

DRAFT
FPSU Committee on the Future
September 26, 2009
Lake County Office
Draft Minutes

Committee Members Present:

Angela Aikens, Andre Allen, Jerry Blout, Sherrie Colgain, Freda Exum, Lovie Fulse, Lyndon Gray, John Henkle, Liza Jacobs, Robin Kirkpatrick, Richard “Mac” MacDonald, Martha Mateen, John McGibbon, Alicia Medeiros, Gene Phillips, Raymond Rawls, Sonya Roundtree, Robin Turner, Theo Webster

Observers:

Sandy Gamble
Lynette Gibson

FPSU Staff: Carl Booth, Van Church, Kim Cronin, Caitlin Fishman, Colin Fiske, Rick Smith, Frank Sosa

Facilitators: Pat Thomas, Alphonso Mayfield, Megan Sweeney

Note taker: Katie Roberson-Young

Goals:

- To finalize our ground rules, our pledge and our vision statement
- To understand our FPSU union membership, our potential, and political challenges
- To understand the role of the local union and basic governance structure
- To determine the committees we need to carry out our vision and draft committee language
- To determine membership rights and responsibilities

I. Introductions

Quick Quiz → Lovie won prize; will write questions for next meeting’s quiz.

II. Review

Feedback we’ve heard from members

- Curiosity—want to know what’s going on
- positive attitudes
- suggestions (for attendance at convention)
- glad steps had started to get laws in place

Minutes from 9/12/09 → unanimously approved. No corrections.

Ground Rules – Determine quorum

Quorum = sufficient number of committee members present to conduct business.

“A quorum shall consist of _____ to undertake committee work.”

Proposal: committee members representing 5 chapters must be present in order to conduct business (= over 50% of members represented).

10 chapters represented today, representing 90% of members of FPSU. 24 units total, including very small units. Example of chapters: Orlando, Jacksonville, St. Pete, Lake County.

Committee expressed concern about representing small units. We will come back to this issue after discussing makeup of FPSU later in the agenda.

Pledge

Discussion about the importance of consensus – gives everyone a chance to be heard and to agree or disagree. But also necessary to have an up or down vote.

FPSU COF Pledge

- We commit to each other and to achieving the purpose of the Committee on the Future: Preparing and recommending FPSU’s 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 will 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.

Committee unanimously adopted Pledge on 9/26/09.

Mission statement

Combined draft from small group first drafts:

(Who we are)

We are a diverse community of public service employees who are dedicated to improving the lives of workers and their families today, and dedicated to the next generation in the future.

(What we stand for)

We believe that the power of our united voices has the ability to change and improve lives. We are committed to building solidarity in order to raise collective standards for health, safety, and economic equality. We believe in spreading the wealth of knowledge and education through the freedom to participate in a union.

(What we will do)

We will fight to empower all working people and increase recognition and respect for quality public services in our communities and all across Florida.

Small group discussions:

1. Does the combined draft reflect the vision elements that were shared by all three groups?
2. Does it make you proud?
3. What do you want to change? (what can't you live with, wording, etc.)

FINAL DRAFT of MISSION STATEMENT:

We are a diverse community of public service employees dedicated to improving the lives of workers and their families today and to the next generation.

We believe that the power of our united voices has the ability to change and improve lives. We are committed to building solidarity in order to raise collective standards for health, safety, and economic equality. We believe in spreading the wealth of knowledge and education through the freedom to participate in a union.

We will fight to empower all working people and to increase recognition and respect for quality public services in our communities and all across Florida. We will work to change laws that are contrary to our mission.

Unanimously adopted by Committee on 9/26/09.

III. Education

The role of a local union – Megan Sweeney

How does the day-to-day functioning of the union advance our mission?

Committee Brainstorming:

Representation

- represent members with employers
- bargain good contracts and improve standards
- prepare for bargaining and engage in contract campaigns
- facilitate enforcement of contracts (file grievances)
- support intra-union solidarity

Politics

- get involved with politics
- endorse candidates based on members' endorsement criteria
- lobby on behalf of better legislation
- hold city and local officials/employers accountable to members and to community
- raise money/oversee a PAC
- communicate and educate about politics and how it impacts our worksites

Organizing

- build membership in existing units
- organize new members in non-union public sector workplaces
- train members to communicate why non-members should join (rap)

Leadership & Staff Development

- activate and engage current members
- create diverse opportunities for members to develop leadership skills
- have staff visible in worksites, provide staff trainings
- aim for consistent staffing

Communication and Education

- communicate important information to employees
- provide resources for our members

- provide trainings (for stewards) and worker education on employee rights and laws (for members and non-members)

Union Governance Overview – Pat Thomas

Who has highest authority?

The membership

- Adopts the Constitution & Bylaws (and amend C& B in the future)
- Sets dues
- Elects officers
- Votes on contract

Chapters – how members govern day-to-day issues (stewards, bargaining committees, chapter chairs)

Convention – highest governing body of union (once every 1-3 years)

- sets out overall program of union
- is accountable to membership

Executive Board (elected officials and board members) – governing body between conventions.

- Must be representative of members and worksite. (If E-board is very large, then smaller executive committee may meet more frequently)
- Is accountable to convention

Standing committees

- advise executive board and make recommendations
- another avenue for members to have a voice
- membership is determined by:
 - the executive board elect/appoint chairs and members
 - Open membership elect/appoint chairs

Not So Fun Florida Facts – Rick Smith

Examples:

Rank of Florida in graduation rate: 50th

Decline in Median income in Florida in 2008 – 3.9%

Drop in Florida property values since 2006 – 46%

Percent of folks without health insurance who are working – 81%

Countries with lower infant mortality rates than Florida's – Slovakia, Serbia, Croatia and Cuba

FPSU Membership & Potential – Alphonso Mayfield

FPSU members: 4920

Employees covered by FPSU Contracts: 15,747

What are ways we can improve to 50% membership?

- canvassing
- phone banking
- communicating with employees
- answering the question, “what’s the union going to do for me?”
- thinking outside the box

Chapter/Unit distinction: chapter is a particular structure that large units have.

6 major chapters: Lake Co.; Orlando City, Fire, Police; City of West Palm; Palm Beach County Schools; Pinellas School District; St. Pete blue & white collar units.

Smaller units with chapter structure: HCC, Jacksonville, Delray

To undertake committee work, a quorum shall consist of Committee members representing 5 units (that, when combined, constitute 50% or more of the total membership).

Adopted 9/26/09.

Political Challenges & Opportunities – Caitlin Fishman

Issues	← Controlled by	← Overseen by	← Influenced by
Wages	Management	School Board	Voters
Benefits	“da Man” (or Woman)	City Council	People in Community
Job Security		County Commission, Mayors	Advocates
Working conditions		Board of Trustees	COPE
Respect			Union members
			\$\$

Political decisions we want to affect:

- Get rid of right to work laws

- Closed shop legislation
- Living wage
- Pro-worker local officials
- Affordable quality insurance
- Funding for our schools
- Quality training for public service workers
- Fighting tax cuts and revenue caps limiting what local governments can spend

Who has control?

- Governor (appoints commissions)
- legislature (State House and Senate)
- AG (can sue employers who violate law)
- CFO (fiscal watchdog)
- Commissioner on Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Local government
- U.S. Senate and House of Representatives

All open in 2010!

Union Standing Committees – Pat Thomas

Examples from Colorado:

Organizing Committee
 Political Education Committee
 Community Engagement Committee
 Member Relations Committee
 Department Committee

Ideas: (ideas in bold were chosen by group)

- **Organizing Committee**
- **Political Education Committee**
- Training & Education Committee? (May be more appropriate as a program)
- **Membership Relations Committee** – including focus on communications and training for members
- **Bargaining Committee** – to share information and coordinate standards throughout state. (May be more appropriate for decisions at local level in each unit or chapter?)
- **Community Engagement Committee**

IV. Drafting Language for Standing Committees

Group Reports:

- **Organizing Committee**

The purpose of this committee is to make recommendations to the Executive Board to both maintain and expand the membership of the union.

This committee will:

Strive toward full membership

Focus on specific issues of concerns to members

Draw specific plans to achieve goals and oversee execution of them

Take direction from and be accountable to Executive-board

- **Political Education Committee**

The purpose of this committee is to elect and insure our political leaders stand up for working families and to protect and enhance quality public services for all Floridians.

To achieve this purpose, this committee will recommend to the Executive Board to:

Get members involved in politics through communication, education, and mobilization

Endorse candidates based members' endorsement criteria

Lobby for pro-worker legislation

Hold elected officials and employers accountable

Build our COPE campaign war chest

Educate the community on pro-worker issues

- **Membership Relations Committee**

The purpose of this committee is to enhance membership through stronger education and communication.

To achieve this purpose, this committee will recommend to the Executive Board to:

Create a member maintenance plan

Build two-way communication between members and leaders

Identify and develop new leaders

Educate, educate, educate

Create diverse opportunities for members to develop leadership skills

Develop strategies to increase union presence on all worksites

Create stability through member retention

Provide training for stewards

Develop programs to enhance members' understanding of contracts and labor laws

- **Bargaining Committee**

The purpose of this committee is to improve local units' ability to bargain effectively

To achieve this purpose, the committee shall:

Review contracts and make recommendations to executive board about universal contract improvements.

Make recommendations on trainings for contract bargaining.

- **Community Mobilization Committee**

The purpose of this committee is to educate and become educated by the community.

To achieve this purpose, the committee shall:

Commit to work together with community groups on shared common goals

Invite or solicit invitations from community members/leaders to discuss our common interests and aspirations

Learn from each other in the spirit of cooperation and compromise.

FPSU will prepare a handout for the next meeting with committee language proposals and we will finalize language at the next meeting. Committee members should send interim suggestions via email.

V. Members' Rights & Responsibilities

Committee viewed examples from Local 205's C&B

Small group drafts of R&R language:

RIGHTS

A.

- The right to have opinions respectfully heard, to be informed of union activity, to be educated in union values and union skills.
- The right to choose the leaders of the union in a fair and democratic manner.
- The right to a full accounting of union dues and the proper stewardship of union resources.
- The right to participate in the union's bargaining efforts and to approve union contracts.

- The right to have members' concerns resolved in a fair and expeditious manner.

B.

- The right to have opinions heard and respected, to be informed of union activity, to be educated in union values and union skills.
- The right to choose the leaders of the union in a fair and democratic manner.
- The right to a full accounting of union dues and the proper stewardship over union resources.
- The right to participate in union's bargaining efforts and to approve union contracts.
- The right to have members' concerns resolved in a fair and expeditious manner.

RESPONSIBILITIES

C.

- the responsibility to help build a strong and more effective labor movement, to support organizing of unorganized workers, to help build a political voice for working people, and to stand up for one's co-workers and all workers
- the responsibility to be informed and to participate in the union's affairs
- the responsibility to contribute to the support of the union
- the responsibility to treat all workers and members fairly
- the responsibility to offer constructive criticism of the union

D.

- the responsibility to help build a strong and more effective labor movement, to support organizing of unorganized workers, to help build a political voice for working people, and to stand up for one's co-workers and all workers
- the responsibility to be informed about the internal governance of the union and to participate in the conduct of the union's affairs
- the responsibility to contribute to the support of the union
- the responsibility to treat all workers and members with fairness and respect
- the responsibility to offer constructive criticism of the union
- do no harm
- the responsibility not to do anything detrimental to the organization and its mission

FPSU will prepare a handout for the next meeting with a combined proposal for Rights & Responsibilities and we will finalize language at the next meeting. Committee members should send interim suggestions via email.

VI. Observer Speak Out

Lynette Gibson said she really appreciated the opportunity to attend and listen.

VII. Next Steps/Message to Members & Evaluation

NEXT MEETING: October 10, Largo Office

- Finalize language on committees, members' rights & responsibilities
- Begin discussion about union governance (composition of executive board, etc.)

Message from Van Church: check the website for updates

www.seiufpsu.org

Freda Exum: Wear purple to next meeting!

Lovie will take photo and make prints for any committee members free of charge.

Alphonso: let local organizer know if you need a hotel room the night before Largo meeting.

Message to Members from today's meeting:

- We adopted our mission statement – our purpose & roadmap
- We started drafting members' rights and responsibilities
- We decided on 5 standing committees who will carry out our mission
 - o Organizing
 - o Community Mobilization
 - o Bargaining
 - o Political Education
 - o Member Relations
- We learned about Florida, our units and members, and upcoming political opportunities
- Engage members in conversation about their thoughts for rights and responsibilities
- Members can get involved
 - o Chapter meetings, talk to committee members
 - o Come and observe committee meeting
 - o Check website updates

Evaluation of Today's Meeting

Positive Feedback	Could be Improved
Enjoyed brainstorming with group	Would prefer 2 breaks instead of 1
Informative – received thoroughly researched information	No more pop quizzes
Clear speakers	Not every hand out was 3-hole punched
Time management was excellent – stayed	Should start meetings on time

on task and on course. (Managed to make up time lost from starting late.)	
Liked receiving information from last meeting for review	Changing small groups takes people out of comfort zone
Open discussion	Too hot
Enjoyed seeing how things are coming together	Would prefer a longer lunch
Liked changing up the small groups and getting to know different committee members	
Buffet was better than boxed lunches	
Exciting	
Appreciated shared fellowship, getting different perspectives from everyone	
Well organized and great participation from committee members	
Great balance between sense of responsibility and seriousness of task, with sense of humor	
Better food than last time	
Dedication of everyone coming here today.	
Great facilitator	
Team dynamic is productive	