

SEIU Local 721 Executive Board Minutes
Tuesday, May 14, 2007

The meeting convened at 10:00 a.m. with a planned ending of 5:00 p.m.

Board members in attendance: Annelle Grajeda; Bob Schoonover; Annette Jeffries; Joaquin Avalos; Shannon Boggs; Greg Hagans; Grace Corse; Linda Dent; Tony Bravo; Stephen Butler; Angela Portillo; Grace Corse; Rosie Martinez; Harold Sterker; Kathleen Austria; and Arnella Sims.

Also present: Cynthia Molette, Arturo Diaz; Tracy Boykins; Kenn Turner, Keenan Sheedy, Erma Hall-Wood, Ruby Dye and Lucy Guerrero.

The agenda was reviewed and suspended to hear issues brought to the Board by member guests. Some concerns included questions regarding the union's caucuses and committees and guidelines to participate in these committees.

In a prior meeting, officers discussed LACLA; AFRAM; CBTU; the launch of a National Health Care Union; a possibility of 90 slots for the MPAC Conference in September 2007; and the 2008 SEIU Convention in Puerto Rico. Also, for participation in any of these events a criterion of a monthly \$10 COPE contribution has been adopted by the Board.

Diaz renewed his request for a list of Board Members, the minutes from the meetings, the money and where it is going as a review of the expenditures needs to be shared with the members.

Ruby also made a request for minutes. There was concern that Board Members are not elected. Dues structures for every Local that formed 721 were requested. Members are upset and or concerned about where their money is being spent. The Newsletter needs to contain the Board Minutes and now they are not available. The website, the budget and the COPE payments may be unfair or wrong. The Union needs an ongoing educational piece. The agenda was not provided to guests. A request was made to know what union members dues are paying for. Does everybody pay dues? All members are not agency shop and a request was made to provide this information to all members.

Kenn Turner made a request for information as to Shop Stewards carrying a large percentage of the workload. He indicated that stewards are in tune to the members. There was a recommendation and discussion on giving some recognition possibly a dinner and/or picnics to bring stewards together, show appreciation of the work done.

A motion to adopt the Board agenda was MSC.

Discussion of the President's Report

Health Care Workers

There are 9 million health care workers in the U.S.A. Only one million are unionized. Most of those are members in SEIU. Dennis Rivera, President of SEIU 1199 will be leaving his post to organize the remaining 8 million health care workers. There will be a launch of a national health care union in Baltimore 6/22-24. We want health care workers from our union to participate in this organizing program and new union.

The Property Services Division, Public Division, and Health Systems Division will have their identities made more visible, too. We will determine what the percentages are of SEIU public health care workers. We want breakdowns, a profile, etc. of 721 members who fit into these categories. We are reviewing all the best practices and where we will go with our efforts.

The role of Student Workers was discussed and will be explored as we organize them.

Ventura County – Organizing Campaign against a decertification effort by some Ventura County Employees. Ballots will be counted on June 13th.

SEIU 721 is aware that temp employees are not organized in both Riverside and Ventura Counties and we are working on plans now to target them.

The American Red Cross members are meeting here at the Virgil office. They have expressed appreciation for the representation they are receiving. Scheduling for them is a problem. The system in use causes lost time, and because of that problem, lost money. A four-day strike occurred last Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The third major and most problematic of issues are blood donor issues. Judy Chu, former assembly member was at a Pomona rally to support American Red Cross staff.

City of Los Angeles workers are engaged in interest based bargaining for 8,000 workers. This was the first time CAO showed up. The pay inequities were discussed. Bargaining is expected to begin late this month.

L.A. County Unit 723 has indicated interest in using the interest based bargaining process. The RNs have made headway on some issues. Facilitators in the Los Angeles area from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service were suggested as a resource.

An Orange County-Blue Collar Unit in an April contract kick-off of a 450 person bargain unit membership campaign, gained more than 10% increase of members in the unit.

5,500 Ventura County members' contracts expire in June. They're at the table now.

Social workers in L.A. and Riverside counties met and will be meeting again. The goal is to settle as many issues as possible to focus on workload language. The hope is that the Department and the Unions can do this work jointly.

Coachella Valley Water District got 2.5% at 55 retirement plan. Now the employer will pick up the entire cost of health benefits.

LA County Superior Court employees got a 10% salary increase over three years. Clinica Romero has a 1 year agreement in place with 6% pay increase. Our 721 strength was leveraged to bring about this win. A 12% reduction in the Kaiser premium led to an increase in pay for the workers.

A June 2 Bargaining Conference has 114 bargaining chairs set to attend. Goal is to set some common bargaining standards and practices.

Politics and Health Care Reform are moving quickly. Ads were filmed at California Hospital and will be seen locally. On the state and national level there are coalitions. Beth Capell, a healthcare consultant is representing us. Public sector health training for other skilled and licensed workers is needed and money will be set aside. Also, we are redefining the role of the public sector and its ability to compete with the privates while keeping the safety net in place.

Politics

There are projections of potential challenges to the LA County Board of Supervisors.

Riverside City Council - there is a possibility of a win by solidifying Dom Betro's ward. Art Garcia a Machinist union member began precinct walking out of our 721 office. Polls of Latinos was conducted and he polled really well. We are showing some victories, getting respect for what we can do now.

A Town Hall meeting will take place in the auditorium May 14 @ 7:30 p.m. at the Local 721 Virgil office to interview candidates for the 37th CD, a vacancy created by the death of Juanita Millender-McDonald.

40 custodians in Public Works are now County employees, not contract workers. A June 1st welcoming event is scheduled at the Department of Public Works.

Kaiser rates for next year are significantly lower than ever. Plan year 2008 has a 2% increase on the premium. We have forced Kaiser to show us the documentation of the needed increases.

Last Tuesday May 22, we celebrated Nurse Recognition Week. The CAO implemented a career ladder program with many flaws. Nurses and staff continue to meet with the County to address these issues

Riverside County Caseloads

The new Regional Director has had no response from DPSS/HR. A letter has been forwarded and gotten front page press. Hot Skills is impacting Riverside County the same way as in Los Angeles.

L.A. DPSS

Phillip Browning is the new department head who is familiar with the work we have done on a statewide level.

500 S. Virgil Property

We need to grow. The time to sell is now. Shriner Children's Hospital is for sale. A new membership card will be mailed to all members in the near future.

A bill in Congress Anti-family/Anti-worker party was holding up the public service forgiveness bill is being worked on with the public defender. The bill would help to pay off student loans for PD and DA attorneys.

The following expenditures were unanimously approved:

East L.A. Community Corporation - \$750.00;
Muslim American Society Freedom Foundation - \$1,000.00;
Korean Immigrant Workers Alliance (KIWA) - \$1,000.00;
L.A. County Federation of Labor Community Services - \$1,500.00;
L.A. Neighborhood Land Trust - \$2,000.00;

Martin Cubilla Lezcano in support of Security Guards in Panama working for G4S - \$2,500.00.

Homework Assignment

1. E-mail butcher paper in typed version to all members.
2. Goal comparison.
3. Prioritize from year to year to long term.
4. Next meeting starting at 10:00 a.m. with quorum.

Agenda - Recognition of our stewards.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.