

Local 70125

external affairs



PLEASE CIRCULATE

VEUILLEZ CIRCULER

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 20, 1995

ASSEMBLER MENSUELLE
LUNDI, LE 20 MARS 1995

7:30 P.M.
246 QUEEN STREET
ROOM 202

7:30 P.M.
246 RUE QUEEN
CHAMBRE 202

ASSEMBLEE

MEETING

- | | | | |
|------|---|----|---|
| ✓ 1. | CALL TO ORDER | 1. | OUVERTURE DE LA RÉUNION |
| ✓ 2. | ROLL CALL | 2. | APPEL NOMINAL DES DIRIGEANTS |
| ✓ 3. | ADOPTION OF AGENDA | 3. | PROPOSÉ ORDRE DU JOUR. |
| ✓ 4. | MINUTES OF JANUARY 95
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS | 4. | COMPTE-RENDU DU JANVIER
95 ASSEMBLÉE MENSUELLE |
| ✓ 5. | BUSINESS ARISING FROM
MINUTES | 5. | DÉBAT DU COMPTE-RENDU |
| ✓ 6. | CORRESPONDENCE | 6. | CORRESPONDANCE |
| ✓ 7. | REPORTS
Executive
Committees | 7. | RAPPORTS
Executif
Comités |
| 8. | NEW BUSINESS | 8. | AFFAIRES NOUVELLES |
| 9. | ADJOURNMENT | 9. | FERMETURE |

Section Locale 70125

affaires exterieures

PSAC LOCAL 70125
MINUTES FOR MEETING OF
MARCH 20, 1995

1. The meeting was called to order by President Dubé at 7:30 p.m.
2. PRESENT: E. Dubé, C. Pyl, P. Coupland, J. Davidson,
J. Kruithof, R. Harris
ABSENT: G. Doherty, for personal reasons.

3. ADOPT AGENDA M/Pyl S/Cundell Carried

The following items were placed under NEW BUSINESS:

- a) Vote of March 27.
- b) Purchase of new office furniture.
- c) Survival Skills Course given by SPDA.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 16, 1995

M/Cundell S/Kruithof Carried

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Correction: 70% traces on tiles in two different places
should read: throughout the building.
(Health & Safety Committee Report).

6. CORRESPONDENCE

JAN. 10/95: NJC Cyclical Review Schedule: Input Call -
J. Kruithof wanted to know what the status of this was.
L. Cundell stated that the letter pertained only to the
items contained therein.

7. EXECUTIVE REPORTS

President's Report M/Dubé S/Coupland Carried

President Dubé expressed concern over the wording of the ballot for the March 27 Work-To-Rule Vote. The current wording is that there will be one sole vote for all items mentioned, rather than voting for each item. She said that some members would agree with certain items, but not others.

Another concern was the holding of the vote. President Dubé stated that Departmental facilities COULD NOT/NOT BE USED to hold the vote; our request was refused by Staff Relations. She further stated that Departmental facilities COULD NOT/NOT BE USED to send ballots to members abroad. As to members abroad, she is waiting to hear from G. Doherty who will be raising this matter with the Component. It is important to have an answer quickly from the Component since: (1) we must have the office open from 9:00 to 5:00 approximately, (2) we must get notices posted throughout the building. She also mentioned the time factor: there was little time as we would require the latest and most accurate membership list containing the names and job levels of members as well as how many members there are now. L. Cundell stated that to hold a good vote, there would have to be at least six weeks turnaround time. One suggestion was made to mail ballots to members' homes. President Dubé said that PSAC does not have the addresses of all our members, just those who get the union magazine.

As to locale, it was decided that it would be held at the Locale Office, since it was our only real choice. President Dubé stated that setting up a table on the sidewalk would not be practical (weather/umbrella). She stated that there could be no drop-off spot for ballots at the worksite, nor could we use the E-MAIL system. We also are not permitted to do a desk drop. J. Davidson admitted that even if we get ballots to members via union resources, the members would not be able to respond using management resources, without management's permission. They would have to set up their own phone lines in order to send faxes back to us.

C. Pyl asked whether Staff Relations had asked to see the wording of the ballot. President Dubé stated: no, they simply refused to allow the holding of the vote at the worksite, or to allow the use of Departmental facilities for the carrying out of the vote. J. Davidson commented that PAFSO had held elections at the worksite. President Dubé stated that this is because they are management (the officers). Also, PAFSO calls itself an association, not a union.

President Dubé stated that what we are permitted to do is put up notices throughout the building, provided they are carefully worded. If Staff Relations does not like the wording, they could be removed. The notices will be worded as follows: "PSAC LOCAL 70125 - VOTING WILL TAKE PLACE AT 27 MARCH 1995 AT (time) AT 246 QUEEN STREET, 2ND FLOOR, ROOM 202. COME CAST YOUR BALLOT". The other thing we could do would be to spread the word to as many members as possible. If members complain about the locale, we would have to tell them that management would not permit the vote to be held in the building.

President Dubé also attended another meeting at Passport Office with G. Doherty and M. Ramsay. A new name has been proposed: Security and Foreign Operations. It is up in the air as to whether the Passport Office will stay with us or become a Specialized Operating Agency. No one will know until the Budget is implemented. Another possibility is that they could become part of Immigration, or else become an independent body in the private sector. She stated that although the presentation was done professionally, it told her nothing. She has a hard copy of it. The management at Passport Office assured her that they would maintain contact with her as well as with the members and ensure that the process is carried out in a fair manner. Management there also mentioned that some jobs would be lost. In response to a question, President Dubé stated that there are over 200 members at Passport Office and that about 30 would be affected. Management has assured her that everything will be done to ensure that members are treated fairly under the Workforce Adjustment Directive and that no layoffs would be anticipated.

Finally, she mentioned that she had been invited to attend a meeting of the Foreign Service Consultative Rotational CR Group.

First Vice-President's Report

M/Pyl

S/Cundell

Carried

To the best of his knowledge, at Place Vanier, eight terms (members) have been told that at the end of this month or next month, they will be gone. Some of these people have been working almost four or five years. About one month's notice was given. He also stated that his Bureau is undergoing another reorganization (there have been three of them in the last five years).

President Dubé stated that she has been trying to convince as many terms as possible to go through the Public Service Commission. Management lets go of employees approaching the five-year mark, on the grounds that they would have to be made permanent (i.e. benefits would have to be paid; they would have the same rights as other permanent employees). This happens just when the employee is getting to know the Department and how it operates. She stated that based on conversations with the Alliance, very little can be done, except to grieve that it goes against the intent of current policy. Those employees approaching the five-year mark would have a better chance of winning than those who have not been around a long time. Two grievances were filed, but both were disallowed. She finally stated that morale is very low; people are wondering whether they are staying or not. Pressure has been put upon others to retire.

Second Vice-President's Report

M/Coupland

S/Cundell

Carried

She attended a number of meetings of the Foreign Service Rotational SCY Consultative Group. February 1 meeting: a questionnaire had been circulated to all rotational SCYs stating what are your needs, what should priorities be for the future, etc. Initially, only about 10% had answered since the questionnaire had not gone out to everyone (P. Coupland was one of them). The reason was that nobody had thought of this, also that there were SIGNET problems. The questionnaire was eventually sent out again, results were compiled (about 30% had responded), and they were presented at a meeting held by SPV on February 15. SPV was quite impressed with the work done by the group, but of course they could not promise anything because the bottom line was cuts. At the same meeting, SPV also announced that KPMG (formerly Peat Marwick) had been hired to do a needs analysis for the administrative and technical support group - an outlook of the next 10-15 years. The person in charge is Frank Reed, a former employee (classification officer) of the Department. There would be focus groups reporting to Mr. Reed, who will eventually do up his report and it would be presented to senior management. The results of the survey would go to Mr. Reed.

Another meeting March 8 dealt with late appraisals. A fair number of officers are slow to complete these reports once they have received input from secretaries. Managers should make a greater effort to complete the appraisals on a timely basis.

On March 15, P. Coupland attended a video presentation. This video was a presentation made by the Group to USS in December 1994 (a hard copy was provided to the Local). Gordon Smith was impressed with our work, calling it a "powerful, persuasive, well argued brief" and he said: "I agree with every word you said". Bottom line, however, is still more cuts coming; as he said: "it is three times more expensive to have somebody abroad than it is to have somebody at home".

In his response to the Group, Mr. Smith went through the usual spiel: the massive changes that jobs have undergone - from the time that officers had to "draft, draft and redraft", to the current state of things today where virtually everyone has a computer. He said that people are the Department's most important resource. P. Coupland commented that she had problems with this because why the cuts??

Mr. Smith also stated that he intends to push ahead with the GE Conversion, to speed things up. He intends to follow up with Bob Giroux of the Treasury Board on this. He also intends to emphasize training of staff. This was in reply to a comment by one of the SCYs that managers tend to refuse a request for training if it is of a general nature - e.g. prepare for the future - or if the course does not relate to the job you are performing now. A better chance of approval is obtained if the course pertains to the particular job you are doing now. This meeting was also attended by SPD and SPV.

Mr. Smith reflected the typical attitude of the Department by admitting that SCY-2s would be SCY-4s elsewhere. The President asked if anyone challenged this admission. P. Coupland said no, they were speechless.

Finally, P. Coupland stated that she has started a working file on this group because of the paper accumulated and that it would be kept in the Local office.

Third Vice-President's Report

M/Davidson S/Coupland Carried

J. Davidson attended the Budget Night rally at PSAC on Gilmour Street and that P. Coupland and E. Dubé also attended. There were lots of reporters trying to get reactions of members, but he noted that they were concerned about getting taxis - i.e. they did not want to stay long, probably because there were no huge riots, so no real story for them. President Dubé stated that she had been interviewed by one reporter, but would not give her name or allow herself to be quoted since during the strike, what she had said in an interview had been twisted and taken out of context. P. Coupland also stated that she had been approached, but also would not give her name.

J. Davidson also mentioned that R. Harris has expressed a keen interest in the newsletter. He also said that at work, the regular computer courses have been set aside so that ICONDESK 4.4 can be run exclusively. He said that while the Department talks about training, at the same time, the one-hour courses won't run again until May. Stress is put on people because the only time that most can attend is during their lunch hour. President Dubé said that management is obtaining full devotion for an extra hour (the lunch hour) of employees, in addition to the full devotion obtained during the other 7½ hours. She understood the situation well, saying that she spends most of her lunch hours dealing with employees who have problems. She also expressed the concern that this one hour is not paid time, it is the employee's time!!

Treasurer's Report

M/Cundell

S/Pyl

Carried

November, December and end-of-year reports were presented. On the December and end-of-year reports, some figures were changed. The reason was that in looking at the bank statements, the Treasurer discovered errors. A deposit was made on December 31 and it had not been reflected.

President Dubé asked what the CLC unrepresented cheque was. The Treasurer stated that this was in connection with the Health & Safety Conference in Toronto which was attended by C. Pyl.

President Dubé also asked whether the parking (Item 561) was all-inclusive for one month. The Treasurer said it was for three months.

The Treasurer stated that part of the \$400.00 Petty Cash Advance went to the Christmas Party. The actual total for the year was \$269.50. The Christmas Party was put under Item 60101 - Local Hospitality. The AGM was under a different item. Less was spent on the Christmas Party than was allocated.

President Dubé asked if the amount under Communications (Item 511) was for one month. The Treasurer said no, this was the year end statement ending December 31. The monthly rate is now \$92.00 and will rise once we start using the fax.

January and February reports were not available.

President Dubé asked whether our financial codes could be changed. The Treasurer stated that we would have to sit down and do it. People do not find it easy to follow, especially those who do not often attend. These codes were taken from an old coding system used by the Department. They were not changed because they have served us well.

On the last page, the Royal Bank was included since it was year end. In the previous year, funds were transferred to us that were left over from the strike.

The accounts will go over to the Component next week for auditing. There will be a period where no rebate cheques will be received. This will not present a problem as we are in good fiscal shape. It will be about June before we start getting the cheques again.

Health & Safety Committee Report

M/Pyl S/Coupland Carried

Meetings are being held on schedule; the Committee at the Pearson Building meets on Thursdays. The asbestos problem is still not being dealt with. As far as it is known, the contract is still not signed, mostly because of paranoia created as a result of the last fiasco with respect to the windows. The Minister must now sign off any projects that are being done, even asbestos removal. It is hoped that on Thursday's meeting, we will be advised that this project will be carried through. C. Pyl has also been attending several meetings on shortage of work space in BICOs. This is slowly being resolved; swing space is being used to restore dead files. ESSA seems pleased with our efforts.

FSD Committee Report

M/Kruithof S/Coupland Carried

On April 1, new tables are coming out for FSD allowances. Most benefits will reflect approximately 0.65% increase. PSAC statistical people have run off figures provided by Treasury Board, and these figures check out. With respect to the Shelter Cost Table, it is a bit more complex. For some of the lower level rates, there will be a slight increase (\$2 or \$3), and for some of the upper levels, there will be a slight decrease (\$1 or \$2). Maximum increase would be \$10.

Department has sent to all missions a request for input for the FSD Triennial Review. J. Kruithof stated that whatever gains are made in one area, there are likely to be reductions in another area.

Membership Committee: NIL to report.

8. NEW BUSINESS

a) Vote of March 27

M/Cundell S/Pyl Carried

Since the vote will be held at the Local office, the Local will reimburse those who will be at the office for loss of salary (approximately \$200.00 per person). A per diem of \$49.00 will also be paid. (President Dubé said that this must be shown on leave slips under Union Business).

President Dubé said that the most recent membership list would be used for the vote.

b) Purchase of New Office Furniture

M/Cundell S/Pyl Carried

That the Local put aside \$4000.00 to purchase new furniture as it sees fit. That way, a vote will not have to be held each time a purchase is being contemplated - e.g. new furniture for our new computer and printer (anything over \$100.00 must be approved).

c) Survival Skills Course given by SPDA

President Dubé read out an E-MAIL message that she and J. McCann had been copied on, in which D. Delaney stated that the cartoon used in the notice for the course had been in poor taste - "in a period of extreme stress in worklife, violence in the workplace, in homes and against women and children is on the rise, at a time where debate on gun control rages across our country, where just a few short years ago, a government employee gunned down a supervisor on the Interprovincial Bridge, using a cartoon to depict an employee at a meeting with a rifle to promote the course shows a total lack of understanding or concern of problems in our society". D. Delaney went on to say that these courses and their promotion are an important part of staff relations. Although he felt that cartoons selected for these posters have by and large been of good quality, he asked that SPDA/Barbara Barr give more thought to selection of cartoons in the future.

Barbara Barr's response: "I apologize for having offended you. It was absolutely never my intention to promote violence as a method of survival. My work puts me in situations where I witness results of abuse of any kind very frequently and I abhor any actions that hurts others. I saw only humour in the cartoon. However, given the context that you have pointed out, it was obviously a thoughtless choice on my part and hope you will forgive me."

The cartoon showed people sitting around a table, one of them with a rifle. The caption read: "Well, Jim, seeing as you have a gun, why don't you start the meeting?"

The Executive agreed that D. Delaney's point was well taken.

REPORT OF PRESIDENT Submitted by E. B. Dubé

As usual the month of February was Annual General Meeting time. I was amazed to see that so few Members attended given the trying times we are all facing. It is a mystery that so little interest is generated even though the Civil Service is being cut and downsized to death.

Was very happy to see the usual faces present and thank all of you for your input. I am pleased at my re-election and look forward to working with you for another term. My thanks to the Executive for their support and congratulations to those re-elected as well as the newly-elected.

The Alliance is planning a vote to take place on the 27th of March to see what the Membership wishes are regarding planning actions to show dissatisfaction with the impending implementation of the Budget. Management will not allow us to hold the vote on the premises nor will it allow us to use the Dip Bag services to reach our Members abroad. We should know soon how we will endeavour to accomplish this.

Problems are on the rise and time is much occupied. Brother Doherty, Mary Ramsay and I attended a meeting at the Passport Office. A presentation was given to explain upcoming changes. Not much to relate right now as they have just begun the process. They do anticipate however, that some positions could be affected and that is what is of particular interest to us. They will keep us informed and contact will be maintained with Members to ensure that the process is carried out fairly.

I have been invited by the Consultative CR Group to attend one of their next meetings and am looking forward to it. Will keep the Local up to date on events as they occur.

Once again, thank you for the vote of confidence I know this year will be a trying one and the only thing we can do is keep our lines of communication open and support one another through it all.

COURAGE, COURAGE, COURAGE MY FRIENDS!!!!

March 20, 1995

