

United Educators of San Francisco
Assembly Meeting
Wednesday, November 19, 2003, 4:00 p.m.
Unofficial Minutes

Minutes

Approval of Minutes Susan Solomon

M/S/C to accept the minutes as presented.

Financial

Financial Report..... Elaine Merriweather

M/S/C to accept the report as presented.

Special Order of Business

UFCW Strike and Health Care Crisis..... Margaret Hanlon Grady

UFCW members are going into the 7th week of a strike. The big issue is health care. The supermarket owners are engaging in union-busting: They want to introduce a two-tier system of benefits for new hires and are attacking full-time employment. (Health benefits are the big issue in all unions' negotiations. Senate Bill 2 is already in peril.) Albertson's and Safeway are well-funded. The CEO, Steven Byrd, can cut \$130 million from health benefits alone, and refers to this attack on health care benefits as a long-term investment. The pickets at Bay Area Safeways are from southern California. Since there is no strike in Northern California, UFCW members here are constrained from doing informational picketing. This Saturday, November 22, starting at the Rockridge BART station, there will be a big march to the Safeway at 51st and Broadway to support the strikers. Q: Why Safeway and not Albertson's? A: The strategy is to target Safeway. In Los Angeles, Vonn's (Safeway) was struck, and then workers were locked out of Ralph's and Albertson's. UFCW chose to remove pickets from Ralph's so that shoppers would have somewhere to shop. At this time in the Bay Area, shoppers are encouraged to shop anywhere but Safeway.

1. Resolution in Support of UFCW Dennis Kelly

Whereas Albertsons and Ralph's locked out UFCW workers after union members at Vons walked out on strike, putting over 70,000 workers on the picket line in California;

Whereas the employers are demanding workers accept a 50% reduction in health insurance and reduced pension benefits;

Whereas these companies' operating profits are 91% higher than four years ago and have risen 10 times faster than employer contributions to worker health plans;

Whereas employer health care contributions for Southern California supermarket workers are far below the national average;

Whereas a prolonged strike/lockout or forced concession will lead to economic hardship and unnecessary suffering to many people throughout California and other states;

Whereas the issue of health care crisis affects all working people in the U.S. and union members throughout the country are fighting attacks on their health care coverage;

Therefore be it resolved that the United Educators of San Francisco firmly and enthusiastically supports the members of the UFCW in their struggle against these companies and urges the union leadership to take whatever actions are necessary to help the struggling brothers and sisters in the UFCW;

Be it further resolved the UESF will also call upon elected officials, community leaders and others to respect the picket line and support this strike;

Be it further resolved that UESF calls on all members and their other organizations around the state and country to join in honoring the strike, and lending what financial support they can to the striking UFCW workers until they are allowed to return to their jobs with an acceptable contract.

Be it finally resolved that UESF supports and endorses the November 22nd “March to Support Grocery Workers” and urges members to participate in this action.

Amendment: that UESF urge its members to refrain from shopping at Safeway, if possible, during this holiday season, until further notice from UFCW. **M/S/C**

M/S/C on the main resolution. Flyers for the November 22 march were available at the meeting.

President’s Report Dennis Kelly

1. Negotiations are every other week. Talks are still about the current contract. Issues being discussed include AB1207, the retirement incentive bill; the effects of NCLB on paraprofessionals; and CDP. The CDP Task Force report from last year called for cost savings and revenue enhancements. UESF has agreed to measures that have saved money. It is now the District’s turn to show evidence of revenue enhancements.
2. Weighted Student Formula: UESF had one meeting with the District and raised concerns, and was invited to join the WSF Committee. Brother Kelly suggested that teachers, not union officers, should be part of the committee, since teachers are involved in the process. Five teachers will be on the committee. The first meeting is next Monday.
3. Employee Housing: Jason Bloom will present his report on November 25 on what possibilities are available.

Vice- President’s ReportLinda Plack

1. Building Representatives’ Training: The tentative dates for the next round of training sessions are February 8 for elementary schools and March 10 for middle and high schools.
2. Building Corporation: One problem UESF has encountered with the purchase of our building, which we own with the National Association of Letter Carriers, is the enormous cost of renovations. In an effort to find a bid lower than the current \$1.3 million bid, the job was put out to bid again. The new bids came in at \$1.5 and 1.3 million. There will be a meeting tomorrow with the architects and NALC. The low bidder will be asked if any more of the price can be shaved off. Another proposal the architects will make to the contractors is for UESF and NALC to move out of the building for six months. The current plan is based on the contractors working on the building while both unions continue to occupy it. Perhaps if the building is without occupants the work may take 3 months, rather than 9. This solution may save money, but is not without problems and expenses, such as moving expenses and finding places short-term for both unions. Q:

What did we know about these required renovations and when did we know it? A: There is no easy answer. The fourth floor is the most complicated and needs the most work because it was constructed without permits. Q: Can the work be done in stages, over several years? A: Once anything is done at all, the whole building has to be brought up to code. Most of the renovations are for bringing things up to code.

3. CFT Labor Conference: On the evening of Friday, November 21 and all day Saturday, November 22, CFT is having a conference at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Burlingame for bringing labor studies into the schools. There is no cost to attend.

Brother Kelly introduced Neheet Trived, 2003-2004 Coro Fellow in Public Affairs, who is currently doing an internship with UESF.

Staff Reports

1. Contract Administration Mary Anne Ahtye

UESF meets monthly with Tom Ruiz and Jolie Weinroth to talk about issues in an effort to resolve them without needing to go to grievance. UESF staff meetings on Fridays include items that should go to CAC. Items this month will include: heating at school sites (Reminder: ask your principal if the heating has been checked); and Martin Luther King Middle School and the issues surrounding the new curriculum requirements and restrictions and the role of the UBC in policy changes.

2. Seven Hour On-Site Actions.....Jocelyn Won

The District has 15 days, until November 21, to respond to our Level 2 grievance. Tom Ruiz was the hearing officer for the grievance, which is a conflict of interest because he is named in the grievance. There was a technical problem with the proof of service for the filing of the Unfair Labor Practice charge. It is now officially documented for 11/13/03. The lawyer will have to make a determination on the evidence by December 5. If it cannot be resolved at that step, it will go to full PERB Board.

3. Communications.....Mindy Pines

2666 e-mail addresses of members are available to date. The use of e-mail for communications is encouraged because it is immediate and cheap. (Snail mail is much more expensive). Distributions include lists of members for whom e-mail addresses are needed. If members do not give an e-mail address, try to find out why. E-mail mkimura@uesf with addresses.

4th edition of *The Educator* is in the current distribution. Sister Pines thanked Liz Connelly for telling her about the Hillcrest Elementary paraprofessionals David Skinner and Yolanda Travis who are featured on the cover, and urged membership participation in the newsletter.

4. Health Benefits: There are 140 teachers who were laid off and recalled, but they do not know that they are no longer enrolled for health benefits. The new head of Health Benefits office said these teachers are considered “newly rehired” and have to reapply for benefits. If anyone knows of teachers who were laid off and recalled, it is important to let them know of this situation.

- COPE Report** Ken Tray

After the mayoral campaign is over, the crucial campaign will be for the City Charter amendment for schools. There is a need to build a strong coalition. The San Francisco Labor Council COPE was unable to come together behind one candidate in the runoff and voted for no endorsement. Right after the November 9 election, both candidates were invited on short notice to meet with some UESF COPE members. Gonzalez was able to come and Newsom was not. There was no recommendation of endorsement from that meeting.

There was a successful fundraiser held for Ammiano on October 24 at El Valenciano; about 50 members attended. We need to work on building COPE membership by urging members at our sites to join.

Resolutions

1. Mayoral Run-Off (10)Ken Tray

Whereas the San Francisco Labor Council is meeting on Wednesday, November 5, 2003 to endorse a candidate for Mayor of San Francisco in the December run off election, and

Whereas the UESF has been participating in a broad coalition of unions ensuring that the San Francisco Labor Council will endorse a progressive candidate favorable to our agenda of gaining more city resources for San Francisco public schools.

Therefore be it resolved that UESF will endorse the candidate for Mayor selected at the Wednesday, November 5, 2003, meeting of the San Francisco Labor Council, and

Be it finally resolved that UESF will donate \$1000 to the campaign for the San Francisco Labor Council's endorsed candidate or to PACs that campaign independently, but in support of that candidate.

M/S Brother Tray motivated for no endorsement in order not to divide labor in San Francisco, and because no candidate was selected by the SFLC.

M/S Substitute motion: endorse Matt Gonzalez.

Many members spoke. Sergeant-at-Arms Roberto Michel reported that the 10 minutes allotted had been exceeded.

M/S/C to close debate after an additional 10 minutes.

M/S/F to endorse Gonzalez, 27-18.

M/S/C for no endorsement, 34-9, which was interpreted as the meaning of the original motion (see first *resolved*).

Since there is no endorsed candidate, the second *resolved* is moot.

2. Governor Schwarzenegger (5)Vince Quackenbush

WHEREAS, the Republican candidate Arnold Schwarzenegger prevailed at the ballot box, and

WHEREAS, Governor-elect Schwarzenegger campaigned with the motto "Kids Come First", and

WHEREAS, Governor-elect Schwarzenegger also pledged to eliminate the increase in motor vehicle fees, which was an integral part of last year's budget agreement, which lessened the effects of the educational budget cuts this fiscal year,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The UESF calls for a massive educator, and general labor, demonstration to be held on the first practical Saturday after the announcement of any education cuts to be proposed due to any budgetary short-fall; and that UESF calls upon all its affiliates (State FED, SF Labor Council, CFT and CTA) to jointly co-sponsor and motivate all their members to produce an appropriately large turnout to such an event.

M/S/C to table this resolution to some unspecified future date.

- 3. Academic Freedom Committee Jeremiah Jeffries
Whereas teachers are facing the pressure to neglect best practices in favor of off the shelf curriculum and pedagogy and

Whereas, at the state and federal level, directions are challenging a teacher’s right as a professional to make the best academic “choices” for their students, I move that UESF establish a working committee called the “Academic Freedom Committee” this November.

The committee will research and define academic freedom as well as develop a resolution to be presented at the Assembly Meeting by Jan. 21st 2004 to reflect the best way to support academic freedom.

The committee will be comprised of interested UESF members and volunteers from the November Assembly Meeting.

The committee shall be established by the end of the November Assembly Meeting. Notice and a call for membership to the committee will begin (as amended) at the November assembly meeting and shall be advertised through UESF's cost neutral ways such as e-mail and inclusion in notices/publications.

Brother Kelly pointed out that Article 6.2 of our teachers’ contract has language about academic freedom.

Many people spoke, all in favor. An amendment was accepted to remove the fifth paragraph, “The committee shall be established by the end of the November Assembly meeting,” and the phrase, “...from the November Assembly Meeting” from the fourth paragraph, and to add “...and possible contract revisions” to the third paragraph, after “academic freedom.”

M/S/C to extend time limit by 5 minutes.

M/S/C unanimously on the amended resolution. Executive Board member Kit Bell was appointed to convene the committee.

Divisional Committee Reports

- 1. Paraprofessionals Committee.....Bradley Reeves

There will be a meeting for paraprofessionals on December 4 at 5:00 Ida B. Wells High School. The Committee of Industrial Relations has approached UESF about taking part in a four-year apprenticeship program. Participants would accumulate enough credits for a BA. The first meeting with the District took place today. It is hoped that special education paras can participate, and that the program can begin soon.

The District is planning on laying off 30 additional paras. If layoffs can be postponed until next year, AB 1299 will probably have been passed, requiring that there be a 45-day notice for layoffs, which will buy time for paras slated for layoff.

Brother Reeves has been researching the retirement systems in which paras participate. PARS seems to be a bad deal. He has been unable to find out how UESF got into PARS; SFUSD is the only district in California that is enrolled in PARS for classified staff. He is looking into the possibility of switching to PERS, which has a higher contribution rate.

Special Education paras are being moved around without regard to the transfer rules set out in our contract. Some students have IEPs which require special education paras specifically for them, and this is not always done. It is not a very transparent process that is being used. According to our contract, security aides are supposed to go through a 24-hour training. With Brother Reeves' urging, training has been scheduled. Call the UESF office for dates. One will be on January 30.

Longevity pay is still an ongoing issue. Some paras have gotten pay dating back 6 years. A total of 140 paras are affected.

2. Social Activities Committee..... Susan Solomon

UESF will have our holiday party on Friday, December 5, at Castagnola's Restaurant from 4:00-8:00 p.m. There will be hors d'oeuvres, drinks (first one free), live music by Hiram Bell, face painting for children, and raffle prizes. There are three hours of validated parking. All members and their families are invited to attend.

M/S/C to extend the meeting for 15 more minutes.

3. Substitute Division.....Sandra Mack

a) A survey has gone out to the schools about whether there is a problem with scheduled substitutes showing up to determine whether there is a substitute shortage. b) The substitute division elected 7 members to be Assembly delegates. Work is being done to organize the next election. c) Jolie Weinroth agreed to send a memo to every site to have a key policy for substitutes, suggesting that the UESF-drafted policy be used. If a school is not implementing the policy, this should be reported to UESF.

4. Elementary School Committee..... Susan Solomon

The survey on the elementary school workday, to be used for bargaining re-openers, is ready to be sent to schools. At its next meeting on November 26, the committee will work on a resolution regarding the newly-adopted Houghton-Mifflin reading series and the Reading First program instituted at some schools.

5. High School Committee.....Ken Tray

Issues discussed: a) The committee and ISO Frank Tom met to discuss the ongoing concerns about how SSCs function at sites. b) Large schools on the west side and underpopulated schools on the east side indicate a problem with fundamental educational equity. The committee is moving towards a proposal for a union position on equity. c) Security, especially in light of DeShawn Dawson's death is of concern. d) There needs to be proper faculty input into professional development.

6. Child Development Committee.....Betty Robinson-Harris

There will be a committee meeting at Theresa Mahler CDP, December 1 at 6:30. Six community meetings to discuss students' transition from pre-k to kindergarten and to help parents to register

their children for kindergarten have been scheduled. The first, held on November 13, from 6:00-8:00 p.m. at the Bayview Opera House was changed from a transition meeting to something different when Ackerman introduced guest speaker Lorraine Monroe and the concept of “Dream Schools.” Therefore, registration for students did not occur.

7. Counselor’s Committee..... Amy Loomis

The committee has made lots of headway with truancy concerns. There was a meeting with the District and there are now plans for counselors to become part of the decision-making process. Meetings will continue with the Dropout Prevention office and Pupil Services. Another issue is the enormous process in which counselors participate for eighth grade students who are applying to Lowell.

Delegation Reports

1. Labor CouncilTom Edminster

There was an exciting and lively meeting on Wednesday, November 5, the night after the election, shouting and all. The purpose of the meeting was to endorse a mayoral candidate for the runoff election in December, but the meeting was recessed until Saturday to give locals a chance to talk with their constituents. There was a vote of no endorsement.

2. CTA State CouncilElaine Merriweather

The Council overwhelmingly endorsed a CTA-proposed funding initiative for universal preschool by raising property tax rate on commercial property, to go on the ballot in 2004.

New Business

Resolution on Education, not Incarceration Teach-Ins and Statewide Day of Action... Lisa Gutierrez-Guzman

WHEREAS: San Francisco public schools have face devastating budget cuts forcing the lay-offs of teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors and other staff; and

WHEREAS: Further budget cuts could lead to a gradual dismantling of public education, leaving underprepared youth with fewer options and at a greater risk of entering the incarceration system (the majority of prisoners are high school dropouts); and

WHEREAS: The S.F. Board of Education and UESF supported the May 8th, 2003 Day of Action when more than 1,000 students, teachers, parents and union and prison reform and community activists converged on Sacramento to meet with lawmakers and rally support for the redirection of our priorities toward education and not incarceration; and

WHEREAS: The above-mentioned pro-public school advocates continue to organize under the umbrella of the Education, no Incarceration Coalition; and

WHEREAS: The S.F. Board of Education voted unanimously to support the Educations, no Incarceration teach-ins and Day of Action on October 28 and the S.F. Youth Commission followed suit on November 17; and

WHEREAS: The National Education Association overwhelmingly endorsed the call for our state and local affiliates to have an open dialogue regarding this issue; and

WHEREAS: San Francisco educators want our students to grow up to be critical thinkers, participants and decision-makers in our society;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That UESF supports the broad-based involvement in the age-appropriate teach-ins by the Education, no Incarceration Coalition which began on November 12, 2003 and which culminate today, November 19, in a statewide Day of Action calling for a reduction in the incarceration budget and an increase in resources for public education in the incoming budget cycle.

M/S/C

Good of the Order

Announcements:

- \$435 was collected for UFCW at this meeting.
- There will be a Rally and Candlelight Protest for Workers' Right to Organize on Wednesday, December 10, International Human Rights Day, at 5:00 p.m., at Union Square in San Francisco. Flyers were available at the meeting.
- Literacy for Environmental Justice, an organization based in the Bayview Hunters Point community, is developing an Emergency Response Plan for when an environmental emergency occurs. Flyers were available at the meeting.
- Sister Derrlyn Tom will be released from prison during the first week of December, after serving six months for trespassing at the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia.
- UESF, CFT, and SFCC Labor Studies are again offering a course in California Labor History, Labor 88, starting January 15. Flyers were available. Call UESF for more information.

Pam Routh is impressed with the turnout at recent Assembly meetings.

Adjournment was in memory of Hoadley Johnson, Jan Seeger, George Moscone and Harvey Milk.

M/S/C to adjourn at 6:30.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Solomon, Secretary