

FPSU Committee on the Future

September 12, 2009

Minutes

Members Present: Angela Aikens, Andre Allen, Freda Exum, Lovie Fulse, Lyndon Gray, John Henkle, Liza Jacobs, Robin Kirkpatrick, Richard (Mac) Macdonald, Raymond Rawls, Sonya Roundtree, Robin Turner and Theo Webster.

FPSU Staff: Van Church, Kim Cronin, Israel Fermin, Caitlin Fishman, Colin Fiske, Rick Smith and Frank Sosa

Facilitators: Pat Thomas and Alphonso Mayfield

Note taker: Katie Roberson-Young

Goals:

- To commit to each other and to our committee's purpose.
- To share our vision for Florida in the next 20 years
- To understand the purpose and basics of a union constitution and bylaws
- To set out our work plan and calendar

I. Opening & Introduction – Alphonso Mayfield, FPSU Provisional President Goals & Agenda

WHAT IS PURPOSE OF COF?

To draft a permanent constitution & bylaws for FPSU

What is C&B – defines how we govern ourselves

All viable organizations have:

- Mission/Purpose/Structure – (defined by constitution & by-laws)
- Leaders
- Members
- Resources

Why do we need a C&B? (it's the LAW & its democratic)

Move from Provisional Status:

- Organize into a union and/or merge organizations into a union

- Period of time (two years) to determine if viable, members willing to own & build their organization (organize, sign members and get contracts)

Steps to Permanent Status

- Draft C&B
- Members Vote To Approve
- Members Elect Officers

Why we need a Constitution and Bylaws:

- rules to follow, protect the peace
- write it down – see as well as hear
- establish a foundation you can go by – help explain to members
- rules that protect everyone
- responsibility and accountability (protect members’ dues)
- build a cohesive, internal structure
- engage membership (writing, voting, electing officers)

Expectations for process from now to Feb. 26:

- bringing everyone together, get to know each other
- unified “vision on paper,” everyone coming from the same place
- completion so we can move to the next step and be more effective
- getting information to workers so we can build membership
- support each other across the state (communicate, network, meet, share information and victories, travel to different parts of the state to go to rallies, get involved in politics, joining and increasing the strength of the family)
- from all of the above → power

How do we build power?

- Education
- Unity
- Commitment
- Numbers
- Resources
- Trainings
- Publicize victories

II. How Do We Work Together? Lessons from Colorado & HOPE – Pat Thomas, SEIU SSW Leadership Development Director

HOW DO WE DO IT — HOW DO WE MAKE THE BEST DECISIONS?

<u>DEFINE THE WHAT</u>	<u>THROUGH</u>	<u>HOW IT SHOULD WORK</u>
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FPSU VISION	EDUCATION	MISSION/PILLARS
FPSU PROGRAM	EXPOSURE	MEMBERSHIP GOVERNANCE
	DISCUSSION WRITING	OFFICERS OFFICERS DUTIES REVENUE ELECTIONS COMMITTEES MEMBERS RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

How we work together:

- Ground rules
- Honor pledge
- Time frames
- Consensus/parliamentary procedure
- Minutes
- Vote on final articles
- Speakers list
- Small groups work
- “parking lot”
- Chocolate . . .chocolate . . .chocolate
- “basecamp” website?

DRAFT: COF Meeting Ground Rules

Goal: Fair & full Participation

1. Turn cell phones off
2. One person speaks at a time & observe time limits if time limits are set and/or follow agenda time limits.
3. Listen to and respect each person’s opinion. Speak with thoughtfulness and choose words carefully.
4. Disagree without being disagreeable — disagree with positions not personalities — Don’t take it personally.
5. ONE COMMITTEE — one meeting – No side conversations
6. Step up, step back (if you have all ready contributed, encourage others to speak who haven’t yet contributed)
7. Observers must respect the committee’s role.
8. A quorum shall consist of 50% + 1 to undertake committee work.

The Committee unanimously approved draft ground rules #1-7 with the following changes (and excluding quorum question #8), at 12:10 pm 9/12/09.

Observers →

1. Any member can attend (but must be member)
2. Observers must be respectful during committee discussions
 - a. Before committee makes a decision on an issue, committee may elect (by majority vote of those present) to have a comment/discussion period for observers, with a 3 minute time limit per speaker.
 - b. Standing rule: Half hour towards end of meeting for observer comments on constitution and bylaws (3 minute time limit per speaker). Agendas will be posted online before meetings.
 - c. No side bar conversations during committee discussions
 - d. Committee can invite speakers/experts to attend meetings

Quorum →

It's still unclear what the total number of Committee Members is — we will have a clearer idea on Sept. 26 of the full Committee structure, and can decide at that time on what quorum should be.

Members/Alternates →

1. Makeup of committee was determined by:
 - a. Chapter chairs – could join or appoint someone else
 - b. Some worksites have two or more committee members, based on size of bargaining unit, members and geographic area. (After chapter chairs, stewards or workplace leaders were invited to join.)
2. If a Committee Member cannot attend a meeting, a designated Alternate may attend and participate in the meeting, including voting on committee decisions. The Alternate must be designated by his/her Chapter. If a Committee Member attends the meeting, then his/her Alternate cannot vote.
3. Alternates must be up to speed and prepared to participate in Agenda items without committee time spent on background.

Minutes are public and will be posted on FPSU's website (seiufpublicservicesunion.org); our goal is to be as transparent as possible.

DRAFT: FPSU Committee on the Future Pledge

- We commit to each other and to achieving the purpose of the Committee on the Future: Preparing and recommending FPSU future union program including a new, permanent Constitution & Bylaws.
- We agree on what is appropriate communication and we stick to it. We do not put out any independent communications.

- We will communicate with public service employees about COF work and use such opportunities to sign up new members.
- We speak with one voice to our employers, our co-workers, our elected officials and our community.
- We make decisions by consensus whenever possible.
- We work to promote the greater good of the entire FPSU to ensure its future growth and success.
- When we draft our final recommendations, we will support them to the membership.
- We will volunteer our own time and fully participate in the committee's work.

The Committee will read and consider the pledge and will vote on final language at the next meeting, on 9/26/09.

III. Start with a Vision – Florida in 20 years

Where we were... Where we are... Where are we going?

- Strong
- Prosperous
- Recognized
- Respected
- Repeal right to work laws

What do we want Florida to look like?

Small group presentations: draw a picture of what you want Florida to look like in 20 years.

Group 3

- Purple represents SEIU, throughout the state
- different colors of faces working together
- Power is in the numbers.
- Connect with other unions
- Help elected officials see the light
- Grow from plants to trees
- equality and education
- Unite all employees for a safe and healthy workplace and to be free from bondage.

Group 2

- Purple sunshine state — 1 million plus strong in FPSU

- clean environment
- safe place to live and work for all Floridians
- health care for all Floridians
- fair and equitable living wages for all Floridians
- freedom of choice for public and private sector workers to join a union
- protect our seniors, plan for retirement

Group 1

- purple state
- blue state in elections (– esp. from I-4 and north)
- fist of unity
- immigration rights
- educate younger generation to follow in our footsteps
- create awareness of labor rights
- sharing information
- building leadership at worksites
- solidarity
- “key to life” retirement (the keys)
- rescue the people in the water — bring them on board
- Spread the wealth through knowledge and solidarity, with fair and equitable treatment for all

What do the visions have in common?

- unity
- power
- growth
- knowledge, education
- wealth
- equality, respect
- justice for all

Small groups’ first draft of purpose language:

Group 1:

Vision statement:

We are a diverse community of public employees. Our mission is to unite and improve the lives of Florida families by empowering all working people to raise collective standards by which work is valued by spreading the wealth of knowledge and education. Through promotion of solidarity, the union shall fight to improve conditions of its member and their community.

Group 2:

We are a diverse community dedicated to improving the lives of workers and their families. We believe that through our unity we will provide a safe, clean

environment, a safe workplace, affordable health care, equitable wages and benefits and the freedom to participate in a union.

Group 3:

We are power. We are dedicated public service employees improving lives of workers and families. We are the key to the next generation. We are the future: power, respect, participation, and building strength in the community and around Florida. Power has the ability to change and improve lives.

Plan for drafting final language: The Committee unanimously decided that FPSU will combine the three statements into one and distribute this draft joint statement along with each of the three above at the next meeting, on 9/26/09. The Committee will discuss and decide on language at that time.

What can I contribute?

- Sonya – dedication
- Freda – commitment
- Lyndon – fresh ideas
- Theo – past experience working with developing bylaws and strategic planning
- Lovie – dedication, commitment to soaking up knowledge and becoming a better steward
- Mac – communication, commitment
- Robin T – promoting positive input and encouraging ideas of others
- Liza – loyalty to the committee, commitment, dedication, and hard work to complete the project
- Raymond – will step up and step back.
- Andre – dedication, commitment, chef!
- John – wisdom, age, and sense of humor
- Angela – manpower for justice
- Robin K – respect, support, sacrifice, dedication, commitment.

IV. Constitution & Bylaws Basics

Pillars or Mission Statement	Our values, vision, beliefs-- foundation of our union	What do we believe and value (our vision)? How do we achieve our vision?
Jurisdiction	The workers we are authorized to organize	None. <i>Jurisdiction for new groups of workers must be authorized by International union</i>
Membership	Who is eligible for membership & basic member obligations	Do we want additional categories of membership—retirees, associates, etc. to help us grow?
Governance Structure	How we govern ourselves; eligibility for officers	How many officers/board members? How are members represented in

		leadership? Who can serve? How long do they serve? How are vacancies filled?
Duties of Officers	Officers' responsibilities	What does each officer do?
Revenue	Dues obligation, how set, member obligations	What amount of dues will finance our union? What are our financial obligations? What are members' responsibility for paying?
Elections	Procedures for leadership elections	How and when do we nominate & elect our leaders?
Charges & Appeals	Procedures for settling disputes within the union to protect members' rights	<i>None/minor—procedures are standard.</i>
Member Bill of Rights	Member's Rights & Responsibilities in the Union	What are members' rights & responsibilities
Meetings	Authority for setting meetings, frequency	How often should we hold membership meetings?
Affiliations	Organizations that FPSU joins	None/minor — decide authority to authorize affiliations
Committees	Union committees to move the union program	What committees do we want to specify?
Amendments	How to amend the constitution	<i>None/minor—the standard is 2/3rds vote with proper notice & with approval of International Union</i>
Property Rights	Protection for union property	<i>None — standard to protect union property</i>

V. Next Steps & Calendar

Re Alternates: Committee members must tell Alphonso in advance if you cannot come to a meeting and are sending an Alternate in your place.

Conclusion of first meeting & message to take back to workplaces:

- Constitution & Bylaws = how we govern ourselves
- All members have a voice in the drafting process
- The Committee is made up of members from across Florida who will work and debate together to come up with a unified vision for our union, which will be presented to members for ratification at a Convention in January.
- We began drafting our Constitution and Bylaws by considering our vision for our union, and what we want Florida to look like in 20 years.
- We have a calendar set. We'll be done with the drafting process by November 16. We'll have a convention to vote on the Constitution and Bylaws and nominate candidates for union officers on January 9, 2010. We'll elect officers by February 26.

- How can members participate in this process?
 - o Go to chapter meetings
 - o Give input to committee members
 - o Come and observe a committee meeting
 - o Meetings and agendas will be on website

VI. Meeting Evaluation

Positive:	Could be improved:
Learning experience, educational	(Andre making lunch!)
Informative – different	Turn down AC
Part of big event	Discussion about how to win more union members
Meeting/Networking with other members from across the state	Feels like it is moving slowly
Drawing – thinking about things out of the box, looking at big picture	
Sharing different ideas	
New experience	
Agenda, time, location	
Forming of COF	

NEXT MEETING: 9/26/09 in Tavares (101 N. Joanna Avenue)