

05/26/99

nw  
Clerk 05/28/99

Introduced By: Louise Miller

Proposed No.: 1999-0310

1

MOTION NO. **10720**

2

A MOTION adopting the minutes of the 1999 Labor Summit  
between local labor leadership and King County elected  
officials.

3

4

5

WHEREAS, the 1999 Labor Summit between local labor leadership and King  
County elected officials was held on April 26, 1999, and

6

7

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

8

9

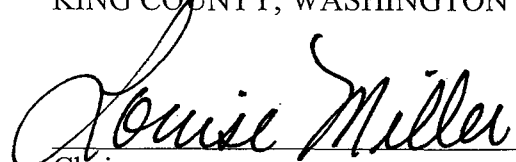
1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11

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

The minutes of the 1999 Labor Summit are hereby adopted.

PASSED by a vote of <sup>11 ab</sup>~~12~~ to 0 this 6th day of July, 1999.

KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

  
Chair

ATTEST:



~~Deputy~~ Clerk of the Council

Attachments: 1999 Labor Summit Minutes

Metropolitan King County Council  
Committee-of-the-Whole  
April 26, 1999

Labor Summit: Meeting between local labor leadership and King County elected officials.

Participants:

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

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

Labor Representatives (Seated at the table): Wes LeMay, Washington Nurses Association; Kim Cook, S.E.I.U. District 925; Dustin Frederick, Public Safety Employees; Ron Forest, Carpenters Local 131; George Verheul, Operating Engineers Local 302; Jan Pelroy, Operating Engineers Local 286; Jack Gilchrist, Seattle King County Building and Construction Trades Council; Barry Samet, Amalgamated Transit Local 587; John A. Williams, Teamsters Local 117; Marc Earls, Service Employees Local 6; Kim Ramsey, Professional & Technical Engineers Local 17; Tom Krett, Teamsters Local 763; and John Masterjohn, Public Service Employees Local 1239.

The April 26, 1999 Special Meeting of the Committee-of-the-Whole was called to order at 9:03 a.m., by Louise Miller, Chair. The meeting was held at the King County Labor Temple, 2800 – 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Seattle, Washington.

The Clerk of the Council conducted a roll call of Council members.

Chair Miller asked if members had any additions to the agenda for the April 26, 1999 Council meeting. There were no additions offered.

Introductions and welcoming comments

Chair Miller made welcoming comments and reminded participants that the Annual Labor Summit is being held in response to Ordinance 13000. The Labor Summit focuses on labor issues and is not a bargaining session. Chair Miller stated that the next Labor Summit will be held during April 2000.

Ron Judd, Executive Secretary, welcomed the Council and staff on behalf of the labor community of King County. Mr. Judd thanked Councilman Pullen for Ordinance 13000 that allows this summit to take place annually.

Ron Sims, King County Executive, stated that 82% of the County's workforce belongs to an organized union. Mr. Sims stated that he always looks forward to this summit in order to work hand in hand with the union leadership.

Chair Miller asked participants seated at the table to introduce themselves.

#### Childcare

Councilmember Fimia together with Kim Cook, Regional Director, S.E.I.U. 925, presented an update on progress made on the issue of childcare since the 1998 Labor Summit.

During the 1998 Labor Summit there was a brief discussion about the pay scale of daycare workers and the impact that pay scale has on health-workers, their families, and on our children.

There is approximately a 40% turnover rate in the healthcare industry. That turnover rate impacts our children. Educators have been making the public more aware of the impact of teachers and their salaries on our children. In reality, training and teaching begins when our children are much younger and are in early childcare.

S.E.I.U. Local 925 formed the Childcare Union Project last year with an organization called Worthy Wages Task Force to begin to unionize the childcare workforce in King County. The Project has been working cooperatively with employers and directors of centers in King County to raise public awareness and commitment. There are twelve centers in King County which have voluntarily recognized the union and have met together with directors and their employees to work out a master agreement for the industry.

The Childcare Union Project has proposed a wage and career ladder for childcare teachers. All levels of government are being asked to join in this endeavor, through a commitment for funding from the state as well as local governments.

#### Hiring Process

Betty Sorbo, Teamsters Local 117; Barry Samet, Amalgamated Transit Local 587; and Dustin Frederick, Public Safety Employees, presented issues related to the follow up on the hiring process since the 1998 Labor Summit.

The issue of hiring practices of King County government was one of the main issues during the 1998 Labor Summit. As a result of the discussion during that summit a committee was established to create hiring guidelines. The primary goal of the committee is to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity in the King County job market.

Betty Sorbo, Barry Samet, and Dustin Frederick are serving on the hiring process committee. The committee began meeting at the end of January 1999. In the

beginning many Division and Section liaisons attended the meetings to provide information on the hiring process in King County and attempt to address issues that were raised during the 1998 Labor Summit. Representatives of the Office of Human Resources and labor are continuing to work on the issues.

The purpose of this committee is to establish a guide for the hiring process. The biggest issue is communication. There needs to be improved communication within King County as well as with people who are seeking employment with the county. The majority of the committee's time has been spent attempting to address the issue of how to better communicate.

In addition to the communication issues, the committee is reviewing efficiency in hiring practices. The guidelines as drafted should increase the speed for hiring employees as well as outline the training process. The Council recently passed an ordinance requiring the Executive to make recommendations for reforms no later than August 1999. The Executive has signed this ordinance.

Representatives from the Office of Human Resource Management are working with the committee to draft hiring guidelines. The implementing of these guidelines will be the first step toward resolving issues related to hiring practices. The guidelines will continue to be updated as necessary. Labor remains concerned, however, about the decentralization of hiring. Labor would like to see the development of an accountability process for departments that will assist in monitoring follow through on the hiring guidelines.

#### Right to organize in King County

Ron Judd, Executive Secretary, made a PowerPoint presentation regarding the right to organize in King County.

During March 1999, a group of truck drivers in North Bend decided to form a union. The day following the decision to organize all of those truck drivers were locked out of their job site. Many employers practice anti-union discrimination. In fact, 32% of employers fire workers who actively support unions, 91% of employers force workers to attend anti-union meetings, and 50% threaten to close the workplace. The law does not protect workers. 10,000 workers are fired every year for organizing, and tens of thousands more are harassed and intimidated.

The King County Labor Council's "Right to Organize" campaign includes community outreach and education, and support of elected officials.

To establish workers' rights the King County Labor Council is mobilizing union members and allies in defense of workers' rights, creating public awareness of obstacles workers face, holding employers and their allies accountable when they resist workers' rights, and recognizing and supporting employers who respect workers' rights.

Elected officials play a vital role by signing the pledge to support the Right to Organize, meeting with workers who are organizing, supporting public policy that builds strong communities, backing businesses that respect the right to organize, and taking a public stand in support of the Right to Organize.

#### New Direction

Ron Sims, King County Executive, presented his "New Direction" for King County government.

Following the adoption of the King County budget last December, a cabinet retreat was held to look at a different kind of county government. King County is not regarded as a regional government nor is it structured as one. Reorganization of the existing government is not the solution. Following the listing of the salmon as an endangered species, the bulk of the work within King County government on the Endangered Species Act was done by the Department of Natural Resources. That approach addressed issues related to water, such as water capacity, water conveyance, and water reuse. Then other departments began asking about land use plans, road issues, and land use enforcement. It was decided that King County needed to move forward with a single Endangered Species Act Recovery Plan. Based on this example, it appeared this structure and cooperation should be used throughout King County.

King County should do business differently in the year 2000. That means that employees should remain competitive and empowered. There must be performance measures in place, and King County must be a problem solving government. King County must change the culture in which it works. Departments must share information with each other. King County must provide training to its employees. Currently King County continues to lose employees to agencies that provide training.

Labor indicated that they are in agreement with this approach and want to be a partner. Resolving the hiring practice issues will be a major help. Also reaching a successful conclusion of the County's classification and compensation project will do a tremendous amount of good.

Summit participants acknowledged that King County has a way to go to create a better working environment for its employees. However, the executive's proposal is a great new beginning.

#### Labor Policy Discussion

Councilman Pullen presented the issues relating to labor policy formulation.

The intent behind the labor policy ordinance, Ordinance 11480, was to provide the Council with a meaningful role in the labor negotiation process. Under the County Charter the County Executive has the responsibility to bargain. The County Council, as the policy making body, and many labor leaders, felt that the

Council was being shut out of the process and it was left with only a token role of ratifying collective bargaining agreements already agreed to. It was felt that if the Council were more active in the process it would be beneficial to the employees and to the Executive. In general, the labor policy law has worked well.

A number of innovative labor policies have been adopted, including encouraging the adoption of collective bargaining agreements before current agreements expire, encouraging natural medicine to be added to the county's health care package, and providing for no loss of wages for key bargaining unit employees who are involved in collective bargaining negotiations.

One major intent of the labor policy ordinance was to have labor policy recommendations transmitted by the Executive to the Council's Labor Policy Committee by June 30 of each year. Implementation of this intent needs improvements so there is better communication between the Executive and Council with regards to various contracts, most of which are expiring at the end of the year.

#### Labor Policy Implementation.

Dustin Frederick reported that labor policy implementation has greatly improved. There continue to be a few areas where the results are not what the Council or the Executive intends.

There are times when the best efforts of the Council in creating policies are being frustrated by not being disseminated throughout the County government and reaching the people who actually implement the policies. In addition, department and division heads need to be held responsible for implementation of the labor policies.

The labor negotiators do not necessarily know about all of the labor policies that have been adopted.

The solution might be that Council staff member(s) and Executive staff member(s) who work with labor issues should be responsible for training those management representative personnel who do labor negotiations. This training should be conducted in concert with union representatives so that all parties understand the framework within which negotiations are to occur. Perhaps Council staff should become part of the negotiating team.

#### New term limited temporary employees.

John A. Williams reported that there are problems in this area and that labor is very concerned about the proliferation of Term Limited Temporaries.

Creation of term-limited employment was part of the settlement of the Logan-Knox lawsuit; it is a logical category of employment for the county. Some of the term-limited positions are filled by career service county employees because they

have some of the qualifications to fill those positions. That in turn allows for the term-limited employee to backfill for the career service employee.

Labor believes, however, that the use of term-limited temporaries has gone beyond what was originally intended in the Logan-Knox settlement (which forced the citizens of King County to pay twenty-four million dollars because county actions were inconsistent with labor policy) and is creating the foundation for future problems.

Career Service employees can leave County employment, then return to County employment within two years, and recoup all their vacation and sick leave. This policy applies only to benefit-eligible employees and not to term-limited employees.

Some term-limited temporary positions that could be filled by career service employees are not filled because of employees' concerns that they will lose the protections of their collective bargaining agreement while serving in the term-limited temporary capacity and not be allowed to revert back to their permanent career service positions. Labor feels they should be able to negotiate rights for term-limited employees. These term-limited employees are members of local unions and they are doing union work. They may be assigned to specific projects and hired for those purposes; nevertheless some of these assignments may be for an extended period of time, lasting for three years and more.

There are approximately 550 term-limited employees currently in King County. There are also term-limited positions in King County that are budgeted but not filled.

#### Diversity in the workplace

Councilmember Gossett presented issues related to diversity in the workplace, specifically in King County.

The issue of diversity in the workplace was raised during the 1998 Labor Summit. A lot of issues raised about racism and diversity come to Councilmember Gossett's office, and to the office of the County Executive, and not always to the office they should be raised too.

Employees have come with concerns over promotional opportunities, and disciplinary actions, and feeling that they did not have an opportunity to be integrated into the mainstream of the workforce of King County government. The perception is that the existing structure for handling these types of problems -- through the EOC, Ombudsman's Office, or with union representatives -- is not being staffed by people who are sensitive enough to the needs of minority workers.



If King County focuses enough attention to this issue we can make progress, not only in people feeling that they are a part of our government and feeling that they are fairly treated, but also providing fair opportunities in recruitment, and in apprenticeship and training programs.

The unemployment rate in King County is about 3.3%. However, the unemployment rate in the African American community, the Native American community, the Latino community are still consistently at a rate of about 9%.

King County in general has an exemplary record in supporting people of color. King County can do even better if we focus and continue to be a model for integrating the workforce. King County should create a task force with members of the King County Council, members of the community, members of the labor community, and the King County Executive to promote a more diverse workforce.

Labor indicated that King County is doing a good job. Has it done all it can? No. Can it do better? Yes. The County Executive indicated that King County is moving far more aggressively than most people realize.

#### Open discussion

Participating in the open discussion were: Motter Forman, Local 76-493 AFM, Tom Krett, Teamster 763, Bob Markholt, AFT 1789, Michael Woo, LELU, Ron Forest, Carpenters Union, and Wes LaMay, Washington State Nurses Association. Items of discussion included, but were not limited to:

- Right to organize
- What index King County uses for determining COLA
- Support for supplemental pensions
- Family Wage Job Project
- Hiring Practices

Ron Judd thanked members of the King County Council, the King County Executive, and the labor leaders, for taking the time to spend the morning communicating. Mr. Judd indicated that this has been a very good labor summit that raised many good issues.

The Committee-of-the-Whole /Labor Summit of April 26, 1999, was adjourned by Chair Miller, at 12:09 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Weaver  
Council Staff