

UUP New Paltz Chapter – Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

11:00 am April 11, 2012

Attendees:

Executive Committee: Peter Brown, Linda Smith, Jeff Miller, Shannon Roddy, Glenn McNitt, John Hain, Alan Dunefsky, Donna Goodman, Maryann Fallek, Salvatore Engel-DiMauro, LRS William Capowski, Chapter Assistant Mary Thompson, Ed Hanley

Chapter members/guests: NYSUT Secretary Treasurer Lee Cutler, Abigail Robin, Nancy Schniedewind, Gowri Parameswaran, Robin Smith

Proposed agenda adopted as amended (item of new business added). Minutes of the 031412 Executive Committee meeting approved as submitted. Notes from the 032812 Executive Committee meeting reviewed without comment.

Officers' Reports: (distributed via email before the meeting)

President Brown: briefly recapped his report. Fallek asked Brown about the process used to select our new chapter intern. Per Brown, he attended the recent intern job fair(s), discussed the position with prospective candidates, interviewed those who expressed interest, and identified Jaime Burns as the most qualified applicant. Brown then asked for a formal motion to approve Burns' selection. Motion was made by Fallek, seconded, and approved unanimously.

VP Smith: indicated the "temp vs. term" appointment issue is not unique to our campus. Several other UUP chapters are now reporting similar situations. Therefore, Smith asked Brown to put the item on the agenda of the next Labor-Management meeting.

VP Miller: reminded everyone of the Workload Committee's upcoming meeting on April 13th @ 11:30am.

Treasurer Roddy: called the committee's attention to her update on chapter expenditures. There were no questions or comments about those expenditures.

Secretary Hanley: nothing to report.

Committee Reports:

Community Outreach/Coalition Building: Goodman attended the April 5th rally opposing Tier 6 at NYS Senator Larkin's office. Though a number of unions and other organizations were represented, only 15 people (total) attended the rally; she was the only UUP member present. She admitted being quite surprised by the lack of response from our members to the chapter's call to action. Lee Cutler of NYSUT also expressed surprise at the exceedingly small turnout at the rally - an event that had been well publicized in advance. Goodman concluded by mentioning the committee's efforts to connect with CSEA on campus to explore areas of potential cooperation.

Legislation/Political Action: Per McNitt, the next lobbying opportunity in Albany will be on Tuesday, April 17th. McNitt also indicated that, as requested at the Executive Committee's 3/28 meeting, he had drafted a resolution on the recent Tier 6 legislation.

Membership Development: Dunefsky reported that the next phase of the ongoing membership drive – direct mailings to fee payers - would be implemented shortly.

Old Business:

Lee Cutler on high-stakes testing in public schools: noting there had already been considerable discussion of this issue here at SUNY New Paltz, Brown welcomed NYSUT Secretary Treasurer Lee Cutler and invited him to share NYSUT's perspective. After providing some brief introductory background, Cutler acknowledged that NYSUT positions will of course be questioned occasionally and he welcomed the opportunity to meet with the committee to discuss the matter. A wide ranging discussion then ensued.

According to Cutler, NYSUT saw the handwriting on the wall with respect to testing and teacher evaluations. As a result, NYSUT then made a strategic decision to engage in a dialogue on these issues with the NYS Education Department. Had NYSUT chosen not to engage, the Governor and/or the legislature would likely have imposed a potentially far worse outcome than that which ultimately arose out of the discussions. Though the outcome may not be perfect, NYSUT stands by its decision to help shape it.

Goodman noted that the outcome on teacher evaluations appears to have been sold in the media as some sort of "victory." She suggested that, by implying such finality, NYSUT's message actually undermines efforts to continue the fight on this issue. Cutler indicated this was very good feedback regarding how NYSUT's message is being received. Fallek observed that answers regarding teacher evaluations found in the relevant "Frequently Asked Questions" section of NYSUT's website left much to be desired. Per Fallek, this information was not laid out in a very user friendly manner, making it difficult to find the level of detail she was seeking. Cutler stated that, though a major overhaul of the website was presently underway, he would look at the area of the website in question and respond to Fallek's concern.

Noting that many people cannot support "high stakes testing" because there is no data to confirm its value, Schniedewind suggested that many are discouraged by NYSUT's decision to support such testing as a component of teacher evaluation. While people can understand NYSUT's desire for a "place at the table" they wonder what we are giving up in return. Per Cutler, any disagreement with the concern raised by Schniedewind was political and strategic, not philosophical. He reiterated that, had NYSUT kept silent, it would simply have encouraged and empowered our opponents. He also suggested that continuing to publicly highlight existing differences on the issue makes it clear that we lack unity.

Robin Smith asked why NYSUT appeared to be buying into a continuing discourse that is being framed by others. Acknowledging the importance of both language itself and its impact on shaping that discourse, Cutler indicated he was to attend a meeting later in the

day which would deal with that very issue regarding the privacy of a teacher's evaluation. Smith then suggested some specific language for portraying various aspects of the evaluation issue. Cutler attempted to capture not only the exact wording proposed, but the spirit of the ideas underlying the language suggested by Smith.

In response to a question from McNitt about NYSUT's reaction to CSEA President Danny Donohue's public statement on Tier 6, Cutler noted that while NYSUT political contributions had stopped as had CSEA's, NYSUT had elected not to make a public statement to that effect. The matter of future political contributions will be taken up at NYSUT's endorsement conference in July.

Unfortunately, the discussion had to be curtailed at that point due to time constraints and the need to transact the remaining items of business on the agenda.

New Business:

- **Nomination for Faye Samuel Award:** McNitt made a motion to nominate Yvonne Aspengren for the award. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

- **May Day Events:** Engel-DiMauro asked what the UUP position was on upcoming May Day events associated with the "Occupy" movement(s). LRS Capowski ventured that, as a general rule, the union could not publicly support any activities that would involve a disruption of public services. He also recommended coordinating any proposed chapter activities with UUP President Phil Smith to ensure none would negatively impact ongoing contract negotiations between UUP and NYS.

- **Tier 6 Resolution:** discussion of this item was cut short because of time constraints. As further discussion was clearly warranted, Brown recommended the conversation be continued online rather than waiting until the next Executive Committee meeting to resume consideration of the draft resolution.

Upcoming events:

Apr 20-21 UUP Spring Delegate Assembly, Albany, NY.
Apr 25 Executive Committee meeting, 12:30am, JFT
May 9 Executive Committee meeting, 11:00am, JFT
May 11 Part-Time Labor-Management meeting, 11:00am, HAB
May 11 Labor-Management meeting, 3:30pm, HAB
May 12 Strategic Planning Session, 9:00am, Mohonk Visitors Center

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ed Hanley
Chapter Secretary