Resolution and Contract Language changes.

Scott said he recalls Barbara saying that it needs to be simplified. He didn't recall her saying make it a General resolution, rather he remembers her saying to keep it to a single page.

Wendy wondered if the contract language changes could be condensed to a single page.

Ron thought making it one page was a good idea.

Scott said he would work on it to see if he could get it condensed. He will report back at the next conference call.

Scott asked what everyone thought of the pledge sheet that was sent out before the meeting.

Ron had not had time to read it but likes the general idea.

Dick said it is a well written statement.

Wendy likes the idea but hasn't read it carefully

Peggy said she thinks we should be careful how to approach it.

Reggie asked if this would reduce the role of the delegates.

Scott said the One Member One Vote is meant to put the power where it rightfully belongs, with the membership. That would naturally reduce the role of the delegates, but in the process we are working on, the delegates would still have the role of nominations at the convention. Nominees would have to achieve 5% of the delegates in a secret ballot election to be put on the ballot.

Agenda item 5) GM Pension Buy Outs

It was proposed to postpone until Nick could be on the call since he was the one that requested it be put on the agenda, but everyone seemed to want to talk about it anyway.

George said Marchionne has said he is not interested in "de-risking" at Chrysler.

Peggy said this is just another way to squeeze more money from workers. GM is talking about buying out pensions of hourly retirees. She is afraid of what will happen to pensions if they go forward with it. We should come up with a leaflet trying to convince people not to take the pension buy out.

Reggie agreed that we need to educate members about lump sum payments. He said workers are making the wrong choices. This has to do with debt. We get into binds where signing bonuses and buy outs look attractive. They are not thinking things through for the long term.

The companies are offering choices. These decisions are not mandates, but workers are making choices that are against their best interest.

Wendy would like to hear from Nick on this topic.

Scott is afraid that when these workers are bought out that the pension plans may be weakened for the ones that decide not to take the buy out.

Dick said the details of the Pension buy out at GM ARE twenty four pages long. These are not simple buy outs. The full details of both the GM and Ford Salaried workers buy outs are available for download at the Detroit Free Press.

Martha asked if Dick could send out a link to those in an e-mail for the google group.

Dick said he would try to find it and forward it. He also said the GM Salaried Workers Pension Plan is now closed. GM employees are now earning credits under ERISA.

Agenda item 6) Skilled Trades Appeal

Martha said there's nothing new to report. She was hoping the e-mails to the Public Review Board would get the IEB to act.

George suggested that they begin to send letters inquiring about the status of the appeal and request for documentation on a regular basis.

Appearing at Public forums where President King will be appearing and putting him on the spot may be another effective strategy

This might be the best situation for the moment. They are in a position where they can't confirm, can't deny, and can't let it go to the public review board. It is an illustration of how the IEB won't follow their own rules.

Dick asked if we are talking about an actual appeal that has been filed or a request for information for the appeal.

George said an appeal was filed in a timely manner. We are asking for both a request for information and an answer to the appeal.

Ron reminded us that there were a few reporters at the last speak out. The next one may be an opportunity to put some public pressure on the IEB.

Dick stressed sending letters inquiring what point in the process is the appeal at.

George said he will take care of the letters to the Presidents Office.

Agenda item 7) Autoworkers Caravan Structure

A committee was formed to address the structure for AWC. Committee members are Nick, Peggy, Frank, & Martha

Martha suggested we have a Voluntary Steering Committee to set agendas and come up with ideas for events.

Ron said he would have to leave the call very soon. He asked that we move to agenda item about Ford hiring.

There was no dissent to skipping to the Ford Hiring agenda item.

Agenda item 8) Ford Hiring

Ron said new employees at the Saline plant are being offered less than half pay by the new company Faurecia.

Ray Local 600 retiree joined the call.

Scott said Ford has been hiring LTS employees again. The claim is that they are summer help. There have been about 90 LTS hired at Chicago Assembly Plant. They have all expressed a desire to become full time Seniority employees. He also has information that Dearborn Truck has been hiring LTS's also.

Peggy said it is important to remember that we shot down the modification to lift the cap on 2nd Tier employees.

Ron said he doesn't think LTS's count towards that cap. It is a way for the company to cheat the cap.

Agenda item 7) We returned to the structure of AWC

Martha suggested we name a person to chair the next call at the end of each call. That person would then be responsible for developing the agenda and sending out call reminders.

Wendy volunteered to chair the next call.

Martha suggested we spread it around so the same person isn't carrying the burden every time.

Several dates and times were discussed for the next call. We decided upon JUNE 22nd 2012 at 6pm Eastern time.

Ron asked for a point of privilege to thank Ray for joining the call. This was his first call. Ray would be interested in discussing the elimination of the Legal Services on the next call.

The meeting adjourned at 5:32 Eastern Time.