

Local 76000 Annual General Assembly 2019 Minutes
March 7th, 2019
IDRC, Hopper Rooms

Participation and quorum:

A total of 98 members in good standing participated in the AGM, including the electronic votes from members in the regional offices and on official travel. This far exceeded our needed quorum of 30% (about 75 of active members).

Local President Andres Sanchez called the meeting to order at 12:09pm and introduced representatives from P.S.A.C, Greg McGillis and Nairra Tariq.

The proposed agenda was:

1. Approval of the minutes of the General Assemble of 1 March 2018
2. Approval of annual and financial reports
3. Voting on motions from members
4. Elections

Addition of a Q&A after item 2.

The agenda was adopted (Renaud DePlaen) and seconded (Mano Buckshi)
The minutes from the last Assembly were adopted (Mano Buckshi) and seconded (Erin Renee Keddo).

Item 2: Highlights from 2018 and priorities for 2019

Andres Sanchez, local president, began by noting the contributions over the year of the P.S.A.C executive members, the members of the health and safety committee and other volunteers. He provided highlights from the past year including:

- A noticeable change in the discourses at the centre responding to Union calls for more fairness and transparency in how decisions are made; and greater respect, collegiality, and accountability. All of these points have been endorsed across the Centre by Union and non-Union colleagues and managers. The Guarding Minds survey and the recent action plan have been key in the shift. While discourse has changed, more is needed to ensure that this is followed through in practice.
- Key achievement was the ratification of the collective agreement. This provides a transparent reference point to move forward on improving conditions and the processes for dealing with conflicts and grievances. The collective agreement was ratified by more than 80% of members, and the recent endorsement campaign was signed by approximately 90%.
- The grievance related to job security has not been resolved and after discussion with P.S.A.C the Union will be informing the employer that we wish to move to arbitration.

Mr. Sanchez, on behalf of Michele Leone the Vice President Regional Office, explained that the Union is planning to create a regional caucus to improve collaboration with regional colleagues. This is the reason for including the motion to have shop stewards in each region.

Mr. Sanchez concluded by thanking the members for their support over last three years, as he is not seeking re-election.

Sean Burns, Chief Steward, noted the increase in the steward network from 11 to 18 this year. He provided information on the twenty ongoing grievances which are using the new formal process. While over the past year there has been successful mediation of some issues, other cases are moving to binding arbitration. The Union will be using the services of FCMS (Federal Mediation & Conciliation Services) for mediation on complicated issues.

Carole Garneau, Health and Safety Officer, updated the membership on the internal health and safety audit done in 2018 by the Centre. A second audit was carried out with WSPS in conjunction with the mental health action plan. The audit found that IDRC was only compliant with approximately 16% of the regulations. The Centre has put out an action plan to address deficiencies. Ms. Garneau provided an overview of the role of the Health and Safety Policy Committee. She noted the 3 new employee members from the regions. There has been an increase in complaints of workplace violence.

Wilfredo Jirón, Secretary-Treasurer, provided the financial report including an overview of the Local's financial situation in 2018 and budget for 2019. Union dues for next year are pro-rated for 9 months because an agreement still being worked out between P.S.A.C and IDRC. The Local will be creating a local strike fund, into which half of dues each year plus any unspent funds each year will be added. This will ensure the Union can always balance the budget.

David O'Brien, Vice-President, provided an overview of the priorities for 2019. He notes that with the ratification of the collective agreement, there are now 65 new articles to be implemented. This has generated a lot of discussion between the Executive, the stewards, and the Centre.

Priorities for 2019:

- 1) To increase dialogue with the Centre (joint union-management consultation committee). This includes the need to work more closely with regional office staff;
- 2) To grow the stewards network and representation;
- 3) To build a case management system to monitor and follow through on each grievance item as they progress through to resolution;
- 4) To communicate better to members throughout the year on what the Executive is doing. This is why they are proposing to create a standing communication position.

Item 3: Q&A period

The following questions were raised during the question and answer period:

Q: How are the stewards organized? Is there a system to house knowledge and expertise of different areas of the collective agreement with different people?

A: The Chief Steward responded that there are no specific areas of expertise developed yet. Most cases have been very long running and so the steward's expertise is around 1 case. The practice for assigning cases to a steward is to try and keep people removed from each other (so stewards from one unit are not working on cases within that unit). This minimizes workload disruption and helps ensure confidentiality.

Q: Without divulging confidential information, could you provide a description of the broad strokes or patterns you see emerging in the grievances?

A: The Chief Steward responded that it is difficult to provide examples that are not identifiable, but several cases have followed the pattern that an employee will raise a concern with someone in authority above them (often a new employee or an unfamiliar issue) and that issue will not be adequately addressed at the first level. If the concern is pursued further there are often consequences to the employee such as being labeled as difficult to communicate with, or being given a poor rating in their PRAS. Then there can be further escalation. Most of these big issues originated pre-collective agreement so he is hopeful that now with process of arbitration and grievance that solutions can be found. Other Executive members noted that this should not discourage anyone from bringing forward complaints. We need people to come forward with injustices so that we can get the employer to address them.

Q: Because this is all very new to everyone, and issues are very confidential, is there any mechanism we can think of to aggregate issues and see what lessons have been learned? For example, what kind of issues are the main stumbling blocks on either side? Is there some kind of education piece that could help prevent this?

A: The President responded that the Executive has been planning to de-personalize cases and share with the stewards so there can be learning from the process, but they haven't had time. This is reflected in the budget for next year though. There is a recognition of the need to get better at preventing the escalation of complaints, and that requires learning from committee, members, and management.

Q: It would be great to challenge ourselves about who is represented. We gather strength from the diversity of views and so all members should all consider running for an executive position to make sure executive and stewards reflect diversity of the centre.

A: Agreed. There is a diversity of views in the committee. More members running for election is always a positive.

Members thanked Andres for his term as president.

Item 4: Voting on motions from members

Remarks from Greg McGillis, P.S.A.C. He noted that it is important to normalize the grievance process as one way we resolve conflicts. This will support others who someday need to use the process. It is also important that there is now an official process that can result in sanctions to the employer. He provided an update that the grievance on outsourcing of jobs is moving to arbitration. Nairra will be working with local to move forward.

Q: Are the sanctions mentioned financial, and if so how does that impact future jobs or programming?

A: Yes, they are financial, but individual sanctions are usually small (up to \$20 000 for human rights complaint) so unlikely to bankrupt an organization. They are important because once sanctions have been applied, they have to be reported on the organization's balance sheet and to the board. There are different kinds of sanctions, but most have a limit.

Move to voting on motions from members:

1. Approval of 2018 Annual and Financial reports (with 2019 Budget).
Proposed by Andres Sanchez, seconded by Sean Burns. Passed unanimously.

2. Amend the composition of the executive committee to include a communications officer.
Proposed by Andres Sanchez, seconded by Sean Burns. Passed unanimously.
3. Amend the composition of the executive committee to include a regional office shop steward in each of the regional offices of IDRC.
Proposed by Andres Sanchez, seconded by Sean Burns. Passed unanimously.

Item 5: Elections

P.S.A.C. explained the voting process.

- Only the Human Rights Representative was contested.
- The following were acclaimed:
 - Sean Burns: President
 - Erin Gilmore: Secretary-Treasurer
 - Paul Viveiros: Chief Stewart
 - Carole Garneau: Health and Safety Officer
- Members in attendance voted (secret ballots)

Remarks from new president Sean Burns. Motion to adjourn the meeting was proposed (Adrian Di Giovanni) and seconded (Paul Viveiros).

Meeting was adjourned at 1:12pm.