

01/19/99
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clerk 1/26/99

Introduced By: Louise Miller

Proposed No.: 1999-0052

MOTION NO. **10621**

A MOTION adopting the minutes of the 1998 labor Summit between local labor leadership and King County elected officials.

WHEREAS, the 1998 Labor Summit between local labor leadership and King County elected officials was held on October 19, 1998, and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 13000, adopted by the King County Council on February 9, 1998, directs that the minutes of the annual labor summit be adopted by the council;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

The minutes of the 1998 Labor Summit are hereby adopted.

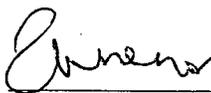
PASSED by a vote of 12 to 0 this 15th day of February

1999

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON


Chair

ATTEST:


Clerk of the Council

Attachments: 1998 Labor Summit Minutes

Labor Summit: Meeting with Seattle/King County Labor Council of the AFL-CIO, King County Unions, Labor Temple, 2800 - 1st Avenue, Seattle, WA

Participants:

Louise Miller, Chair of the Metropolitan King County Council, Ron Judd, Executive Secretary, Labor Council

Councilmembers: Maggi Fimia, Cynthia Sullivan, Dwight Pelz, Rob McKenna, Pete von Reichbauer, Greg Nickels, Kent Pullen, Larry Gossett, Jane Hague, Brian Derdowski, and Chris Vance

Labor Representatives: Lin Schnell, Dustin Frederick, Clem Edwards, Wes Lemay, Irene Eldridge, Chris Merritt, Rob Vargas, Bob Hasegawa, Barry Samet, Joe McGee, Don Hursey, and John A. Williams.

Other participants: Betty Sorbo, Karen Place, Bill Ziegler, Ron Knight, Jack Gilchrist, Martha Baskin, and Kim Cook.

Introductions and review of 1995 Labor Summit

Ron Judd made welcoming remarks, asked participants seated at the table to introduce themselves, and stated that this is the first labor policy since the adoption of Ordinance 13000. Mr. Judd reminded everyone that this is a great opportunity to share thoughts and concerns about a variety of issues.

Louise Miller reviewed Ordinance 13000 that calls for an annual labor summit. The ordinance states in part: "The chair of the King County Council shall annually convene a summit between the county's elected officials and the local labor leadership and the leadership of all collective bargaining units representing the county's work force.... The intent of convening an annual labor summit shall be to: increase communications between King County elected officials and the leadership and membership of local labor organizations and of all the county's collective bargaining units, to identify issues and problems of mutual concern, to identify solutions to problems affecting the membership of the county's collective bargaining units, to delineate ways in which the county's elected officials may more closely and effectively work with the County's collective bargaining units and local labor organizations to attain mutual goals and to foster a spirit of cooperation in working to serve the public."

Councilmember Miller stated that participants' schedules this year did not allow for this summit to take place during the time frame specified by Ordinance 13000.

Ron Judd requested that John A. Williams, International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 117, and Councilman Kent Pullen review the labor summit that was held during the fall of 1995.

Mr. Williams reviewed issues discussed at the last labor summit:

- Privatization primarily related to the waste industry.
- Need for cooperation in the annexation/incorporation movement as it relates to such things as surface water management.
- Courthouse security.
- Need to reward employees for their contributions.

Mr. Pullen summarized the objectives of the last summit as follows:

- To hear concerns, suggestions, and ideas from labor to make county government better.
- To develop a partnership that will enable labor to comment on new legislation and other policy matters.
- To hear the first annual "State of Labor" address by Ron Judd, Executive Secretary of the King County Labor Council.
- To set a precedent for continuing such meetings on an annual basis with the goal of improving communication between labor and the Council.

Mr. Pullen also summarized the informal dialog that occurred between the Councilmembers and the labor leaders.

Contract approval and implementation

Lin Schnell, King County Labor Relations Manager, and Dustin Frederick, Business Manager, Local 519 reported on issues related to contract approval and implementation.

The time period for processing contracts has been shortened by 25%. The Executive, Council, Office of Human and Resource Management, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, and the Department of Finance are all a part of the contract review process. The executive review time has been reduced from two weeks to two days. Even though the time for the review process has been shortened, work will continue to shorten this time period even further.

A key feature in the process is implementation. It is important to have a specific person from the appropriate department within King County assigned to monitor individual contracts.

Labor has become more aware of the need to work with the Council and the Executive to provide more efficient service to the public. King County's relationship with their bargaining units is better than that of other jurisdictions and is one that should be duplicated.

Issues from Labor's perspective related to hiring practices

A panel consisting of Betty Sorbo, Local 117, Karen Place, Local 17, Bill Ziegler, and Ron Knight, reported on issues related to hiring practices from labor's perspective.

Formerly hiring practices in King County followed specific rules but the process took too much time. Currently there is a decentralized hiring process that allows each department to do their own hiring. Each department sets its own rules for accepting applications and for hiring. This is confusing to people seeking employment. No standard hiring policies are being followed. For example, job openings are not always posted, and outside hiring is being used instead of using promotional practices. In some instances hiring is done from a previously used recruitment effort (using applications from an earlier screening process), not allowing an opportunity for current employees to be considered.

Labor contracts should always be considered as part of the hiring process. The use of temporary employees during the hiring process is a labor issue and needs continued review.

Decentralization of hiring has not necessarily improved the process. Employees do not have faith in the current hiring process. There must be standards countywide. Not having viable training programs in place was also raised as an issue.

The Council was asked to pay attention to the hiring process and insist that standards be created and implemented. Basic principles of the hiring process need to be based on honoring obligations under labor contracts and hiring inside before hiring outside. It was suggested that OHRM review all hiring and perhaps a task force be created to help standardize countywide hiring practices. The Council agreed.

When hiring, the focus should be on efficiency, cost, productivity, and service. King County is not providing the necessary training needed to meet these four key factors. The Council agreed to consider reviewing hiring policies that could be applied countywide. The creation of training guidelines will also be considered.

Project Labor Agreements (PLA's)

Jack Gilchrist, Executive Treasurer of the Seattle King County Building and Construction Trades Council, presented issues related to Project Labor Agreements (PLA's).

Mr. Gilchrist explained that PLA's in our region are generally used for special projects of approximately \$60 million or more. PLA's involve a three-way partnership with the contractor, labor unions, and the project owner.

Governor Lowry issued an Executive Order stating that people doing large projects should use this vehicle. King County may benefit from the use of a project labor agreement in the future when doing large dollar projects. For example, the Regional Justice Center may have benefited from the use of this system.

The Council asked if Sound Transit had begun negotiating a PLA. The response was that they have not. However, a PLA is ready to move forward when Sound Transit is ready.

Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI)

Martha Baskin introduced for discussion the issue of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment.

MAI is an international treaty that took effect in 1995. The Washington Labor Council, the King County Labor Council and the AFL-CIO have all denounced this treaty. The MAI is a serious threat to labor. The goal of the MAI is to establish international standards related to how government treats foreign investors and their investments. As currently negotiated, the MAI's obligations will directly apply to the acts of all levels of government, including municipal governments. For example, the MAI's broad investment rules may result in new limits on the ability of government to freely meet environmental challenges and could affect: public health and safety, municipal licenses, land-use regulations, subsidies and investment incentives, and municipal procurements. The MAI is the latest in a series of trade agreements that would have a dramatic impact on working people in this country and worldwide, yet fail to address even the most fundamental labor standards to protect the workers.

Councilmembers Fimia and Derdowski have sponsored a proposed motion expressing the council's opposition to provisions of the MAI, its commitment to future actions on this proposed trade agreement, and requesting the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney to examine the potential effects of the NAFTA and MAI on King County government. (Editorial Note: Motion No. 10602 was unanimously passed by the Council on December 14, 1998).

Other Issues

Chair Miller asked if members of the Council had individual issues and/or concerns that they would like to discuss with labor representatives.

At the request of Councilmember Fimia, Kim Cook presented issues related to the state of day care.

Ms. Cook explained that teachers are organizing and are working with twelve centers in the Seattle area to establish standards for day care. The Childcare Union Project is working to improve compensation and training of teachers. This is expected to improve the overall quality of day care services.

Councilmember Gossett stated that there were two issues that he wanted to bring before this labor summit. First, he thanked Kent Pullen for reminding the Council that this is the first summit since 1995, and he thanked Louise Miller for being responsible for setting this meeting. Secondly, Mr. Gossett stated that between twenty and thirty minority employees come each year to his office to discuss their concerns about management as well as labor. Their primary concerns are that unions do not reflect their interest, and management seems to have prejudices. He suggested that this summit is a way for Council and labor to improve working conditions for all employees.

Councilmember Vance raised the issue of solid waste that he feels may explode in the upcoming year. He stated that the issue of privatization should be addressed. The Council agreed.

Ron Judd expressed thanks to the Council for bringing issues to the attention of labor leaders so that resolutions may be achieved. Mr. Judd indicated that labor and the Council have an excellent partnership, and that there is a lot of good and exciting work ahead. He said it is important to understand that the next time the summit convenes, there should be consideration given to scheduling time for free flow dialogue so that each councilmember can share their concerns and suggestions.

Chair Miller announced that the next labor summit will be held in April, 1999.

The October 19, 1998 Committee-of-the-Whole/Labor Summit was adjourned by Chair Miller at 12:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Weaver
Council Staff