

General Union Meeting
March 6, 2013
Minutes

The meeting began at 2:33 pm.

The minutes of the last GUM (Feb 13) were presented. A motion was made to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Constitution and Bylaws Revisions

Rich spoke about the changes being made to the Local's Constitution and Bylaws. Our constitution is at least thirteen years old. There were provisions related to elections and officers' job descriptions, among other issues, that needed revision. Therefore, we wanted guidance from our membership in revising the Constitution and Bylaws. We felt that instead of taking a piecemeal and incremental approach to modifying existing documents, we should consider them as new documents. The constitution committee consists of Bill Vincenti, Jennifer Higgins and Rich Wolfson.

A motion was made to present the Constitution and Bylaws ("First Reading"). The links to the new documents would be sent to the members via email. They are also in the e-bulletin. So far we have received some typographical corrections. At 4:30 today you will receive the new documents. We will also send a paper notice to every member. The vote will take place on April 10. A 2/3rd majority among the full-dues paying members will be required to approve the new Constitution and Bylaws, (and a minimum of 30 members should be present). In the event substantive changes or amendments are proposed, there is a process for that.

Rich spoke about some of the substantive changes being made to the Constitution and Bylaws. For instance, voting rights are clearly spelled out. Only full-dues paying members are allowed to vote. In terms of election rules, the old structure had a nominations committee that put a slate of candidates on the floor. Now we have proposed one elections committee, which would get the required signatures to be on the slate. If it were a non-contested election, ELVIS would suffice. Otherwise ballots would be mailed out.

The Officers group has been expanded with two new positions created. One, a position of Faculty Coordinator, analogous to that for the professional staff and librarians, to make the three positions comparable. Two, the position of a liaison between the MSU Senate and Local 1904 would be created. The liaison will be appointed by consensus of the elected officers and approved by the Executive Board.

The names of some positions have been changed. Instead of Internal VP, External VP, and Negotiations Coordinator, we will have a Vice President for Internal Affairs, Vice President for External Affairs, and Vice President for Negotiations.

We have also codified what the e-board actually does. In the past there was an e-board, but it functioned in a rather unwieldy way. Going forward, we would constitute an e-board that will meet twice annually.

The treasurer will present a document in the September meeting, providing a summary of the state of the Local's budget. At the end of the year, a financial report will be presented.

We are trying to focus the work of the Local on specific issues. Our workload has expanded considerably over the last couple of years.

The floor was opened for questions. In response to a question, Rich said that we are doing away with write-ins, to simplify the process. Anyone can run in the elections by collecting thirty signatures.

Mike Heller said that, at present, the Local spends \$14k-15k monthly in the dues paid to the Council. Additionally, we pay \$20k monthly to the National. The National-AFT recommends that dues be collected in a certain way. In effect, what they are saying is that the dues increase should be passed on to the membership. We use a different approach, of fixed member dues, to avoid confusion and to reduce complexity.

An upcoming issue with respect to the dues is the Local's membership in AFT-NJ. This would amount to an annual increase in dues of \$72/member. Not only would this extra payment wipe out our modest annual surplus, we would still not be able to raise adequate funds. We simply cannot afford to pay these dues. For now and the next 3-4 years, the Council and the National are paying these dues. There are efforts being made to reduce the NJ-AFT dues. Eight out of eleven locals have a signed a letter that the dues should be reduced by 33%.

Mike said that 59.4 % of our collected dues are being spent on dues paid to the Council and the National.

In summary, Rich said that if members compared old documents (Constitution and Bylaws) to the new ones, everything is different. However, most of these are not substantial differences.

Essential Services Employees

Recently a meeting took place between the administration and the Local. We are also working with the CNJSCL, and have an interesting strategy to pursue this matter. Ken said that certain AFT members in the library were recently told that they were essential employees, but no one received a written notification. The administration's line of reasoning on this issue is that someone has to take care of the students in the resident halls, in case of emergencies when the campus is closed.

Jennifer said that she is collecting signatures on a petition in support of Barbara Buono's candidacy. Only registered democrats who live in New Jersey can sign the petition. If anyone has a friend who would like to sign, please let Jennifer know.

Rich said that the past practice has been for the local to not endorse anyone in the governor's election. We only endorse candidates and give money in the local elections. Notwithstanding this, the Council and the Local have decided to endorse Barbara Buono running against Governor Christie. Rich said that his personal opinion is that the race is far from over. For electoral purposes—that is, for political contributions—we can only use the COPE funds. For the record, Buono is the only person who said health care should have been negotiated, not legislated. Needless to say, if she is elected, Buono is going to be helpful during the next contract negotiations.

In response to a question about the low voter turnout in the Hudson and Essex counties in the last gubernatorial elections, Rich said that we will work with the AFL-CIO and Essex-Hudson Council to ensure a higher turnout.

Librarian Report

The Essential Services Employees issue is the only important one to have come up recently.

Grievances Report

Kathy reported that we had a Step-1 hearing for the payment of the Local President's release time. She also received a lot of questions from members about promotions, reappointments, vacation time and increment calculations.

Rich reminded everyone that there have been mistakes made on people's salaries. There have been instances of over/under payment. Everyone should, therefore, pay attention to their salary.

Also, re: W2, we have asked the administration to issue an explanation. Tomorrow you should receive your W2-C.

Instructional Services Specialist/Clinical Services Specialist

Ken reported that there was a tussle with the administration on the issue of voting rights of ISS/CSS. The agreement now is that the ISS/CSS personnel cannot vote on departmental matters.

Also, it has come to our notice that there is a Dean who wants faculty to use a standard CV template. Overall, personnel procedures are highly variable from college to college. Only two colleges, for instance, have approved procedures pertaining to personnel issues.

There are also questions that have emerged about the new General Education committee. Some of these issues pertain to terms of employment. For instance, there are words like accountability in the document. For instance, what does accountability mean in the context of advisement? What kind of training is being imparted to the faculty on advisement? Basically, they are interested in having faculty administer the new Gen Ed.

Judith Hain also wishes to revise the faculty roles and responsibilities document. We are also trying to put in one place a set of guidelines for reappointment, etc. She is cleaning up the documents, and our goal is to make sure there is no change in terms of employment. Rich noted that we have had Deans in the past who had poor knowledge of the historical record regarding procedures and personnel action.

Career Development

Dana announced that the deadline for submissions of Career Development applications is April 5.

If anyone is interested in serving on the UPSRB, please contact us. Also, we have a long list of negotiable items about which we are waiting to hear back from the administration.

Tuition Waiver

Betsy's report was presented by Jennifer. The Board of Trustees in 2010 passed a policy that the administration will decide on a course-to-course basis whether to provide reimbursement. We have been able to get a hearing scheduled on this issue. Books and fees are not covered, but Career Development Funds can be used for that purpose and for travel expenses.

Rich said that Career Development could also be used for certification. The upper limit on individual grants is \$4000, although the committee can do whatever it wants. In essence, Career Development means you are requesting a committee to assist you in improving your performance in your current job.

Rich reported that in the last Board of Trustees meeting, they approved a facilities master plan. MSU has applications pending for \$350 million in infrastructure spending.

Mike said that the One Montclair project seems to be lagging. There has been a lot of cost escalation. At recently as last year the Provost said that the project is going to cost \$10 million. The present cost estimates are in the range of \$75-\$100 million. The project has been mismanaged from day one. It affects us all in what we do.

Mike said that there are other sources of funding available, apart from "Building our

Future” bonds issue, for constructing infrastructure.

Old Business: Jennifer said that regarding Sick Time, there seems to be some errant supervision. You do not need a doctor’s note for availing sick time. If you are taking sick leave for more than five days, you would need a doctor’s note. The doctor’s note goes to Betty Pollino.

Meeting Adjourned at 4 pm