

GREAT LAKES UNITED EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TELECONFERENCE

Thursday, September 15, 1994

Minutes

Present:

John Jackson, Chair
Kathy Bero
Robin McClellan
Karen Murphy
Jane Wilkins
Jeanne Jabanoski
Sarah Miller (first agenda item only)

1. Collective Bargaining Committee Report

Sarah pointed out significant changes to the agreement for the benefit of those who have not received the most recent draft. In doing so, she referred to the minutes of the May 13th meeting of the Board of Directors in which the Collective Bargaining Committee was given direction to change "working days" to "calendar days" throughout the document. She noted that there was concern raised regarding the section on compensatory time off for hours worked. This section was changed to specify how long the compensatory time can accumulate as well as how many hours can accumulate at one time.

The section regarding the anniversary date was changed to read the original or latest date of hiring. Regarding management rights, "and its management staff" was added at the end of Article 5. Changes to the section on the Personnel Committee included the substitution of language regarding the collective agreement and removal of other language. In Article 11, under compensatory time, after the first paragraph the following was added: "compensatory time will be taken within three months of being earned in consultation with management". In Article 12, it was stipulated that personal days are not cumulative or payable upon leaving GLU. In Article 13, under extended maternity and paternity leave, the Committee added "all applicable state, federal and provincial laws". Sarah reported that they did not make explicit which portion of management is involved at every stage of the process in order to ensure flexibility for the Board.

There was discussion as to who should be named in the contract as members of the bargaining unit since a full staff complement which no longer exists began the bargaining process. The current bargaining unit and its union representative have suggested the addition of a note saying that during the negotiation of this contract individuals were laid off because of a lack of funds to support programs and have only Reg and Mary as signators. John said Reg and Mary would be listed in Appendix A and an additional attachment would list the others with an indication that they could apply for future available positions without prejudice. John made it clear that these arrangements can't supersede New York state law. Karen said she was not aware that we still

have obligations to former staff since the only person without a full time job is Sean. Jeanne said that it is normal in collective agreements for laidoff employees to have right of recall however there is usually a time limit. Robin said that this is not based on state law. John proposed that we accept the union proposal as stated and amend the agreement to reflect July, 1993 when we formally recognized the bargaining unit.

Robin asked for an explanation as to what constitutes a proper protective shield for computers, as referenced in the agreement. Sarah responded that it refers to the type of lead screens CELA has installed on the backs of their computers. Robin said that there are a number of different ways to approach this, including the Swedish standard. The Committee decided to leave it loose so it can be negotiated later.

Karen raised the issue of Mary as a contract employee and how this should be dealt with in the context of this contract. Sarah said that they dealt with Mary as if she were a fulltime employee, and saw the agreement as a way in which to correct a difficult situation. Karen said she believed Mary was on contract because she is an American citizen working in Canada and suggested that this matter should be discussed seriously at a later date in order to give her equal employee status. The only outstanding item in the agreement concerns consultation with management on scheduling compensatory time.

ACTION: John was authorized to sign the agreement once Sarah has amended it as stated and subjected it to a final review.

2. Financial Update

Karen reported the good news that the auditors are going to remove the "going concern" statement from our audit report which will be ready tomorrow morning. She has spent the last three days with an accounting firm reviewing all our statements in order to obtain a clear picture of our finances. She intends to do a fuller statement in October, however as of August 31, our revenues are \$94,000, our expenses \$72,000 and our surplus is \$22,000. Karen indicated that we have paid \$22,000 of our 1993 debt which was around \$50,000 in general and restricted funds. We still have \$30,000 to pay off this year. Karen is not sure what this means in terms of our cash position or future hiring for this year.

On the Canadian side, \$14,000 has been transferred to that operation from the U.S. general fund account and \$11,000 in settlement fund money has also been transferred. Karen thinks that the bulk of Mary's salary will come out of the settlement funds plus money that has been raised for the Foundation. Those funds should sustain the Canadian operation. Some settlement money will have to go to the U.S. side since U.S. personnel will be working on the project. Karen will have to rework these figures to cover expenses in the Canadian office. It is too early to know what this means regarding bringing Mary to more than half time. The Committee agreed that there will be no decision on Mary's status until Karen has developed this further.

Robin suggested that Jane and Karen stay on the call at the end to discuss financial affairs in more depth. Karen reported that the auditors will review Canadian finances as well. The bid from the auditors for both financial reviews was \$1700 to \$2200.

John raised a concern regarding the Board's decision to remove our accumulated deficit of \$50,000 in one year only. He said that other organizations opt for a staged reduction of a deficit over several years. Jeanne thought that the auditors had directed us to remove the deficit quickly in order to avoid the "going concern" label. John said that they were telling us not to keep increasing the deficit but that we could reduce it over time. Karen says we couldn't have made it with cash available to us this year if we had had to pay a full staff complement and that the auditors were saying that we were not viable with current staffing levels. Karen stressed that the foundations don't want to see their money going for deficit reduction. She suggested that at the end of year we review what has been raised through other sources and apply that to the deficit. Karen said that we will still have a deficit by the end of the year however it will be smaller. Robin noted that we have heard conflicting information about whether to obtain a loan from the auditors, accountants and foundations with the result that the Board really can't make an informed decision on the matter.

John pointed out that a 1995 budget should be developed to present to the Board at the next Board meeting in November.

ACTION: Karen, Robin and Jane will prepare 1995 budgets for presentation to the Board in November.

Karen reported that the Renaissance fundraising campaign has raised the following: on the U.S. side, \$4,300 is pledged and \$1,325 is received out of a projected \$15,000; on the Canadian side, \$4,220 is pledged and \$4,220 is received out of a projected \$10,000. John asked for ideas as to how to restimulate the campaign. Karen said it needs a couple of enthusiastic people to get it going. Robin has undertaken major donor campaigns with several groups but none have worked. Kathy said that we need techniques that are more creative than phone calls and letters. Robin said that the major problem is that most people don't get started at phone calls and letter writing. Jeanne suggested that we talk about it at the next Board meeting however John said that people have to do it, not talk about it. Kathy said that since it's difficult for some members to raise money when they are committed to organizations, we should consider encouraging some of our membership to raise funds. John said that our member groups are also raising money for their own groups and Jane agreed. Robin suggested that individual members might be good prospects and Kathy said that one LMF board member has been doing that since she got off the board. Kathy suggested that we print out the list of members and see if there are people we could approach. Karen said that it would need to be a former board member with a high level of involvement in the organization. John suggested Fred or Bob Boyce. Karen said that we have one supporter who lives in California however we don't know her. Karen agreed that we should look at our membership list although she did that at the beginning of the campaign and only came up with a list of 10 people that had made significant contributions. Robin suggested that we develop criteria as to who to approach.

ACTION: Karen will bring a list of our individual members to our next Board meeting and we will attempt to develop a small list of people to approach.

Karen pointed out that it will soon be November and we need to follow up on the fundraising campaign. Kathy said Steve, Camilla, and Dan indicated that they would undertake membership development and fundraising in response to the questionnaire.

ACTION: The Fundraising Committee will be convened by John to discuss this further.

3. Bookkeeping

Karen said that we have two choices as to how to carry out our bookkeeping: contract it out and pay the bills in-house or handle the bookkeeping in-house. We have a resume from a woman who is interested in doing the job. The system we have now is cumbersome and Karen recommended that it all be computerized. Robin prefers that we do our bookkeeping in-house so that we can pull financial statements at any time. Kathy said that we need to know what's going in or out. Karen has not pursued either option; however, she has asked the firm that carried out the audit to give us a bid and she will follow up with the woman by sending her resume to the auditors. Karen will also call the Beldon Foundation to see if they will provide us with technical assistance or general support money to revise and revamp our financial accounting system. We likely could apply our audit expenses to date to a Beldon grant as well. Karen said that Beldon makes grant decisions monthly. Robin has information on fund accounting.

ACTION: Robin, Jane and Karen will make a decision on future bookkeeping services once the additional information is obtained by Karen.

4. Executive Director Hiring Committee Report

John reported that five people were interviewed and only one is left on the list. The Hiring Committee decided to delay a decision and put out feelers to see if anyone else is interested. One additional application has been received from a woman in Chicago. She is only willing to do the job in Chicago, however, and John asked Committee members how they feel about this. Kathy asked how much it would cost to move the office to Chicago. Robin said that none of the candidates are enough of a known commodity to move the office at this time. Jeanne said we need a better reason to move the office. Kathy asked how we are going to deal with having a really good candidate that won't move. Robin said if we had courted them and were confident that we wanted them, it would be a consideration. Jeanne expressed reservations about moving the office on that basis and Karen agreed. They felt that we should consider where to place the office strategically and weigh the downside as well. John said that he was hearing that even if we have a great candidate, it doesn't make sense to move the office. Kathy responded that GLU as an organization has to go beyond adolescence and a good executive director is key.

John asked Hiring Committee members how to get to the next step since he is only available evenings for the next two weeks and Karen will be out of town. Jane suggested that members get together as a Committee and meet people face to face. Karen suggested interviews be set up.

ACTION: Kathy will coordinate the next stage of the Hiring Committee's work.

5. Annual General Meeting Date

John pointed out that we have set the first weekend in May as the date for our Annual General Meeting and have subsequently heard from Rick Coronado that the Canadian Auto Workers are having their annual labour-environment conference on the same weekend in Port Elgin, less than half an hour drive from Sarnia. John noted that the next weekend is Mother's Day, the following weekend is a Canadian holiday while the weekend following that is a U.S. holiday. He considered the last weekend in April however accommodations will be a problem since students finish their exams on the Friday and would be moving out on Saturday. Jane suggested the first weekend in June and although there were difficulties with that date, the Committee agreed that it was the best available solution.

6. SOLEC

John will be attending SOLEC October 25-27 in Dearborn, Michigan as a GLU delegate which leaves a second invitation made to GLU on the U.S. side. Kathy is going as an LMF delegate. Jane is going as a Sierra Club delegate. John will check with other board members to determine if anyone is interested in attending. We are not able to pay travel costs.

ACTION: John will ask Fred Brown to attend on behalf of GLU.

7. Contract - Dottie White

Karen reported that she has been having ongoing correspondence with Dottie regarding outstanding payments of \$2,150. These were apparently for time she spent doing books in December of 1993. The auditors had asked her to enter these payments in the 1993 books. Karen suggested that we stop further discussion with Dottie on this matter; we currently owe her \$1,100 for her time; she owes us \$194 that she charged on our credit card, and she also owes us approximately \$1,100 for the computer she purchased. John suggested that we figure out what she owes us and what we owe her to see if it balances out. Robin pointed out that we have a written agreement with her to pay the computer off over time.

ACTION: Karen will determine final figures on this matter and negotiate a written agreement with Dottie to cancel out our debt to her and her debt to us.

8. Contract - Karen Murphy

John reported that Karen's contract expired on August 15th and Karen has indicated that she will work to Nov 1st. John recommended that, after checking out our cash flow and budget, we pay

Karen fulltime until Nov 1 (she is now being paid 3/4 time). There was also discussion about raising Karen's salary to the rate in the budget for the Executive Director. John had discussed that option with her today and she was not asking to go up to the rate of Executive Director. There was widespread support for increasing Karen's salary, given the amount of time she is putting in and the terrific job she is doing.

ACTION: Karen will be paid at the fulltime rate for her position from August 15th. Following a fuller understanding of our budget situation, she may be paid at the salary level of the Executive Director.

9. Board Insurance

Karen sent our financial information to two companies that offer non-profit board insurance. Philadelphia Insurance said we can't be ensured because we had a deficit last year. Karen hasn't heard anything back from the other. Jeanne mentioned that John Birnbaum had referred us to a company that covers the Georgian Bay Association Board of Directors.

ACTION: Karen will follow-up with the company recommended by John Birnbaum and obtain a quote for their services.

10. Virtual Elimination Committee Meeting

John announced that EPA is having a Virtual Elimination Committee meeting in Chicago on September 21 and 22 and has requested GLU representation. Staff and board members are attempting to find a representative.

11. Office Procedure over next two weeks

Karen reported that while she is away, Reg will be in the office Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday most of the day and will be around the other days. He needs board members to call for routine work.

ACTION: John will be available every evening and can be reached by phone or fax. Reg can call Jeanne during the day.

12. Report Back on Committee Sign-up

Kathy reported on the results of a questionnaire asking board members to sign up for taskforces and committees. She still has not received responses from six members. In terms of committee membership, the results were: AGM - six or seven; Membership - three; Internal Communications - two or three; Publicity - one. Taskforce membership results were: Ecologically Sustainable Production - five; Water Resources - three; Healthy Communities - two to three, Habitat - four.

John said that we need to choose someone from each to be chair to get the committees up and running. Robin suggests that a person be appointed to convene first meeting.

ACTION: Kathy will fax a list of committee members to John for further discussion. She will then make contact with committee members to determine who will be the chair.