

Autoworker Caravan Conference Call Minutes, November 4, 2012

Present on call: Scott Shingledecker, 598, Dick Danjin, 909, Martha Grevatt, 869 Ron Lare, 600, Judy Wraight, 600, Terri Houldieson, 551, Scott Houldieson, 551, Mike Marzillo, 551, Dianne Feeley, 22 Wendy Thompson, 22 Frank Hammer, 909

Terri chaired

1. Newsletter

Ron suggested Scott and Ron and maybe Judy write a brief article on Ford and the OT issue. It applies to Skilled Trades and production, scheduled for 10.7 hours but forced to work 11.5 hours often. Also want to mention the AWS (Alternative Work Schedules) effect on holidays. Chrysler petition against 3-2-120, skilled appeal, Fiat worker interview also proposed for next issue. Could be a four pager but funds are limited. Proposal from Dick for monthly newsletter on line. People are starving for news. It can be downloaded and printed. We could have an expanded issue on line. The printed edition could be edited for length. This could be posted on Reform your union, sos, etc. The print edition could have excerpts of longer articles posted on line. to print. Videos could be included in electronic issue. We shouldn't abandon hard copy, important to get paper in members hands, they may not seek out the electronic version on their own, but with something in their hands they will. The details can be left to the newsletter committee.

2. One member one vote.

Scott is in contact with labor lawyer Barbara Harvey, lawyer for TDU (Teamsters for a Democratic Union <http://www.tdu.org/>), who gave suggestions, most along Teamster lines / TDU lines. Scott felt to get the amendment passed, because we don't have the luxury of court intervention that led court imposed referendum vote in the Teamsters, we have to keep it simple to get it passed. We can improve it with amendments later. Scott is pretty happy with the draft but will go over Ms. Harvey's suggestions; he will work on it this month and get out before the next conference call.

3. Alternative Work Schedules / Flexible Operating Patterns.

Martha reported on the Chrysler situation. "3-2-120" has A crew Mon-Thurs 10 hours on day shift, B crew Wed-Sat 10 hours on evening shift, C crew Fri, Sat 10 hours on days and Mon, Tues 10 hours on evening. So 2 out of 3 crews are working Saturdays 10 hours straight time. One crew has to switch shifts every few days. It began Nov 5 at Jefferson North Assembly (in Detroit) and has been in effect at Belvidere (Illinois) Assembly, Trenton (Mich) and Dundee (Mich) Engine and some of the Kokomo parts plants. It is coming to Warren Truck, Warren Stamping, Sterling Assembly and Sterling Stamping sometime. There are no definite dates. It is hugely unpopular. Reportedly the union meeting at Sterling Stamping last five hours and the servicing rep was run out of the hall. At WSP Martha, Alex, and other workers have collected 400+ names on a petition and put out a leaflet that got 150-200 to the last union meeting. People spoke against 3-2-120 for almost two hours. A meeting is being held Thursday to plan the next step.

AWSs are creating problems for Ford workers, some of who have Sundays as a regular workday. C crew has Good Friday but not Easter off and they are hoping to be able switch and work Friday and have Easter off as a holiday, but it is unclear how pay rates would be affected for C and B crews if they do work that Friday. At Ford, crews work 10.7 but in emergency situations OT rules thrown out. A breakdown of more than 4 hrs is considered an emergency situation. On the same day with no notice workers are told to stay 11.5 hours. Work is not forced on contractual holidays but is mandatory on holiday weekends for those with Saturday or Sunday as a regular workday. This Christmas workers are off from Monday, 12/24 to Tues, 1/1, but Sat and Sun in between are not holidays, some are scheduled to work for straight time. Companies are setting stage to reconfigure holidays, to get workers used to working them. It's easier for them with legacy workers leaving.

4. Structure

Frank apologized for not doing more with the structure committee and welcomed anyone to replace him on the committee (Frank, Nick, Martha, Wendy). We discussed that while it may take time to work out bylaws we need to define membership. The first step is to clarify our mission statement. We agreed that we should review the "who we are" statement printed in the first two issues of the newsletter, give feedback, reach agreement on that statement, and move forward from there. We need to get everyone interested in our work to join the google group. Anyone wanting to be in the group must give their email address to Wendy, Wthomp4490@aol.com, who will send them an invitation. They must respond to the invitation to join the group.

5. Skilled appeal

Lead Appellant George Windau received a letter of denial dated October 30, 2012. Martha summarized the contents of the letter. The emphasis is on the claim that rejecting the agreement would lead to arbitration, that the investigation of the reasons for the no vote was adequate, that the reasons for the no vote were "predominantly economic", that past practices governing separate ratification (including those cited in the 1974 PRB Poszich decision) were adhered to and that local officials who were on the conference call leading up to the decision did not have a predisposition to support ratification. Frank, who also read the letter, said that the union is saying it is essentially boxed into corner and is saying we're in a new era where we can't go back and renegotiate anything. The length (14 pages) of the letter was due to repetition. It was a victory that they responded. Their arrogance was shown in their not explaining why it took so long. We think the time limit to appeal is 30 days. [yes, that is in the Constitution, mg]. We need to come up with a list of questions to ask the Executive Director of the PRB to be sure we follow proper procedure. These should be limited to process and not discuss content. We should ask about discovery, whether we are entitled to see evidence the International will present.

6. School of the Americas (SOA) protest in Columbus, GA November 17-18.

Martha, Frank and Debi Muncy are active in the committee of UAW members and staff supporting the efforts of School of the Americas Watch to close the school, where torture techniques have been taught since the 1950s to military personnel of the Americas. We have been trying to get the UAW to be more active. This year the UAW is sending a bus from Detroit, and will send two if necessary. The bus is free to members and non-members. UAW members on the bus will be joined by youth and peace activist from Ann Arbor, Saline, and Detroit. For labor to win in this era there is a need for International solidarity, members urged to go. Frank will resend the email with bus and hotel information [which was done].

7. Auto show.

For several years we have been demonstrating outside the auto show, but the actions the past two years have been small. We agreed it was a good idea to get started early and try to join with other groups, such as environmental groups, especially now that Hurricane Sandy has demonstrated concretely that climate change is not a myth. We worked to build May Day with many other folks, the theme was "save the workers, save the community, save the planet." That would be a good theme for the auto show protest. Martha offered to contact the May Day committee to see if there is interest, but right now everyone is busy and not ready to volunteer for a committee. We want to bring in issues liked climate change and foreclosure, but also the burning autoworker issue: AWS. There could be speakers to report on UAW involvement in issues like SOA and eviction defense. It would be good to have something in the newsletter, at least the on line version, on UAW activism in eviction defense.

8. Colombia update.

Jorge is currently in Portland, OR. He may go to the SOA action [that is confirmed, he will be on the bus with us.] He may attend a Brazil autoworkers meeting. The religious delegation met GM executives, including Cathy Clegg. This created pressure on GM to negotiate. GM wants to get this behind them but they don't see legitimacy of Asotrecol's claims. The UAW is supposed to be in conversation with GM, there will be more pressure after the election. Solidarity activity may be stepped up. The encampment is ongoing. They need donations and Frank will send info for sending contributions.

9. U of M Flint meeting.

Dick attended and considered it good sized, about 75 in attendance. There were good comments and there was good energy. Most attendees went to a bar afterwards and talked until almost 7:30. Tom Adams, one of the presenters, is working on getting a video of the meeting out.

10. Next meeting

The next meeting will be Sunday, December 9 at 3:00 PM

NOTE: WE NEED A VOLUNTEER TO CHAIR THE MEETING. THE CHAIR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PREPARING THE AGENDA AND SENDING OUT THE REMINDER NOTICE.

Meeting adjourned.

Martha Grevatt, November 6, 2012.