

PTE 17 Seattle Chapter

Meeting Minutes January 11th 2018

Officers Present

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

Denise called the meeting to order at 12:05pm, with 37 members present (quorum reached). Attendees introduced themselves, including Local 17 Business Representatives Amy Bowles and Shaun Van Eyk. Ray Ceasar, Local 17 Executive Board Trustee and Shop Steward, administered the oath of office to Chapter Officers for 2018. Denise Krownbell, President, Mary Davis, Vice President, Darren Wilson, Treasurer, and Joe Steinmeyer, Secretary, were sworn in for 2018.

Minutes for the previous meeting, 12/14/17, were approved with one abstention. There was one correction to the spelling of incoming REC Delegate Sukhpreet “Monty” Dhaliwal. Apologies, Monty!

New Business and Business Representatives’ Reports

Amy thanked members for attending the 1st Chapter meeting of 2018, and reminded members to make sure their contact info is current with the Local. She reported that the Executive Board met January 7th, and voted to place Executive Director Behnaz Nelson on administrative leave, pending an investigation of administrative issues that have been raised with the Board. An independent investigator has been retained to ensure due process, and will report their findings to the Board. Details of the investigation will remain confidential, as they would with any personnel investigation. Amy asked for members’ support and patience while the issue is being resolved. Amy and Denise Cobden, Business Rep for King County IT, City of Tacoma, and Pierce County, will serve as co-Executive Directors in the interim. Amy and Shaun assured the members the stability and health of the Local are not in jeopardy. They both remarked on the cohesive manner Local 17 staff exhibited in the wake of this issue. Amy will determine the source of the money used to retain the attorney conducting the investigation.

Amy said the Local continues to prepare for the Supreme Court ruling later this year (*Janus v AFSME*), which is expected to require unions to provide representation to all employees, whether they pay dues or choose to ride on the backs of those who do. Shaun has been participating in ‘right to work’ round tables with the Coalition of City Unions to develop outreach programs for new members. He announced that Adrienne Thompson, former Government Affairs Director for PTE 17, left that position to become Mayor Durkin’s staff as

Labor Liaison. Along with the election of Teresa Mosqueda, formerly of the Washington State Labor Council, to the City Council, this should create a more reasonable environment for negotiating with the city.

Amy spoke about meeting City Council members to discuss sexual harassment throughout city employment. A discussion followed centered on Harry "Joe" Fithian, a former Library supervisor guilty of sexual harassment who recently was hired as supervisor at SPU. Although he did not supervise Local 17 members at the Library, he will in his position at SPU. Local 17 has put SPU on notice that this is a problem, and will be closely monitoring his behavior. Members who are assigned to work under this cretin should notify their Business Rep.

Amy announced SCL and SDHR agreed to begin bargaining talks about "space planning" work taking place in members' workplaces.

There was a discussion of age discrimination at city departments. The lack of data collection by departments has hampered the ability of Local 17 (and the city) to address this issue, and also the issue of sex discrimination. Members encouraged PTE 17 staff to continue to push the city to provide this information in a timely manner.

Denise spoke about the formation of the Seattle Silence Breakers, a group of city employees and members of the public, to address concerns about the culture of sexual harassment throughout city government. This group is a place people can freely discuss the impacts of sexual harassment in their lives, both at work, and outside the job. One of their first demands of the city is to make the Office of Civil Rights an independent entity, separate from the Mayor's office and HR. Members raised the issue of retaliation against those who report discrimination, and the city's history of protecting managers and supervisors guilty of engaging in it.

Denise noted that criminal felony charges have been filed against a non-union contractor in the death of a worker killed when the un-shored trench he was working in collapsed. Had the member been a union member, the contractor would have been prevented from disregarding employee safety laws and required to provide adequate protections. She reminded the group that anyone who witnesses unsafe conditions at any work site can file a complaint with the State Dept. of Labor and Industries. Shaun spoke about a study in New York City, which detailed the number of deaths that occurred on non-union job sites compared to no deaths of union workers performing the same work.

Denise announced the next Steward Training Session will be held on January 23rd. Performance reviews and coaching v. discipline will be the topics.

Steward Reports

Darren Wilson reported about the difficulties in complying with E3, a pilot program for performance reviews which provides for on-going updates throughout the year. It is a complicated and time-consuming process.

Good of the Order

Denise noted the up-coming Martin Luther King Holiday and March will be January 15th. The 2nd annual Women's March will be held January 20th, and a Day of Action will follow on the 21st. Shaun noted the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in the Janus v AFSME case on February 26th. Listening events are being planned throughout the city. More details will be available at the February Chapter meeting.

Denise adjourned the meeting at 1:00pm

Minutes by Joe Steinmeyer