

MINUTES: Executive Meeting

Tuesday, October 19, 2010

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Lois Kirkup at 12:05 p.m.

In attendance: Sam Chalati, Debbie Cole, Blair Crawford, Randall Denley, Terry Garner, Gord Holder, Lois Kirkup, Jacquie Miller, Jeff Parks, David Reevely.

Absent: Joanne Schnurr, Julie Oliver, DLR rep.

2. Approval of Agenda

M/ by Terry Garner to approve amended agenda. S/ by David Reevely. CARRIED.

3. Secretary's Report

(a) Good Standing Report: All current executive members in good standing.

Appointment - Member-at-Large vacancy. No action.

(b) Adoption of Minutes:

M/ by Gord Holder to adopt the September 14, 2010 Minutes. S/ by Debbie Cole. CARRIED.

(c) Correspondence: Thank you from ODLG for Labour Day donation. Thank you from Canadian Diabetes for recent memorial donation. OFL President's Report.

(d) Congratulations and Condolences:

- Donation to Ontario Heart & Stroke Foundation in memory of David Elder, former Citizen/RS&S & long-time executive member.

- Basket to Chris (Citizen/Editorial) & Karen Yzerman - marriage.

- Check about memorial donation for Julie Mason, mother of Glen McGregor, and mother-in-law of Shelley Page, both Citizen/Editorial.

4. Treasurer's Report

(a) Financial Report: (attachment) Treasurer Debbie Cole reported that the unadjusted, unaudited figures for the 2009-10 fiscal year, which ended Sept. 30, showed a surplus of slightly less than \$10,000. Actual revenue was close to the budget estimate, so the surplus resulted from non-spending of funds that had been allocated to various line items. Defence Fund investments totaled about \$1.46 million as of Sept. 30. Because of the recent wave of Citizen Unit buyouts, Debbie Cole said she would assess the impact on dues revenue and report back to the Finance Committee/Executive.

5. **Unit Reports**

a) CTV Ottawa:

(a) Posting grievance update: ONG staff member Pat Cavalier reported that a meeting between Joanne Schnurr, CWA/SCA Canada staff rep Dave Wilson and company representative(s) had taken place in early October. A settlement was apparently reached, but final paperwork has yet to be submitted to the ONG office.

(b) Newsroom Ergonomics update: No report.

(c) Other matters: Though she did not attend the meeting, Joanne Schnurr submitted the following report by email: "They're looking at some changes to the noon newscast with the retirement of the show's producer, Garry Bitze. Garry had been management, and we have argued that we believe that job function falls under the jurisdiction of the Guild. They're agreed and will post the job shortly as a union position. They're also proposing several changes that are not yet public, so I'm not at liberty to discuss until then, but I've spoken with the members involved, who seem to be, on the whole, in agreement with what's being proposed."

b) DLR International: No report.

c) Delta Reprographics:

(a) Dues update: No cheque received for past dues owing as well as member documentation that has also not been submitted. Treasurer Debbie Cole will send another email to the company owner to detail actions that ONG can/will take to pursue payment of dues and submission of documentation.

d) Ottawa Citizen

(a) Unit - Voluntary Buyouts: It's expected that 12 Guild members will leave at the end of October, and another five in December. The list of those taking buyouts includes: (Newsroom) Sue Allan, Jenny Green, Bert Hill, Kate Jaimet, Kurt Johnson, Paula McLaughlin, Dave Rogers, Brian Shore, Richard Starnes, Bruce Ward; (Financial Services) Claude Barrette, Terry Garner, Debbie Gauthier, Brian Robinson; (In-House Printing) Alan Jenkins; (Reader Sales) Nancy Campbell and Mart Munk.

Editor-in-Chief Gerry Nott told ONG President Lois Kirkup that he was working on a plan for newsroom workflow, etc., to be submitted to Postmedia senior management by Oct. 20. Deputy Editor Drew Gragg and Newsroom Manager Pat Hyndman had said something to the effect of "we can only do what we can do," which sounds like a change in attitude for Citizen management. Citizen Unit Chair Jacquie Miller also spoke with Gerry Nott, and what she got out of the conversation was that Postmedia management recognizes that much of the work will have to be done elsewhere (centralized).

Lois Kirkup also reported on the Sept. 24 meeting between CWA/SCA Canada local presidents from Ottawa, Victoria and Montreal, CWA/SCA Canada director Arnold

Amber and senior Postmedia official Paul Godfrey. Godfrey repeated his earlier comment that any job function that could be outsourced/centralized would be, as well as his comment that Postmedia Newspapers should be "hyper-local." He was unhappy with criticism related to the centralization of reader sales/service operations in the Dominican Republic, saying there hadn't been enough time elapsed since the transition to sort out difficulties.

Member-at-Large Randy Denley talked with Gerry Nott about possible creation of new positions in the Online department regarding an online restaurant guide and an iPad app. There has also been a suggestion that two members could be transferred into those positions. Lois Kirkup said this might lead to a wide discussion about reclassifications, even involving work on the traditional newspaper product.

(b) Editorial - Member LTD claim update: No recent report from member.

(c) Saxotech training: Member-at-Large Blair Crawford has been in training for the past month. He predicts a profound impact on many jobs, though less on reporters. One of the supposed strengths of Saxotech is the ability to track stories and create packages, but everything depends on people following rules/policies related to Saxotech and doing what they're supposed to do. Blair Crawford also said this was the final part of the puzzle about what is facing unions because virtually every function could be done outside the building. (Even computer servers are off-site.) Training of Newsroom staff to ramp up starting Oct. 25. One apparent problem is that everything takes longer with Saxotech; for example, posting stories to the web could take up to twice as long.

Lois Kirkup asked whether Saxotech could be used as a pretext to layoff members. Blair Crawford said it was likely that pretty much all of the newspaper except part of the A Section and Sports would be done elsewhere. Debbie Cole asked what Godfrey said about people who struggled to adapt to the new processes. Lois Kirkup reported that Godfrey said there would be training, but that there would also be essential changes for jobs; the newsroom at each paper will have to weigh its needs and what tasks must be performed. Lois Kirkup said ONG should tell Citizen management now that the Guild will not tolerate harassment/unfair discipline measures related to technological changes.

(d) Seniority in Financial Services: Five members applied for buyouts, but one person was turned down. At the time of her application, member was told she would get the most advantageous seniority date, factoring in her original hire date, a temporary reassignment to another department, dismissal and re-hiring. The member given the new, more advantageous seniority date would move ahead of others when making vacation applications. Debbie Cole consulted with ONG legal counsel, whose written opinion said an arbitrator would likely rule in favour of the later, rehire date, but that, if the company was offering an earlier date for the affected member, the local should accept that offer.

M/ by Debbie Cole. S/ by Randy Denley. That ONG recognize the company's offer of the earlier hire date for the affected member. CARRIED.

Vice-President Terry Garner reported that Citizen would keep the Financial Services department closed on Monday, Dec. 27, to give remaining staff an extra day. Discussion followed about whether “operational requirements” could justify reposting of a vacation schedule already approved by management. Company has said it was waiting for ONG response on the hire date and would then discuss impact on vacations of remaining staff. Consensus from discussion is that vacation requests previously approved by management should be upheld. If approved requests are subsequently changed/revoked by the company, ONG will file a grievance.

(Attendance note: David Reevely leaves the meeting at this point.)

(e) Meeting with Management: ONG had sent letter requesting meeting with Citizen senior managers Debbie Bennett and Gerry Nott. They said they would meet with us, but questioned the Guild’s assertion that staff shortages existed and said they were unaware of any increase in health problems related to workload.

(f) Special presentation to Vice-President Terry Garner, a long-time executive member who had at various times been president, vice-president, secretary, unit chair and member-at-large since first joining the executive in the late 1980s. President Lois Kirkup expressed executive’s appreciation for Terry’s dedication and hard work. There was cake for all and presentation of a gift certificate to Terry. “I’ve actually enjoyed and it has been a pleasure to represent people,” Terry said.

(Attendance note: Randy Denley left the meeting at this point.)

6. **Arbitrations**

No report.

7. **Committees**

(a) Personnel

(b) Communications

(c) Health & Safety - committee rep. With the departure of Vice-President Terry Garner, there will be a vacancy for an ONG rep on the Citizen’s joint health and safety committee. Terry suggests appointing Member-at-Large Jeff Parks, who is already a member of the committee, as the ONG rep and conducting an election for the position at the December general membership meeting.

(d) Grievance

(e) Guild Awareness / Mobilization

(f) Finance

(g) Organizing

(h) Elections

(i) Bylaws - look at changes needed re Retired members. Meeting scheduled for November 8 at 1 p.m.

8. **Internal Guild**

(a) ONG Website: President Lois Kirkup met with Gord Rufh in Victoria. He has

completed the redesign/upgrade of the website, and Lois commends the work he did. She will also meet with ONG staffer Pat Cavalier on Nov. 9 to give her instructions on how to update the site. Local will start advertising the “new” website on bulletins, etc. Website address is www.ottawanewsguild.ca

(b) Postmedia Network Caucus: There hasn’t been a conference call recently, but President Lois Kirkup added more comments about the Sept. 24 meeting with Paul Godfrey. He said he would keep the unions in mind and try to keep the relationship going. He was asked about “digital first” publishing strategy and repeated his previous comments about it. He also said the parent company needed to get 25 per cent of its profits from digital operations. He said his financial backers felt the priority was to protect shareholders, not employees, but he said he believed he needed to protect both groups. As well, he spoke of restoring the quality of the former Southam newspaper chain, but union concern is about trying to do that with fewer employees. Godfrey also said he wanted to look at each newspaper in its own market, adding that local news would always carry newspapers and justify their existence. Finally, he said the Citizen would soon have a new publisher to replace Jim Orban, who resigned after the Postmedia purchase of the newspaper chain was completed this past summer.

(c) TNG Sector Conference, February 2-6, 2011, Orlando, FL
Lois Kirkup and Gord Holder were elected as delegates at the September 22 general membership meeting, with Debbie Cole as alternate.

(d) CWA Convention, July 11-13, 2011, Las Vegas, NV
Lois Kirkup was elected on September 22 as ONG convention delegate.

9. **Outside Issues**

The Ottawa and District Labour Council has distributed pamphlets related to the October 25 municipal election. ONG executive decided to distribute those pamphlets to members.

10. **Other Business**

11. **Lost Time Notification:** Lost time for Sam Chalati, Debbie Cole, Blair Crawford, Terry Garner, Lois Kirkup, Jacquie Miller, Jeff Parks, David Reevely.

12. **Upcoming Meetings:**

- Next Executive Committee meeting - **Tuesday, November 9, 2010**, 12 noon, Guild office.
- Next General Membership meeting - **Wednesday, December 8, 2010** - 12 noon, Ottawa Citizen Conference Centre; Executive meeting to follow at 1:15 p.m. in the Guild office

13. **Adjournment**

M/ by Blair Crawford to adjourn at 1:40 p.m. S/ by Jeff Parks. CARRIED.