

PTE 17 Seattle Chapter

Meeting Minutes November 9th 2017

Officers Present

Denise Krownbell, President
Mary Davis, Vice President
Joe Steinmeyer, Secretary

Denise called the meeting to order at 12:00pm, with 37 members in attendance (quorum reached). Attendees introduced themselves, including PTE 17 Business Representatives Amy Bowles, Shaun Van Eyk, and Ray Sugarman. Minutes from the previous meeting, 10/12/17, were approved with one correction; the October minutes referenced an email address to send Chapter and REC delegate nominations as Adrienne@pte17.org .It should have been elections@pte17.org . There was one abstention.

New Business

Denise reminded members that ballots for the vacant Executive Board Trustee position are due on Tuesday, 10/17/17. Ray Ceaser and Mary Davis are the candidates. Any member who has not received a ballot should contact the union office to request one. Ballots must be mailed; ballots cannot be dropped off at the Local 17 office. Nominations for all Chapter Officer Positions are open. Denise and Mary have committed to running again for President and Vice President. Nominations for Delegate to the Martin Luther King County Labor Council are also open, as are nominations for Delegates to the Local 17 Regional Executive Council. Nominations for Delegate Positions, both MLKLC and REC, must be received by 5:00 pm on Tuesday, 10/17/17. Feedback from Delegates who attended the last REC meeting was given. All those who spoke were impressed by changes made to the meeting format by Executive Director Behnaz Nelson and the Executive Board, and came away with a sense that for the first time in years, their voices were heard and respected. Submit nominations to elections@pte17.org. Members can nominate themselves or another member; however, those members nominated by others must accept the nomination by the same time and date. Shaun made the point that the Seattle Chapter is the largest one in Local 17, and it is in our interest to be fully represented at REC meetings. Denise noted that changes in the way the last REC meeting was conducted were due to advocacy by Seattle Chapter members (THANK YOU, MARY DAVIS!!).

Denise reported the results of the recent survey of members conducted by Local 17 were discussed at the recent REC meeting. Results showed the REC is heavily tilted toward veteran members. She emphasized the need to recruit newer and more diverse members to participate in the REC, and other union activities. The survey also showed that 26% of members responding to the survey would opt out of paying dues should the Supreme Court decide against unions in an upcoming case (Janus vs. ASFME). A loss in revenue of this size would be a major setback to Local 17's ability to maintain its current level of representation. In order to institute a transparent, orderly process for those weasels who wish to opt out of paying their fair share, the REC unanimously voted to recommend that members approve an amendment to Local 17's Constitution which establish an opt out period in December of each year. This will allow Local 17 to set a budget for upcoming years. Amy said ballots for the amendment will be mailed out November 24th and are due back at the Local 17 office by December 16th. The amendment

would pass with a yes vote by 2/3 of returned ballots. Information sessions will be held in the near future. Members relayed their experiences working in non-union jobs, and the positive impact unions have on peoples' lives. Amy asked every member in attendance to speak to 5 members in their workplace about the amendment, and to make sure their contact information is up to date with Local 17. A list of talking points is available for facilitating conversations with members, and a hand out will be available soon.

Business Reps Reports

Shaun reported that a Public Disclosure Request to the city that resulted in the erroneous release of employee emails is the subject of ongoing meetings with the Labor Relations, SDHR, and the Mayors' office. At issue is the recovery and destruction of the emails downloaded to the requestors' computer. The city was so far unable to provide adequate information about the process used. Attorneys for the firm employed to ensure destruction of the material will attend the next Coalition of City Unions meeting to further explain.

Amy reported about another Public Disclosure Request from the freedom foundation requesting the dollar amounts paid by employees in union dues during the period of September 1st 2016 through September 1st 2017 has been received by the City of Seattle. Local 17 is reviewing options for legal challenges to the request.

Shaun noted that a previous PDR from the freedom foundation seeking City of Seattle employees' home addresses and other personal information was argued before the Division II State Court and was denied by the Court, establishing the constitutional right of public employees to a basic level of privacy. This was a good win for our members and unions in general.

Ray reminded members about the ongoing Steward Academy, the purpose of which is to hone Stewards' skills, and prepare them to be better equipped to advocate for members in a post Janus environment. The next session is November 29th; an email with details will go out to Stewards soon.

Old Business

Ray addressed the memo issued by SPU management that seems to bar the use of city equipment for union activity. SPU Management committed to sending a new memo stating that such use is permitted, but would not rescind the offending memo. Members reported that they have yet to receive it.

Denise offered to provide copies of a free speech flyer that addresses members' right to speak about their union in the workplace. Ray reminded members to contact their Rep if they feel they are being discouraged from talking about the union at work.

Amy spoke about a recent bargaining session with the city regarding the city's 'space planning' efforts. Our team presented 10 change of work conditions that are subject to bargaining. The city has yet to agree that their efforts are subject to mandatory bargaining.

Ray spoke about the value of Labor/Management Committees in addressing 'space planning' issues in individual departments. Ray also relayed a commitment from SDHR Director Susan Coskey that unions will have input into the hiring of a new City Labor Negotiator.

Good of the Order

Timothy Lowry reported that recent communications from SPU management appear to prohibit employees from taking leave without pay. He is asking management for clarification.

Mahogany Montgomery inquired about the COLA for 2018; it is 2.75%, effective January 1st. She also requested information on an employee's right to removed personal belongings when leaving city service. Employees are allowed to remove personal items at any time. In the case of personal files, it may be a good idea to remove them beforehand to avoid questions of ownership. It is against the law to take city property.

Denise adjourned the meeting at 1:05 pm

Minutes by Joe Steinmeyer