



OTTAWA NEWSPAPER GUILD
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MINUTES - TUESDAY, JUNE 26, 2012

EMERGENCY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Attendance: Peter Bennet, Rob Bostelaar, Debbie Cole, Tony Cote, Gord Holder, Lois Kirkup, Joanne Laucius, Jacquie Miller, Julie Oliver, Jeff Parks.

1. Call to Order by Debbie Cole at 12:00 p.m.
2. Approval of Agenda
M/ by Gord Holder. S/ by Joanne Laucius. CARRIED.
3. Ottawa Citizen Unit Staff Reductions: Buyouts/Layoffs
President Debbie Cole said the situation at the Citizen with regard to the proposed staff reductions had gotten much worse.
Unit Chair Jacquie Miller gave a summary:
 - i) The company had proposed a package deal involving buyouts to five full-time newsroom ONG members and laying off five part-time members on the condition that all five full-time members must agree to buyouts and the ONG must agree not file a grievance. In the event of a grievance, the buyout option for the five full-time members would be withdrawn.
 - ii) If a more senior member in the E-8 category refused the buyout, the company threatened to lay off a less junior employee, transfer the more senior employee into the more junior employee's position and then, assuming the more senior member would be unable to perform those duties, would then fire that member for incompetence, followed by the presumed rehiring of the more junior employee. Member-at-Large Lois Kirkup talked to a relative of the more senior member, and the family had apparently agreed to a buyout.
 - iii) Member-at-Large Lois Kirkup said company had indicated that if this package agreement was not accepted, it would then re-examine the entire list of buyout requests and cherry-pick those it would approve.
 - iv) In the case of another member in E-4, the company would, if he refused a buyout, lay him off. If the ONG won its argument that E-4 was senior to E-3 category, based on pay scale, the company would argue that he was unable to perform reporting duties. If the company won that argument, this member would only be able to bump into E-8.

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v) Though the five full-time members targeted for forced buyouts were told about the buyout option, the five affected part-time members were not told. Member-at-Large Lois Kirkup said she advised managing editor Andrew Potter and editor-in-chief/publisher Gerry Nott that management should alert the part-timers that their jobs were in jeopardy. Subsequently, Unit Chair Jacquie Miller was told by two of the part-timers that Andrew Potter had said that the ONG had proposed the layoffs of the part-timers. She had assured them that this was definitely not the case.

After discussion, member-at-large Rob Bostelaar suggested a posting to update all Citizen Unit members about the situation.

vi) One member in Reader Sales and Service said that she had no idea that a buyout program was offered and that she had not felt her job was at risk. Following a discussion with management, this member was allowed to apply for the forced buyout.

vii) In the mailroom, two full-time members had been targeted for buyouts. Two other members, both with more seniority, had offered to be bought out instead. As of this meeting, the company had approved one of the switches, but had yet to respond on the other request.

There was a discussion about possible responses to the company's demands.

One was a request to re-post the buyout notice, stating that two more (full-time equivalent) bodies were required.

As well, Member-at-Large Lois Kirkup had talked to Linda Ruhl of Citizen HR about an enhanced severance package that had been previously offered to Customer Service Representatives, which ended the need for layoffs in that department and did not lead to a grievance.

President Debbie Cole then led a discussion about possible cost-saving proposals that the ONG might offer to the company with the goal of avoiding layoffs.

i) Abolish the intern reporter program after the current round of program ends later in 2012.

ii) Ask for volunteers to share jobs or to reduce their number of weekly shifts.

iii) Give up the 2.5-per-cent salary increase due to Citizen ONG members in July 2012. This would be done on the condition that the company would guarantee no layoffs for the next two years.

iv) Ask that the company reduce the number of management exclusions to an appropriate level, given the reduced workforce.

Unit Chair Jacquie Miller suggested surveying the affected part-time members.

Consensus was that the executive needed to meet/talk with each of them to determine what they wanted the ONG to do on their behalf. Debbie, Jacquie and Lois will speak with each of these members today.

M/ by Jacquie Miller. S/ by Gord Holder. That the ONG reject the package deal that would involve agreeing not to grieve layoffs of our members, but notify the company that the union would offer other cost-saving proposals, as allowed under the contract. CARRIED.

4. New Business - none
5. Lost Time Notification: Peter Bennet, Rob Bostelaar, Lois Kirkup, Joanne Laucius, Jacquie Miller, Jeff Parks.
6. Upcoming Meetings
 - Guild will book the Citizen Conference Centre for 12 noon, Thursday, June 28, 2012 to hold an emergency Citizen Unit meeting.
 - Next Executive Committee Meeting - Tuesday, July 17, 2012, 12 noon, Guild office.
7. Adjournment. M/ by Joanne Laucius. S/ by Rob Bostelaar. Meeting ended 1:07 p.m. CARRIED.