

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE JOINT EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF GRAIN
AND GENERAL SERVICES UNION (ILWU • CANADA) held by conference call on April 3, 2020**

GSU President – Jim Brown

GSU Vice Presidents – Michelle Houlden, Brett North

Local 1 (Viterra Ops/Maintenance)

Dave Barrett, Travis Brewer, Gaylyn Kennedy

Local 2 (Viterra Offices)

Sheila Tran, Howard Wilson

Local 4 (Grain Millers)

Glen Wlasichuk (absent), Alex McKay

Local 5 (Western Producer/GVIC)

Sharlene Tetrault

Local 7 (Heartland)

Heather Mackay

Local 8 (Advance Employees Association)

Dion Elliott, Steve Holliday, Doug Murray

Local 9 (Trouw Nutrition)

Derek Webb

Local 14 (Richardson Pioneer)

Justin Shauf

Local 15 (Nutrien) – 4 representatives

Curtis Cousins, Brian Cowan, Lynn Shaw

GSU Staff

Hugh Wagner, general secretary

Lynn Woods, assistant general secretary

Dale Markling, staff representative

Steve Torgerson, staff representative

Donna Driediger, staff representative

Debbie Head, financial representative

Absent with regrets: Amber Pearson - Local 6; Mark Zacharias - Local 14.

These minutes reflect the disposition of the meeting. It should be noted that each agenda item and matters which arose were thoroughly discussed and often vigorously debated. In the interest of brevity, however, in most instances the final result is the only aspect recorded.

For this meeting of the Council, members were asked to voice their vote by saying either Yea or Nay when asked for a response.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 a.m. by call moderator and GSU general secretary Hugh Wagner. Wagner welcomed participants to the meeting and thanked them for participating in the call in this unusual format during unusual times and circumstances.

Wagner advised that staff rep Donna Driediger would serve as the technical assistant during the call and she could be contacted by anyone who was experiencing problems during the call. Driediger was invited to conduct the roll call of participants, which she did.

AGENDA

Noting that the usual practice of sharing of responsibilities of the chair would be cumbersome during a conference call, Wagner suggested that with the agreement of the president and vice presidents he would serve as moderator and chair of the meeting.

Wagner reviewed the materials for the meeting and their location on the GSU web page. He encouraged anyone who was experiencing difficulty locating or opening the materials to speak to staff rep Driediger. Attention was directed to the meeting agenda as Wagner read it aloud.

MOVED by Heather Mackay, seconded by Jim Brown that the meeting agenda be adopted with the power to add. Carried.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Attention turned to the minutes of the Sept. 26, 2019 semi-annual meeting of the Joint Executive Council. Wagner proposed that since minutes had been distributed and were available well in advance of the meeting that the reading of the minutes be waived.

MOVED by Gaylyn Kennedy, seconded by Curtis Cousins that the reading of the minutes of the meeting be waived. Carried.

MOVED by Dave Barrett, seconded by Travis Brewer that the minutes of the Sept. 26, 2019 meeting of the Joint Executive Council be adopted. Carried.

Wagner reminded seasoned Council members and advised new Council members that the Joint Executive Council is the board of directors of GSU and has the right as well as the responsibility to oversee business of the union between policy conventions. He encouraged members to speak up, raise issues and concerns, and request clarification as required as all questions and queries were important.

Council members received a verbal update on an evolving situation regarding members of Local 5 (The Western Producer). Specifically, their employer (Glacier Media) had proposed a 10 percent wage rollback due to circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. Wagner thanked Local 5 president Sharlene Tetrault, GSU vice president and Local 5 member Michelle Houlden, and GSU staff representatives Dale Markling and Steve Torgerson for the work they had been doing to assist members in the Local.

Wagner reported that unlike Glacier Media and many other sectors in Canada, employers of the majority of GSU members were not laying off employees and in some cases they are hiring extra help. GSU members are essential workers who mill oats and feed, receive and ship grain, including the associated administrative, accounting, IT and logistics work. In addition, GSU members work in storing, selling and delivering crop inputs required by farmers to seed crops. They are working to maintain some semblance of order as this pandemic continues to move and change.

APPROVAL OF CANCELLATION OF 2020 GSU POLICY CONVENTION

Wagner reported that the GSU biennial policy convention originally scheduled for March 19 to 21 at Temple Gardens Hotel and Spa in Moose Jaw was set for a banner turnout until COVID-19 arrived. During a conference call with GSU's executive committee and staff on March 13, the difficult decision was made to cancel the convention in light of the public health crisis and since we couldn't hold such a large gathering while guaranteeing the health and safety of attendees. In hindsight it is clear we made the right and wise decision.

Wagner welcomed questions about the decision to cancel the convention.

During the questions and answers that followed Council members learned that Temple Gardens had graciously allowed GSU to tentatively move their convention in its entirety to March 2021 with no penalty or fees, saving the union a roughly \$50,000 cancellation fee.

MOVED by Gaylyn Kennedy, seconded by Michelle Houlden that whereas section 5.2 of the Constitution of GSU requires that a policy convention of the union shall be held every two years; and, whereas section 5.4 of the Constitution of GSU requires that a policy convention of

the union shall be held every two years prior to May 31; and whereas the Executive Committee of GSU cancelled the GSU biennial policy convention scheduled for March 19 to 21, 2020 in response to the public health crisis stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020; therefore the Joint Executive Council approves the Executive Committee decision of March 13, 2020 to cancel GSU's 2020 biennial policy convention. Carried.

Council members considered and discussed Resolution 5., a provisional amendment to the GSU constitution. Wagner advised Council that they could make provisional amendments under the GSU constitution but such amendments would need to be taken to GSU members for a vote at the autumn annual meetings.

For everyone's benefit, Wagner read aloud Resolution 5. and explained it would mean GSU would shift from holding conventions on even-numbered years to odd-numbered years beginning in March 2021. He reiterated that the Temple Gardens has been tentatively booked for March 17-20, 2021.

MOVED by Curtis Cousins, seconded by Gaylyn Kennedy that section 5.2 of the Constitution of GSU shall be provisionally amended to allow for a GSU policy convention to be held within the first five months of 2021 and every two years thereafter, and this constitutional amendment shall be submitted to the 2020 annual membership meetings of GSU for final adoption.

Carried.

Council members considered the second provisional constitutional amendment in Resolution 6. – an amendment to extend the terms of the current elected officers. Wagner pointed out that the Union's Constitution stated elected officers would be in place until a successor was named, but it would be advisable to make it official in this instance. Wagner introduced the current elected officers: president Jim Brown, and vice presidents Michelle Houlden and Brett North as well as himself in the general secretary position.

At the suggestion of Gaylyn Kennedy, the current officers were asked if they were amenable to an extension of their terms until March of 2021. Brown, Houlden, North and Wagner indicated their agreement to the proposed extension.

MOVED by Gaylyn Kennedy, seconded by Curtis Cousins that that the terms of office of the president and vice-presidents of GSU referred to in section 5.9 of the constitution of GSU shall be extended until the 2021 policy convention of the union. Carried.

MOVED by Michelle Houlden, seconded by David Barrett that the term of office of the general secretary, referred to in section 5.15 of the constitution of GSU shall be extended until the 2021 policy convention of the union. Carried.

Wagner introduced Resolution 8. and explained the necessity to suspend in-person union meetings. He added that the GSU staff had been working at home.

MOVED by Lynn Shaw, seconded by Sharlene Tetrault that in order to protect the health of GSU members, family, staff, and the public during the COVID-19 pandemic all GSU Local meetings and in-person meetings will continue to be suspended and all administrative and representational work will be carried out remotely under the direction of the general secretary until public health authorities have cleared resumption of normal activities in whole or in part.

Carried.

AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Wagner provided a detailed review of the 2019 audited financial statements and accompanying documents (copies attached). Council members were encouraged to seek clarification and ask questions as they arose.

Wagner reiterated that while it can't be said with an absolute certainty, other than Local 5 (Western Producer), Local 6 (Wild West Steelhead), and Local 8 (Advance), prospects for continued employment of GSU members look good as they are mostly in ag-related or grain handling occupations. Some employers are hiring and Wagner was optimistic GSU would be in good shape.

In this connection Wagner advised that he wasn't predicting a dramatic uptick in expenses or dramatic decline in dues. He cautioned that the circumstances surrounding the pandemic continued to unfold, he could be wrong, but if everything continued as it was, it will be okay.

MOVED by Jim Brown, seconded by Justin Shauf that the general secretary's report on GSU operations, finances and GSU's 2019 audited financial statements be approved.

Carried.

MOVED by Curtis Cousins, seconded by Alex MacKay that GSU's 2020 audited financial statements be approved and included in the JEC 2019/2020 annual report to members.

Carried.

2020 OPERATING BUDGET ESTIMATE

With everything changing so quickly, Wagner decided not to provide a written budget as it was impossible to provide accurate projections. He had worked with financial representative Debbie Head to come up with an estimate that showed that if the 2020 GSU policy convention had been held, GSU would have had a net operating deficit of \$52,000 for 2020. The deficit could have been financed from cash flow without borrowing.

Cancelling the convention saved the union roughly \$60,000 when compared to 2019. In addition, restricted staff travel, no in-person meetings or membership meetings and so forth will lower the expected regular expenses into the summer.

Wagner advised that he was confident GSU will be operating a balanced budget moderately in the black barring unforeseen misfortune. If current employment of GSU members continues and there are no major disruptions to employment such as a strike or lockout – particularly in Local 15 (Nutrien) or Local 5 (Western Producer) - GSU will have balanced budget for 2020. He observed that GSU was fortunate compared to a lot of organizations.

MOVED by Lynn Shaw and seconded by Sharlene Tetrault that the 2020 GSU operating budget estimate presented by the general secretary be approved. Carried.

REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF 2019/2020 ANNUAL REPORT TO GSU MEMBERS

The draft 2019/2020 Joint Executive Council annual report to members was read to the meeting by president Jim Brown and vice-president Michelle Houlden while individual Council members followed along with their own copies.

Following the presentation of the report, members asked questions and discussed the content of the report.

Succession Planning

Michelle Houlden reminded Council that at their last meeting they had committed to put the policy together. Houlden requested tabling the succession planning section of the proposed draft report in favour of having the Council meet in person to conduct a comprehensive discussion in order to get a better look at what the situation required and determine whether the plan proposed in the draft annual report was what the Council wanted. She added that without meeting as a group to conduct the review, the Council was not meeting its autumn directive.

It was agreed that tabling the succession plan report and required discussion until the autumn meeting of the Council would be the appropriate measure to take, and the annual report would be amended to note that Council was working on a succession plan.

MOVED by Michelle Houlden, seconded by Gaylyn Kennedy that the recommendations on Succession Planning and Transition in the draft 2019/2020 Annual Report of the Council be deleted and that the details of a succession plan be reviewed at the Autumn 2020 meeting of the Council. Carried.

Defense Fund Board of Directors

Houlden identified an oversight in extension of terms of office and asked that the meeting extend the terms of the directors on the GSU Defense Fund. It was noted that former director Sharlene Tetrault was now a member of the Council and, as such, was unable to serve on Defense Fund board, creating a vacancy.

MOVED by Curtis Cousins, seconded by Sharlene Tetrault, that with the agreement of the incumbent directors on the GSU Defense Fund board, the terms of Ron Gerlock, Wilfred Harris,

Darryl Knelsen, and Dennis Piasta will extend to March 2021. Further, that we advertise to fill the position vacated by Sharlene Tetrault. Carried.

Wagner undertook to speak the current directors on the Defense Fund board and to ensure the director vacancy was announced in GSU's upcoming *Tuesday Members' Memos*.

RESOLUTIONS

Wagner directed attention to the resolutions document, and particularly those numbered 13., 14., and 15.

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| 13. | MOVED BY:
that GSU actively promote the CLC campaign for a national pharmacare program. | SECONDED BY: |
| 14. | MOVED BY:
that GSU lobby for the establishment of paid sick leave in federal and provincial labour standards legislation. | SECONDED BY: |
| 15. | MOVED BY:
that GSU lobby and bargain for paid compassionate leave, including paid emergency child care and elder care leave to become part of the Canada Labour Code and the Saskatchewan Employment Act. | SECONDED BY: |

What was normal six months ago is no longer normal, Wagner said, and we don't know what new normal will be. The resolutions were to be put to convention and the Council can decide whether to deal with them now or can set them aside to their autumn meeting. Wagner said that if pandemic restrictions allow, the Council would meet in person in September.

After some discussion, it was decided to defer resolutions 13., 14. and 15. to the autumn 2020 meeting when they could be more actively discussed.

OTHER BUSINESS

Donations

Michelle Houlden voiced concern about workers who were losing their jobs and the ability to feed their families. She suggested that the donation funding originally allotted for convention could be distributed to Saskatoon/Regina Food Banks and the Unemployed Workers Centre.

After discussion about the amount of a donation and a growing number of worthy recipient organizations, Wagner suggested that he would review the union's finances, convene the executive committee to look at where GSU makes donations and before any pandemic-related

donations were made or recipients finalized, members of the Council would be emailed and asked to review and vote on the executive committee's recommendations.

If this approach was acceptable to the Council, Wagner said he would convene a conference call of the GSU executive committee and staff to determine a recommendation to Council for a pandemic response donation.

MOVED by Michelle Houlden, seconded by Curtis Cousins that GSU make a substantial donation to community organizations such as food banks, Unemployed Workers Centre, Salvation Army, Riverside Mission or other non-governmental organizations to help the community. Carried.

Premiums/Pandemic Pay

Dave Barrett initiated discussion on pay premiums for essential service workers as members in his facility had approached him wondering if that was a possibility for them.

Wagner thanked Barrett for raising the issue, saying it was an excellent idea worth following up on with employers.

Council members commented with their personal knowledge and information they had heard. Specifically, Gaylyn Kennedy heard through rumour mill that the Cargill operation down the road from her had increased wages in light of their workforce's efforts during the pandemic. She added that the younger generation were even more concerned in this time of crisis than other workers.

Alex Mackay confirmed that Grain Millers had provided a \$1,000 one-time payment to employees and had done so without being asked.

Derek Webb said Shur-Gain had given employees in Local 9 an extra \$1 premium/\$80 per week to come to work.

Sharlene Tetrault advised that Local 5 members were facing roll-backs.

Doug Murray from Local 8 suggested that it was unlikely their Regina-based employer would be inclined to give employees any premium or increase, and requested that the higher-level management in Toronto receive any letter from GSU suggesting pandemic pay increases.

MOVED by David Barrett, seconded by Alex MacKay that GSU propose pandemic pay for GSU members to their employers. Carried.

No additional business was brought forward.

ADJOURNMENT

Wagner thanked Council members for their time, patience, and participation in the meeting. He added that what they accomplished today and in their ongoing work as union officers was

important to GSU and unions everywhere as they work to defend worker rights and promote worker interests during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

MOVED by Michelle Houlden, seconded by Sharlene Tetrault that the meeting adjourn.
Carried.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

President

General Secretary

Attachments:

- *Resolutions*
- *2019 audited financial statements and accompanying documents*