

MINUTES OF THE TNG-CWA Human Rights and Equity Committee

March 14, 2009

Minutes of the TNG-CWA Human Rights and Equity Committee

Saturday, March 14, 2009

PRESENT: Michael D'Souza, Chair; Randy Gilliam; Yoko Kuramoto-Eidsmoe; Ka Yan Ng; Matthew Olson; Vernon Clark; Natalie Hill and Vincent Proteau.

Melissa Nelson, TNG-CWA Director of Collective Bargaining; Sheila Lindsay, Chair SEC HRE Committee; Carol Rothman, Treasurer, TNG-CWA

ABSENT: Carl Younger

MINUTES PREPARED BY MICHAEL D'SOUZA

Checked by Yoko Kuramoto-Eidsmoe

Budget: The committee agreed to proceed with presenting its budget to the TNG-CWA Executive Committee. The budget is attached. It includes a proposal for a conference on Human Rights and Equity issues in conjunction with the TNG-CWA Sector Conference and the CWA Convention in Washington this summer. The committee agreed to explore holding some of these sessions at the TNG Sector Conference. The committee noted that such a presentation would be a substantial measure of success for advancing HR&E issues within the union.

The committee acknowledged an e-mail from Bernie Lunzer, president of TNG-CWA, asking that the committee not solidify any plans presented in its budget until it is reviewed and approved by the TNG-CWA Executive.

Internships: The committee discussed a proposal put forward by Randy Gilliam for internships for students within the union, at locals or in Washington at the TNG-CWA offices. Carol Rothman said she would see if CWA offers such opportunities. Sheila Lindsay said that her local does have some such internships. Vernon Clark suggested talking to labor-studies programs. The committee agreed to further explore this proposal for implementation later this year or next year.

Adjournment:

The committee adjourned at 13:40 eastern and agreed to meet again, in telephone conference on Saturday, April 25, at 13:00 Eastern (10:00 Pacific)

Monday, March 2, 2009

This budget for the TNG-CWA standing committee on Human Rights and Equity on the direction of the TNG-CWA Sector Conference held in Providence, Rhode Island, in 2008. The Sector Conference passed a resolution directing that "the Sector Executive Council establish an annual budget for the standing committee on Human Rights and Equity so it has the necessary financial resources to execute its plans."

Such a budget is critical to the successful operation of the committee. It is a clear indicator that TNG-CWA believes that the work of the committee is important and gives the committee the stability it needs to continue its work. Approval on a per-project basis is simply not a realistic option. The budget is prepared keeping in mind the realities now facing TNG-CWA. The current economic situation is battering the communication industry in the United States of America and in Canada. This means job losses, and in many cases the people most severely affected are members of equity-seeking groups: Aboriginal people, visible minorities and people with disabilities. In most cases these people are last in and that means they are first out. The budget is also prepared as demographers and statisticians in the United States and Canada paint a very different face of both nations. In not too many years, the people who have long considered themselves the majority population will be the minority. Populations of people of color, as they are referred to in the United States, and visible minorities, as they are known in Canada, will account for the majority of peoples. The number of Aboriginal people is also increasing and people with disabilities are increasingly taking their rightful place in the workplace. But within union ranks, these people are not only underrepresented, they are largely absent. The TNG-CWA Human Rights and Equity Committee is charged with increasing the numbers of these equity-seeking groups within the union movement in general and in the TNG-CWA in particular.

Budget details:

HR&E Conference

Committee:

The committee held a successful conference in Las Vegas in June last year in tandem with the CWA Convention. It is now building on that success with a follow-up meeting. Costs are much more conservative given that this meeting is being held around the same time as the TNG-CWA Sector Conference and the CWA Convention in Washington. Travel and accommodation costs are reduced since most members of the committee itself will be in Washington to attend those meetings. Some allowance has been made for committee members who are not selected as delegates to those meetings. Content for the conference is a work in progress. You can follow the thread of discussions in the minutes of the committee. They're mailed to you. If you've not been receiving them please send me an e-mail. They are also posted on the committee's web site, <http://guildequity.org>

Speakers:

Washington is an area rich in people who can address issues of concern to people from equity-seeking groups. This again means limited costs for travel and accommodation.

Subsidy to attend equity meetings

This program grew organically out of the committee's discussion on ways and means of encouraging members of equity-seeking groups to become involved in the union movement. The plan offers members of these groups a stipend of \$400 each to attend meetings of equity-seeking groups, such as the UNITY conference or the NABJ or SAJA. Two stipends are offered in Canada and two in the United States. Applicants must write an essay on why they should receive the stipend and how it will help the union movement. Winners are picked by a name-draw from all the complete applications. In the future, winners will be given half the stipend up front and the second half on writing a report on the meeting.

New Local Officers Seminar subsidy

The NLOS is the TNG-CWA's most successful training program for new local officers. It's a weekend of practical, hands-on training in dealing with such mundane, but vital, matters as keeping books and minutes to the intricacy of organizing and building a stronger union. The Human Rights and Equity Committee has encouraged locals to send members of equity-seeking groups to the NLOS and encouraged the TNG to subsidize locals sending members of equity-seeking groups to the NLOS. However, the committee does not select the members attending NLOS or decide how many will be subsidized.

Boston Library Project

This is the Carl Younger initiative in Quincy, Mass. The project has had its growing pains but is now moving into attracting younger people to the union movement by reaching out to schools.

Face-to-face meetings

Since its inception in Las Vegas in July 2006, the TNG Human Rights and Equity Committee has met in teleconference at least once a month. It has used these meetings to build trust, cooperation and cohesion. It has now become a team focused on encouraging and fostering the participation of members of equity-seeking groups in the union movement. While members of the committee are at the TNG Sector Conferences, the agenda of those meetings make it impossible for the committee to spend much time together; there simply are too many other things demanding their attention and very limited time. The committee is now at the point where it has to spend at least a weekend discussing its plans and working out details on how those plans will be executed. It held such a meeting in Baltimore that concentrated on the Summit on the Future of the Industry.

The committee is planning its next face-to-face meeting in the winter or the spring.

Three-year projections

This is just a road map and does not need approval of the executive. It is presented to show the executive that this committee is looking at and considering plans for the future.