

PTE Local 17 Seattle Chapter Meeting Minutes July 12th 2018

Officers Present

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

Denise called the meeting to order at 12:03pm, with 68 members present (quorum reached). More members arrived after the meeting began. Attendees introduced themselves, including Union Representatives Amy Bowles, Ray Sugarman, and Shaun Van Eyk. Minutes from the previous meeting, 6/14/18, were approved with one abstention.

Officers Reports

Results of the recent election for REC delegates were announced; Jayme Helgeson, Walker Dodson, Danny Young, and Ray Caesar were selected as regular delegates. Jennifer Pierce was selected as alternate delegate. The next REC meeting will be held on July 21st, and Denise urged delegates to RSVP as soon as possible. Denise noted that the Supreme Court issued a ruling in the Janus v. ASFME case which effectively made public employment in all 50 states 'right to work'. She said it was heartening to see so many members present to support their union.

Union Representatives Reports

Shaun gave background on the Janus case. The court's ruling breaks with 41 years of precedent which compelled employees who objected to union membership to pay a fair share fee. Employees now have the option of not paying even that, although by law the union still has a duty of fair representation to all employees in a represented class whether they pay or not. Unions will also be required to obtain signature cards from new hires in order to collect dues from them. The state legislature passed a law requiring public employers to provide unions thirty minutes at new employee orientations to engage with new hires and explain the benefits of membership. That law took effect on June 1st, and the Local 17 representatives have been speaking with prospective members since then.

Amy elaborated on the issue of card signing and explained that only members who joined after June 27th (the date of the Janus decision) need to sign a new card, those who were members before that date need not sign again. She encouraged members to speak to coworkers about the benefit unions provide, and what union membership means to you. She also pointed out that, while employees may now choose not to join the union, only dues paying members are entitled to vote on contracts, attend union functions, and participate in other union elections. Local 17 staff are excited to meet the challenge the court's ruling presents, and see it as an opportunity to energize the membership.

Shaun explained that the negotiations survey that was set to close tomorrow, June 13th, has been extended until the 20th, to allow for additional informational sessions to be held at members' request. Survey results will be used to set the negotiations agenda, so it is important for members to respond. Results will be compiled in two ways; the Coalition of City Unions as a whole, and a subset for each individual Local. Informational sessions will be scheduled to publicize results the week of August 13th.

Formal bargaining will begin in September, to be marked by a rally at City Hall and the presentation to the city of a member signed petition in support issues gleaned from survey results.

Shaun sits on the healthcare committee which oversees the rate stabilization fund. Due to lower than expected premium increases the last two years, the committee is negotiating increases in fertility and birth control coverage.

Shaun, Amy, and Deidre Girard, Communications Director, have produced a FAQ sheet to help answer questions about PDQs and Reclassifications. The sheet will go out to stewards for posting on union bulletin boards. Shaun answered members questions related to reclassification issues.

Ray spoke about the contract reopener related to wage comparison methodology. The union has submitted a comprehensive proposal for wage comparisons to the city. Meetings are scheduled to begin next Tuesday with the goal of adopting the proposal for use in contract bargaining.

General Discussion

There was member discussion about length of contract, cost of living adjustments, and related issues.

A request was made for Reps to communicate to management that members have the right to engage their co-workers in conversation about union issues, also to provide information packs to use in engaging new members.

Members also spoke about being contacted by the Freedom Foundation with literature urging them to opt out of their union. Members have reported receiving communications using their Local's color scheme and photos of staff members.

Good of the Order

Denise noted that applications are open for PTE Local 17 Scholarships in the amount of \$3000 each. The deadline to apply is July 31st. See the Insight Magazine for details.

Denise asked those interested in becoming Bargaining Team members to submit their name to a steward or rep. She also encouraged members to engage their co-workers about union membership. Members can contact Denise and she will be happy to come speak about the value of the union. She also asked members to include their personal email on sign in sheets so the Chapter can contact them directly.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00pm.

Minutes by Joe Steinmeyer