

PTE 17 Seattle Chapter

Meeting Minutes December 8, 2016

Chapter Officers present:

Ulysses Hillard, Secretary/Acting President
Gabriela Vega Kock, Treasurer

Meeting was called to order by Ulysses Hillard at 12:02 pm, with 36 members present (quorum reached). Attendees introduced themselves, including PTE 17 Business Rep. Guadalupe Perez.

Officers Report

Gabriela Vega Kock reported a bank account balance of \$5617.17 as of October 31, 2016. Quarterly financial reports are due to the Union office. She noted that newly elected officers need to visit Seattle Municipal Credit Union to obtain signing authority on the account.

Ulysses noted that the minutes from the November meeting were not available, but they would be ready for approval at the January meeting.

Stewards Report

Joe Steinmeyer relayed an incident involving a City Light Meter Reader who was confronted by a racist customer while attempting to read his electric meter. The reader's supervisor issued a Safety Hazard Alert Bulletin to alert employees of the encounter, and advised employees not to enter the property in question. He was immediately summoned to the SCL HR Director's office to explain his action. He explained the safety of city employees was his first concern, and asked for guidance as to how the situation should have been handled. It was decided that he was justified in sending the SHAB, detectives from SPD were sent to speak to the customer, and SCL HR Director DaVonna Johnson sent out a memo reminding field employees that they are entitled to the same protections against threats and harassment at their work sites afforded all employees.

Ulysses requested names of stewards who are not included on the master list of stewards. Debra Pate asked that her name be added.

A request was made to have Business Rep. Ray Sugarman's photo and contact information posted where appropriate so members know who their Rep is.

Emma Allen noted that 15 temporary workers at the SPU call center had their assignments terminated. She asked that PTE 17 investigate the viability of filing a grievance on their behalf. She also made the point that the city's use of temps in this manner has created a de facto second class of employees at the city.

Staff Report

Guadalupe spoke about contract issues subject to ongoing negotiations known as 'reopeners' – telecommuting, flex scheduling, gender equity, and paid parental and family leave. The union has proposed twelve weeks paid leave to be used to care for a family member, e. g: care of a new child, elderly parent, sick spouse or domestic partner. The city's counter offer was four weeks paid parental leave and four week paid family leave. The parties have tentatively agreed

to eight weeks additional paid parental leave, for a total of twelve weeks, and four weeks paid family leave. The union's goal is to increase the amount of paid family leave to eight to twelve weeks. One item still to be negotiated is 'draw down' of employees leave time (sick leave, vacation) in order to be eligible for paid parental or family leave. Guadalupe explained that having to draw down sick leave and vacation to become eligible for parental or family leave could create a gender equity issue since it is usually the female employee who misses work to care for a new child after they have exhausted parental leave. A compromise may be reached allowing affected employees to retain two weeks sick leave and one week vacation when utilizing paid parental or family leave. A Tentative Agreement is expected to be submitted for member vote in the near future. Tim Lowry commented that the effect of the draw down would be that members would be incentivized use sick and vacation time in advance of any of life's activities. Blake Morrison asked whether sick and/or vacation time will be allowed to be used in combination with family or parental leave. Guadalupe explained that as long as sick/vacation was drawn down first any remaining time could be used in conjunction or on top of paid parental or family leave. Tom Barr asked if domestic partners would be covered, Guadalupe said they would. Emily Reardon asked if the family leave could be used after the parental leave was exhausted. Guadalupe replied that it may be possible to do so by utilizing Family Medical Leave, provided the employee qualifies for FML. The city's intent is that parental and family leave would be separate events. Guadalupe said the Tentative Agreement would be posted on the PTE 17 website as soon as it was finalized.

Guadalupe noted that the city's head of Labor Negotiations, David Braccilano is retiring in March. In the interim, the city has lost several negotiators, and has filled those positions with HR employees with no negotiating experience. This has resulted in an increased workload for union business reps.

Old Business

Denise Krownbell reported that her managers are receptive to workers concerns about open space planning in her unit. She and her co-workers have submitted a list of items they need addressed prior to implementing changes to work spaces. Management has committed to passing this information on to City Light planners. Denise recommended that if you have a sympathetic manager, members should work with them to at the very least, slow the process down so that changes can be bargained before they are implemented. Denise will provide a list of topics that she and her co-workers submitted. Ulysses asked members to provide relevant information (how many people occupy an affected floor, how many restrooms are available, number of elevators serving that floor) to him or Ray Sugarman. Guadalupe requested stewards send a letter to the appropriate HR office stating their understanding that org xxx is undergoing space planning that has not been the subject of impact bargaining, and request that they cease and desist until that has been done, and cc your union rep. Ulysses asked if an email template would be helpful to members. Denise agreed to work with Guadalupe to create one. Bill Benzer suggested members approach their supervisor so they are on notice before elevating the issue to HR. Guadalupe agreed members should voice their concerns to their supervisors if they are comfortable doing so, and clarified that supervisors should be informed about proposed changes members feel would be detrimental to work performance and conditions, but that steward should also email their HR office to request that they halt any changes to workplaces until they have been negotiated with the union. Information about what options management has in redesigning workplaces should also be requested. She said some supervisors and managers have been supportive of the union's efforts to make sure changes are responsive to members needs, and also asked that members who have already had their workplaces modified to contact the union and relate their experiences.

Tim Lowry reported that he had heard of HR telling members on alternative work schedules that they were not eligible to take leave without pay on holidays. He explained that if a holiday falls on a 9 or 10 hour work day, the member receives 8 hours of holiday pay and may use vacation, leave without pay or comp time to make up the difference. He provided documentation citing the Collective Bargaining Agreement between PTE 17 and the city, and Alternative Work Schedule Agreement and requested this information be attached to the meeting minutes. (see attachment) In the meantime, Tim will send an electronic copy to Guadalupe, who will provide it to stewards.

Yeshi Ray inquired about Melissa Newton's status as a steward. She has been appointed, but has not completed steward training. Guadalupe suggested she email Ray, and he could provide training. Formal steward training will take place in the spring.

Ulysses reported on Executive Board Election results; for President, Lois Watt received 800 votes, Ulysses received 134.

Ulysses made a motion granting signing authority for chapter expenditures to newly elected and returning officers: Denise Krownbell, President; Mary Davis, Vice President; Gabriela Vega Kock, Treasurer; Joe Steinmeyer, Secretary. Motion was seconded by Tim Lowry and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Ulysses said he and Ray are putting together training on Loudermill hearings for stewards and hope to have it available in February or March. Interested stewards should contact Ulysses or Ray.

Denise announced that next year chapter meetings will be held in room 1600 SMT. Unfortunately the room we use currently was already booked.

Ulysses spoke about upcoming threats to public employee unions in the courts. He predicted that in the future, due to declining membership, PTE 17 would not be able provide the quality of representation we currently have. He explained his reason for remaining involved in the union was the core group of members who continually show up to meetings and otherwise participate in their union.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm.

