

PTE Local 17
Seattle Chapter Meeting Minutes
February 8th, 2018

Chapter Officers Present

Denise Krownbell, President
Mary Davis, Vice President
Darren Wilson, Treasurer
Joe Steinmeyer, Secretary

Denise called the meeting to order at 12:00pm, with 28 members in attendance (quorum reached). Attendees introduced themselves, including Local 17 Business Representative and acting Co-Executive Director Amy Bowles. Minutes from the previous meeting, 1/11/18 were approved with one abstention.

Officers Reports

Denise reminded REC delegates of the upcoming REC meeting on March 10th at the Hotel Murano in Tacoma. She asked any delegate unable to attend to let her know so an alternate can be named. Denise also reported that the next steward training will be held February 28th.

Business Representative's Report

Amy provided an update on the latest Coalition of City Unions meeting which was attended by Mayor Durkin. It's a promising sign that the Mayor may be open to a more productive relationship with labor unions than the previous mayor. The expiration of the current contract and the related re-openers were discussed. To that end, Amy said the CCU has filed an information request with SDHR. Talks on the re-opener items should begin no later than April.

Amy is still Co-Executive Director of the Local (along with Denise Cobden), while the investigation of ED Behnaz Nelson is completed. Amy noted that like any personnel investigation, the details of the investigator's report will be kept confidential. Mary pointed out that, per the Local Constitution, the REC has termination authority over the Executive Director, and asked where the authority for discipline short of termination lies, and noted that the Constitution list the REC as the governing body, the Executive Board is responsible to the REC, and the Executive Director is responsible to them. Amy said it was the Board's understanding that they have authority in discipline matters short of termination.

Amy said the Mayor has started an interdepartmental team to address harassment issues in city employment. Their first charge is to address the lack of anti-harassment training in the city. Amy will also be part of the team, along with representatives from SDHR, the Mayor's office and City Council. Tia Jones asked why no city employees were on the team. Amy has requested that employee representatives be included, and that will happen once a selection process is in place. Denise encouraged members to reach out city council members and voice their concerns about this, or any other matter. Even if you don't live in Seattle, you have a right to express your concerns as a city employee. Ulysses Hillard made the point that training people what to do when confronted with harassing behavior, as a victim or a bystander, may be more effective than another round of anti-harassment training which historically has had no effect on harassers. Tia asked whether the team would be looking at the historical culture of harassment (looking at complaints on record in each department) in developing training, or focused on more recent issues. Amy noted that she was named to the team only this morning, but was intent on addressing the addressing the dysfunctional culture.

Deb Pate asked about the possibility of the Local creating a data base of harassment complaints in order to better track and analyze them.

New Business

Joel Vancil raised the issue of new department policies being issued and what notice members can expect from the union that a new policy has been implemented. A discussion followed relating to communication issues between members and Reps. Amy urged any member with an issue regarding a Rep's failure to return their calls to contact the Co-Executive Director with their concerns. Denise said that with changes to the Local's internal structure, including the reduction in the number of city Reps from 4 to 3, members shouldn't hesitate to be the 'squeaky wheel', and not give up when their initial phone call or email doesn't elicit a response. The issue of shop stewards' role and what they can do to assist the Reps in being a bridge between members and Reps was explored. Stewards are encouraged to work with their Reps to establish a mode of communication that works for them.

Old Business

Denise noted that contract re-openers regarding wage inequities will begin this spring. The intent of the re-opener is to establish a methodology for wage comparisons to be used in negotiating the next contract.

Good of the Order

Ulysses made a motion to support the striking Seattle school bus drivers by contributing \$200 to the Teamsters Local 174 strike fund. A friendly amendment was tabled to raise the contribution to \$500. The motion and amendment were passed by unanimous voice vote.

Denise announced an event to be held on February 14th from 4 to 6 pm at City Hall to raise awareness about harassment issues within city government. This event is being presented by Seattle Silence Breakers, a group of city employees and other concerned parties, to address issues of workplace harassment in all forms.

Minutes by Joe Steinmeyer