

MINUTES OF THE TNG-CWA Human Rights and Equity Committee

January 20, 2007

Telephone conference call at 1:00 pm (1300) Eastern; 10:00 Pacific

Prepared by Michael D'Souza

PRESENT: Michael D'Souza, Chair; Natalie Hill; Sheila Lindsay; Yoko Kuramoto-Eidsmoe; Carl Younger; Debbie Thomas, TNG-CWA Director of Human Rights

ABSENT: Matthew Harper, Secretary; Randy Gilliam; Datejia Green;

The meeting

1) Minutes: The committee received and approved the minutes of the last meeting, held on Saturday, December 9, 2006.

2) Carl Younger proposal for outreach: The committee discussed Carl Younger's proposal to reach out to the union membership and the community at large in Boston.

The chair reported on a telephone conversation with Linda Foley, president of the CWA-TNG, Scott Stephens, regional vice president of the CWA-TNG. Debbie Thomas was also in on that meeting. The members of the TNG-CWA executives had some questions about the proposal and the budgetary request for \$5,000. These included the purchase of a large-screen television and the retention of the DVD etc. materials. They also wanted assurance that this money was being spent to further the committee's objective to increase participation of members of equity-seeking groups in union affairs. The executive members did note the substantial commitment by the Boston local for the proposal. Debbie Thomas reported to this committee that the members of the executive agreed to recommend funding of \$2,500 for the proposal; 50 per cent of the requested amount. Carl Younger said he would work with the allocation to make the proposal a success. The funding now goes to the finance committee of the TNG-CWA. It is scheduled to meet on Monday, January 22.

Web Page: During the same telephone conversation with the members of the TNG-CWA executive the chair of this committee also raised the issue of the web page project being stalled at the TNG. The executive members were puzzled by the delays and Ms. Foley offered to help move the project along. Thomas reported to this committee that Bernie Lunzer said he would get the web page up and running. He needed to know if the committee wanted its own URL or be part of the TNG Human Rights page. Michael D'Souza said he would prefer a new URL with links to the Human Rights pages. Sheila Lindsay said that was the best idea. Michael said he would consult Randy Gilliam.

Stipends for attendance Equity-related meetings (split between US and Canada). Debbie reported that the members of the TNG-CWA Executive supported funding of up to \$1,600 for members to attend Equity related meetings of other organizations. Again the executive wanted some assurance that this money was being spent to further the committee's objective to increase participation of members of equity-seeking groups in union affairs. This committee agreed that one way of dealing with the executives concerns was to ask applicants to write a short essay of about 200 words on how their attendance at the meeting they were requesting the funding for would further the TNG-CWA equity targets.

Brochure for outreach. Debbie reported that the members of the executive support the committee's request for \$1,200 for an outreach brochure. Debbie is working on a draft brochure and will forward it to the committee.

Equity participation: Debbie reported that the executive is concerned about the committee meeting one of its primary objectives: Increasing participation of members of equity seeking groups at all levels of the union, especially attending the next convention in Toronto. The committee discussed how delegates to the conference are chosen. In the United States members of the local executive decide who will go and usually include members who are not on the executive. But often members simply don't ask to go. In Canada the delegates are generally selected by a mail-in ballot. The committee agreed that the best way to increase attendance by members of equity seeking groups is by encouraging them and asking them to attend. This could be done by personal letters, emails and talking directly to them. Members of the committee agreed to start promoting the Toronto conference among members of Equity seeking groups. The committee also said that some members may wish to simply drive up to Toronto for the Conference. The committee will contact UNITE HERE, the union representing hotel workers, for suggestion for inexpensive accommodation for members who may wish to make the trip at their own expense. (The union has a tool on its web page with recommendations. the address is: <http://www.hotelworkersrising.org/HotelGuide/>)

Communication tool: Sheila Lindsay suggested a Communication tool for this committee to circulate to the various locals, sectors and councils on our proposed activities to gather more member participation. She explained this could include sending material on the committee's work to locals that have their own newsletters and the union's main information tools; materials to encourage members of Equity seeking groups to express themselves in the union so their voices are heard; materials on how the union is dealing with issues facing members of Equity seeking groups. Sheila and Natalie Hill agreed to work further on this proposal. Debbie will try to find a simple way of distributing the material across Canada and the United States.

Other Matters: Carl Younger reported that the local in Boston was faced with the issue of a local employer outsourcing services like customer service and financial services off the continent. He asked other committee members if they have faced such an issue. Some suggestions were offered and Carl will follow them up.

Next meeting: The committee agreed to meet again on Saturday, February 10, 2007 at 1 pm EST (10:00 am PST)

Adjournment: The committee adjourned at about 2:10 EST (11:10 PST)