

Draft Minutes of
The East Aurora Council of the AFT Local 604
August 16, 2022

In attendance: Arlette Gomez, Aviva Pollack Paradise, Amy Van Cura, Alan Scott, Becky Roireau, Beth Cotter, Christy Harding, Carrie Snyder, Claudia Ruiz, Cin Citro, Eileen Pasturczak, Fatima Ballesteros, Gerry Mestek, Geoffrey Adler, John Burkhalter, Jan Kolodziejek, Jessica Fisher, Jennifer Gentile, Jeffrey Mleczko, Joyce Ladewig, Karen Mueller, Michelle Taylor, Matt Harding, Mary Taylor, Pamela Miller, Rhonda Bass, Sandra Williams, Tim Snyder

Building Representatives, Executive Council Officers, or Senators Not In Attendance: Angie Sanchez, Airen Freese, Brittany Peterson, Beth Eadens, Dulce Jonsson, Dawn Stanfa, Elaine Halleran, Gloria Salinas, Henry Johnson, Jeff Hansford, Janel Jaros, Julie Melendez, Jon Kuehl, Julie Schmale, Judy Durham, Kaliegh Soumar, Kevin Thacker, Lisha Pauli, Lorraine Garciacano, Mary Carol Smith, Mara Clucas, Melinda Thomas, Michelle Hanna, Nicole Connoly, Stephanie Paul, Stacey Martin, Trevor Schrage, Victoria Haier

Call to Order 4 - 6:00 PM. Virtual.

Group Work

- Introductions and Icebreaker

We introduced each other in breakout rooms and discussed personal bucket list items. Afterwards we shared some of those items with the group.

Michelle Taylor raised the question of whether we were going to discuss whether we are going to have in-person or virtual meetings, accessibility to membership, etc.

It was clarified that the constitution states how many meetings are for the general membership. Accessibility will be discussed moving forward.

Secretary's Reports:

- Reviewed union meeting minutes from [04/14/22 DRAFT](#)

Motion to approve: Michelle Taylor, Mary Taylor, Approved. Pass, all. Nays, 0. Abstains, 0.

- Reviewed union meeting minutes from [05/26/22 DRAFT](#)

Motion to approve: Jan Kolodziejek, Michelle Taylor. Approved. Pass, all. Nays, 0. Abstains, 0.

Treasurer's Report:

- Reviewed  22-23 Meeting Budget.xlsx

Sandra Williams: This is a bit of a preliminary budget and we can finetune it as we go.

There has been an increase to our dues. \$1.90 full, \$1.15 partial. But there should be enough in our reserves that we don't have to pass that increase down to our membership.

Cyn C: What is half dues about?

Sandra: You have to make a certain dollar amount to qualify. For instance, some support staff pay partial dues. But there are some support staff who after our last contract eventually made the transition from partial to full.

Motion to approve: Mary Talor, Michelle Taylor. Approved. Pass, all. Nays, 0. Abstains, 0.

- Updated Email: wsweetfebruary4@sbcglobal.net

Sandra's updated email address was shared with the group.

Senators' Reports:

- White cards - Accidental Death and Dismemberment

Should put two beneficiaries; e.g., in case of death of both husband and wife in a car accident.

- Dues Breakdown - 2022-2023

Full - \$700.08; Half - \$376.30; Quarter - \$214.47; Eighth - \$133.50

Full increase - \$1.90; Half increase: \$1.15; Quarter increase: \$0.77; Eighth increase - \$0.59

- Union Leaders

If it doesn't seem right, ask a Field Service Director.

- Tier 2 Pensions

Points of discussion - age of retirement, number of years for salary average.

- Workers Rights Amendment

This is an important issue to educate ourselves and our members about. It is coming up for a vote.

- <https://www.aftlocal604.org/>

Senate meetings, student debt clinics, and so much more! Local 604 staff and Exec. Board. Also, all of the 604 council contracts.

- Trauma Counseling Program

AFT now has a Trauma Counseling Program

- 3 New Programs

1. Free energy audit (local utilities will come in and assist with opportunities to lower energy bills. 2. New incentives to access solar panels 3. Electric School buses.

President:

- Signing Up New Members

New hire orientation meeting: [Membership Cards](#)

Becky Roireau: Our big focus this week is our new staff sign-ups. On Thursday we get to go from 11 - 11:45 to talk with the new hires and do sign-ups for the union. Support staff and teachers will be there.

Jennifer Gentile: We are at the high school. It might be in the cafeteria. We need to confirm exactly where it is at. But it is not at the Meyer Center. The time is the same. We tried to pin Jalitza down but she said it is a work in progress. It has changed every day. Just please welcome the new people in your building.

Fatima: How many people will there be?

Jennifer: 150 - 200.

Becky Roireau talked about the importance of the union and how we've been helping members from the moment they come in the door to the moment they leave the door.

- Building Union Power During 2022-23

Our Vision includes:

[1] Every month, every Building Rep has a meeting with their principal [Alan will speak on this topic]

*[Monthly Union-Principal Meetings: One of Our Most Powerful Tools](#),

*[Form Letter for Reps to Send Their Principals](#)

*[Union-Principal Meeting Agenda/Notes Template](#)

Alan Scott discussed the importance of Union-Principal Meetings, shared the form letter and explained the agenda template.

Jan Kolodziejek discussed the issue of principal input on the notes. She said she doesn't allow them to add their own info. She emails them to the principal, says that they are the final minutes. They initial only.

A discussion was had regarding the pros and cons of having the principal write their notes on the sheet vs just having them approve it with their initials. Alan advocated for allowing principals to add their own notes, and Jan advocated for just having them initial.

[2] Every month, every Building Rep uses their 10 minutes during faculty meetings,

*[Form Letter](#): Intent to Use Union Time During Faculty Meeting

Becky Roireau: The EC will share a slide for reps to use. We encourage reps to use each faculty meeting. We also shared a form letter for initiating a planning discussion with their principal regarding the union using their time during faculty meetings.

[3] Every month, every Building Rep attends our monthly union meeting,

Not discussed.

[4] Every two weeks, the Executive Council will release an update bulletin,

Becky Roireau: It is hard to be effective and mobilized if we aren't informed. If you know of any important issues, share those with me and I'll push it out.

[5] [Building Rep Tool Box](#),

Alan Scott discussed this new resource we are creating for reps. It is a work in progress.

[6] Speaking at Every Board Meeting

Becky Roireau shared her commitment to speak at every board meeting.

Jennifer Gentile: "We need to show up as a presence at all board meetings." Each school needs to sign up. Not to stay the whole time. An hour? Wear blue shirts. We are being pushed out. They're not letting Becky speak at Red and Black. The union got pushed to the end of new hire orientation. We need to fill the seats. Just one board meeting per year. Have fun with it! Plan an event. Go out to dinner.

Michelle Taylor: Some of the things that happened this year wouldn't have happened if we hadn't spoken at board meetings.

Becky Roireau: Not being involved with the handbooks, not being involved with the safety officers, it's an endless list of not being included in decisions. We need a workaround. We need to be present. If we want to do an event, I'd love to join you. Make it fun. Come up with ideas. We can speak about positive things too. Encore teachers can speak. Different groups. Related services people. Office staff. Everyone involved. Not just one school. And that takes the burden off those who sign up too.

Jennifer Gentile: Our members are getting negative letters to quit the union. We need to be at new hire orientation. Norrell will be there on Thursday. We need to show our new members that we are strong.

Becky Roireau: I wanted to thank Jeff so much for answering a million of my questions. He has been an incredible resource for me.

Alan Scott: Mobilizing our membership and having active building representatives increases our union power and ability to affect change.

Michelle Taylor: When board members see how policy affects our ability to teach or help our students, that's when the board will listen.

[7] Regular President Updates (including BOE notes, [U-S Notes 08/04/22](#), President's Comments, etc.).

A discussion was had regarding BOE emergency meetings not being scheduled in the calendar, and the issue of links, documents, etc., also not being shared on agendas. We'd discussed the issue with Dr. Norrell at the 08/04/22 Union-Superintendent meeting.

Beth Cotter: If we have assigned dates, the reps can better push those dates.

Becky Roireau: That's a great idea.

VP - Teacher:

- Leaving the Buildings

Jennifer Gentile: Please do not prop the door. This will be discipline action this year if you get caught propping the door. Safety is the #1 priority.

Geoff Adler: During door duty, can we keep those doors open?

Jennifer Gentile: When you are standing by the door, yes. But not if you leave the door. Do not prop the outside and leave it unattended.

- Student Contact

Jennifer Gentile: The message the new staff have been hearing is not to put hands on children. Please remind your staff, do not put hands. No hugging. We live in different time periods. The district said that at the new hire orientation on the first day. Dr. Norrell means business with that.

- New Security Guards

Jennifer Gentile: They're retired police department officers. They aren't union but they were union in the past. They should be union positions.

Cyn Cintro: CPI training will be affected. Who is going to want to intervene?

Alan Scott: This was brought up at high school union-principal meetings. You are not protected if you physically intervene in an altercation and a student gets injured whether by accident or due to excessive force. The principal would not say that those who intervene are protected. If you want to protect your position, maybe stand between students, ask students to stop, use non-physical means, etc., but don't put hands on students.

Jan Kolodziejek: This should be brought up at the district level.

Sandra Williams: They make us take CPI every summer.

Michelle Taylor: Those who are trained aren't doing it. They observe.

Jessica Fisher: They are supposedly providing a new non-physical type of training.

Sandra Williams: New security are hands off.

Michelle Taylor: The officers are moving between schools, looking for security breaches, etc.

Kelly Hastings: What do we say to staff whose student's grandparent dies and they want a hug?

Becky Roireau: It needs to be clarified by the district, it needs to come through principals, and it needs to be shared with staff. We don't want to take a chance. It's rough out there. Our team will ask those direct questions but in the meantime err on the side of caution.

Jan Kolodziejek: Admin will believe any student even if they aren't there. They'll put you on leave and then forget about you. It happened at Waldo. It was precipitated by notes between kids, flimsy stuff. It was sad. It was ridiculous.

Jennifer Gentile: Being on leave for weeks and weeks is awful. It has a psychic toll.

Stephanie Paul: They side with the parents, even when we have the documentation.

Jan Kolodziejek: We need respectful treatment when it comes to employee discipline.

Becky Roireau: One of the power dynamics is that they've taken discipline meetings out of the buildings and to the admin building.

Alison Nile: Sometimes kids just come up and hug me. Should I be reporting that?

Jennifer Gentile: You need to document it. I know it's hard for elementary. Use different motions, a dance, a fist bump, etc. I know it's a lot of work. I just want you to be cautious. People are being sent out. I don't think you should run to admin each time. We have to start training ourselves.

Jan Kolodziejek: Also tell your building rep.

Becky Roireau: We'll get clarification. But err on the side of caution. It is a good opportunity at the beginning of the year to start new habits.

Alison Nile: I think that day one it needs to be told to everyone. It is a human response to sooth students who have been hurt or injured.

Becky Roireau: We can ask her to address this specifically.

VP - Staff:

- Introduction

Claudia Ruiz introduced herself. She encouraged reps to join us at the new hire orientation.

VP - Clerical:

No report from Rhonda Bass.

Building Concerns

- Union Blue During Red and Black

The pros and cons were discussed regarding whether we should make a statement at Red and Black by wearing union blue.

The group decided to start with union blue on Tuesdays.

- Committees

Becky Roireau will send an email around about unfilled committees.

Adjourn:

Motion to adjourn. Gerry Mestek, no second. Approved. Pass, all. Nays, 0. Abstains, 0.