

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY BOARD
COMMITTEE MINUTES

LABOR SUBCOMMITTEE

Monday, August 3, 2009

**Brookens Administrative Center, Putman Meeting Room
1776 E. Washington St., Urbana**

5:15 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Betz, Greg Knott, Brendan McGinty, Alan Nudo,
Sam Smucker (Chair)

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Kat Bork (Administrative Secretary), Deb Busey (County
Administrator), Alan Kurtz (County Board Member), C. Pius Weibel
(County Board Chair), Nora Stewart (AFSCME Local 900 President)

CALL TO ORDER

Smucker called the meeting to order at 5:24 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Betz, Knott, McGinty, Nudo, and Smucker were present at the time of roll call, establishing the presence of a quorum.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/ADDENDUM

MOTION by Betz to approve the agenda; seconded by McGinty. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

CHAIR'S REPORT

There was no report from the Chair. Busey announced another Labor Subcommittee meeting will be scheduled in the next couple of weeks. The committee agreed 4:30 p.m. was an acceptable meeting time.

Weibel entered the meeting at 5:28 p.m.

INVITATION TO ATTEND LABOR-MANAGEMENT MEETING

Weibel stated that Tara McCauley, the AFSCME staff representative, asked for a labor-management meeting at the Nursing Home, which was arranged approximately a month ago. Right before the meeting, McCauley sent an email to Weibel, certain County Board members, and selected Nursing Home Board of Directors members asking for representatives from both boards to attend the labor-management meeting. Contract negotiations were ongoing at that time, so Weibel responded that the Board members should not attend such meetings during the negotiation process. Negotiations have completed, though the contracts have not been signed, and McCauley has made another request for a labor-management meeting with representatives from the County Board and Nursing Home Board of Directors in attendance. Weibel felt the Labor Subcommittee should make a decision and asked Smucker who should attend a labor-management meeting. Smucker asked for an explanation of why McCauley was asking for the meeting.

Betz expressed concern because the neither the collective County Board nor individual Board members should be involved in the day-to-day operations of departments other than where it is statutorily or contractually required. If the County Board takes on the role of listening to grievances, it has the potential to contradict the people it has hired to operate the departments and Nursing Home. For example, Busey was hired to run the Administrative Services Department and it is not his position as a Board member to sit down with an employee that Busey needs to discipline, fire, or hire. Betz wanted to develop a policy to prevent individual Board members from being pulled into labor negotiations or grievances. Smucker concurred with Betz and said the Negotiating Team was the appropriate body to address issues. Weibel said the union could want to discuss a multitude of issues, including issues that should be bargained. The Negotiating Team can bring issues to the Labor Subcommittee for further discussion at their discretion. Weibel thought it might be more appropriate for the Nursing Home Board of Directors to attend the meeting. Smucker warned involving either board instead of the Negotiating Team could create confusion regarding who is responsible for negotiations. There needs to be a clear line of authority.

Busey agreed and pointed out that the collective bargaining agreements define labor-management meetings. The assumption in the agreements is that management will attend those meetings, not County Board members who are policy-makers. If a manager felt he or she needed direction from the County Board regarding a labor-management meeting, it is incumbent on the manager to ask for the Board's direction. Weibel was happy to agree, he just wanted to make it a policy. Betz totally agreed with Busey's statements as he does not expect to monitor department heads as a Board member. The committee discussed the grievance process available to employees in the contracts. Betz asked if Andrew Buffenbarger, the Nursing Home Administrator, requested Board members to attend the labor-management meeting. Weibel had not contacted Buffenbarger about this issue. Betz wanted Buffenbarger to know the County Board has not hung him out to dry. They believe it is Buffenbarger's job to manage the Nursing Home and the Board would consult with him upon his request. Busey stated the new contract has been negotiated over the last nine months and contains even more definitive labor-management language.

MOTION by Betz that neither the collective County Board nor the individual County Board members would attend labor-management meetings unless the department manager or County Administrator requests the Board members' presence.

McGinty asked to add that the County Board would continue to operate according to its current lines of delineation with negotiating with the Negotiating Team. The committee concurred. Smucker recommended a Negotiating Team member be the one to attend a labor-management meeting if it is requested by the manager. This would ensure the Board representative is also a Labor Subcommittee member. The committee preferred that the County Board members not attend labor-management meetings, but were willing to concede at the request of a manager. Busey noted there might be circumstances where an administrator or manager may ask non-Labor Subcommittee member to attend a meeting because of the relevance of that member's participation. It was agreed that participation by non-Labor Subcommittee members would be cleared with the Labor Chair and County Board Chair. **Betz agreed to consider McGinty's addition as a friendly amendment.**

McGinty seconded Betz's motion.

Smucker asked to have a statement written for the next meeting. Busey suggested writing it as a resolution to be sent to the County Board. Betz remarked union employees communicate with the County Board members and he does not want to stop that practice, but the Board cannot address grievances or engage in negotiations. He verified the employees' First Amendment rights are not being cut off; the committee is simply creating a practical policy. He confirmed no County Board member will be sent to tomorrow's labor-management meeting at the Nursing Home because there has not been a request from Andrew Buffenbarger. Busey agreed to inform Buffenbarger tomorrow.

Motion carried with all ayes.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

ADJOURNMENT

Smucker adjourned the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kat Bork
Administrative Secretary

Secy's note: The minutes reflect the order of the agenda and may not necessarily reflect the order of business conducted at the meeting.