

MINUTES OF THE 14TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION OF THE GRAIN AND GENERAL SERVICES UNION (ILWU • CANADA) POLICY CONVENTION held virtually by Zoom and in person at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel & Conference Centre, Regina, SK - March 18 & 19, 2021

GSU Executive Committee

Jim Brown

Michelle Houlden

Brett North

Local 1 (Viterra Operations & Maintenance)

Shannon Antonenko

David Barrett

Travis Brewer

Colton Buck

Matt Denomie

Willy Harris

Ken Helmkey

Scott Jordison

Gaylyn Kennedy

Darryl Knelsen

Cody Makarow

Cindy Manahan

Glenn Outram

Brian Sansom

Chris Yeo

Barry Zimmer

Local 2 (Viterra Head Office)

Kaylee Krueger

Sheila Tran

Local 4 (Grain Millers)

Brandon Allin

Ryan McNabb

Local 5 (Western Producer)

Sharlene Tetrault

Local 6 (Wild West Steelhead)

Aamir Pasha Mughal

Local 8 (Advance Employees Association)

Dion Elliott

Doug Kampman

Doug Murray

Local 9 (Trouw Nutrition)

Jordan Jefferson

Derek Webb

Local 14 (Richardson)

Jerid Clark

Barb Healy

Leon Martineau

Dennis Piasta

Craig Reiman

Justin Shauf

Mark Zacharias

Local 15 (Nutrien)

Curtis Cousins

Brian Cowan

David Jones

Brent Pelechaty

Sandy Salberg

Sheila Scansen

Lynn Shaw

Tanya Thiessen

Bruce Thompson

Local 16 (Lake Country Co-op)

Ian Stolee

Local 17 (Discovery Co-op)

Ben Scott

GSU Staff

Donna Driediger

Debbie Head

Dale Markling

Steve Torgerson

Hugh Wagner

Lynn Woods

Yellow indicates in-person attendance.

These minutes reflect the disposition of the Convention. 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.

DAY ONE - MARCH 18, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

General Secretary Hugh Wagner called the convention to order at 9:30 a.m. He welcomed everyone to convention and introduced himself and the executive officers at the head table. Prior to roll call, staff rep and meeting technical support Steve Torgerson advised a few delegates were struggling with getting connected, but they were working through that together.

Wagner completed a roll call of convention participants.

Delegates were asked to identify themselves whenever they spoke and to speak slowly and clearly to assist with record keeping and to accommodate a lag in technology. There will be no official breaks during convention as those online can sneak away and those in person are also free to come and go. The lack of breaks will be balanced by a two-hour lunch break to stagger sitting time and online time.

Attention turned to the convention materials as Wagner provided an overview of the convention workbook and accompanying contents. As he introduced the resolution package, Wagner advised that although there was a written package of resolutions, additional resolutions by delegates could originate at any time from the floor. Wagner also emphasized that while seven individuals had declared their candidacy for the various offices, anyone who wished to do so could declare they would like to be a candidate for office.

Regarding the advertisement for the CLC/SFL Spring School, Wagner said GSU will sponsor three GSU participants to attend. The school is virtual, but paid union leave would be arranged to facilitate attendance from home at no cost and no loss of wages to members.

INTRODUCTIONS

Wagner identified GSU's executive officers and thanked GSU staff for their work to make sure this convention could happen.

President Jim Brown welcomed everyone to convention and reminded all that the convention was being held on Treaty 2, Treaty 4 and Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of Metis nation. He encouraged everyone to participate fully as convention marks an opportunity to set policy and a chart path forward to a bigger and better future. In closing, Brown said working people need strong labour unions to continue to be a presence in economic and public policy debates.

AGENDA

The convention agenda was reviewed as an outline with the understanding that it was open to additions, combining elements, and changes as required to keep moving forward on an efficient basis.

The in-person and online process for voting was reviewed.

MOVED BY Ryan McNabb, seconded by David Barrett that the 2021 GSU biennial policy convention shall also stand as the 2021 spring annual meeting of the Joint Executive Council.

Carried

MOVED BY Sharlene Tetrault, seconded by Gaylyn Kennedy that the proposed 2021 convention agenda be approved with the power to add and adjust to circumstances.

Carried

MOVED BY Ryan McNabb, seconded by Darryl Knelson that the convention format consisting of the Regina-based central location and remote participation by other delegates be approved.

Carried

MINUTES

The minutes of GSU's 2018 biennial convention had been adopted at the next available meeting of GSU's governing body, the Joint Executive Council. Wagner asked vice-president Michelle Houlden to read the minutes of the Semi-Annual meeting of the Joint Executive Council held Oct. 8, 2020, and she did.

MOVED by Sharlene Tetrault, seconded by Gaylyn Kennedy that the minutes of the Oct. 8, 2020 meeting of the Joint Executive Council be adopted. Carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Wagner advised there was nothing specific to report on other than the resolution regarding appointment of the next general secretary and that the position will be a hired position with the candidate to be approved by the Joint Executive Council (as directed by the Oct. 8, 2020 council meeting). He added that the Council's annual report will cover any other items mentioned in Oct. minutes.

Wagner addressed the GSU scholarship program and provided an overview of the scholarships and the program requirements. He explained that scholarships are adjudicated on a blind basis without the committee knowing names or locations of applicants to ensure there is no favouritism or bias. The executive committee serves as the union's scholarship committee and they are tasked with selecting the five successful applicants. When committee members have an applicant from within their home, they recuse themselves from the committee and a replacement is named. Wagner encouraged potential applicants to apply.

2020 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Wagner advised the statements would remain as a draft document until they were reviewed and adopted by convention. After approval, the final copy of the statements will be combined with the Joint Executive Council's annual report and the document is posted on GSU's website, made available to members by email link, and provided by mail as required. As he described the auditor's process and began his detailed review, Wagner encouraged delegates to ask questions as they arose.

With his review complete, Wagner noted delegates would not be asked to adopt the report immediately. Rather, they would have an opportunity to reflect and raise questions as they arose or whenever they saw fit during the next two days. Everyone was encouraged to ask any question they wished, because nothing is assumed to be obvious and it was always good to ask when unsure as others likely have similar questions.

In response to a question regarding union promotional clothing, Wagner asked convention delegates to send him their shirt size and preferred colour of shirt, and he would see that same were distributed.

Wagner asked delegates to identify the draft operating budget in their kits, and he proceeded to review the report in detail – including his estimation of the costs of the 2021 GSU convention.

Again, he added that members should take time to reflect, consider, and ask questions before voting on the draft operating budget later in convention proceedings.

MOVED BY Ryan McNabb, seconded by Dave Barrett that GSU's expense policy be amended to specify that delegates to the 2021 policy convention who participate remotely shall be entitled to claim a daily per diem of \$20; and that delegates who reside in the vicinity of Regina and attend the convention's central location shall be entitled to claim a daily per diem of \$20 plus parking; and that delegates who attend the convention's central location from outside the vicinity of Regina shall be entitled to claim a daily per diem of \$60 for 2.5 days, plus parking.

Carried.

BYLAW AND CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Wagner reviewed and provided background on recommended bylaw and constitutional changes. Delegates were advised they could expect to vote on these changes later in convention.

DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT OF THE JOINT EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

President Jim Brown and vice-presidents Michelle Houlden and Brett North shared the presentation of the draft report of the Joint Executive Council as delegates followed along using the written report in their workbooks.

Wagner advised that the report was intended to cover the broad scope of items and changes in administration, and he offered the following additional information:

- Brett North has advised that he will be retiring later this year, likely in the early summer. Wagner recapped North's service with his employer and the union and thanked him on behalf of GSU members, officers, and staff for all of his support and commitment to GSU over the years. He encouraged North to stay in touch and hopefully involved in the labour movement.
- Ron Gerlock is leaving Local 8 for other opportunities. Convention joined with Wagner wishing Ron well as his new career and thanking him for his work with Local 8 since its inception and his service with the Defense Fund since 2016.
- Wagner advised that GSU staff rep Dale Markling has formally advised he will retire at the end of July 2021. Dale started with GSU in June 1992 after being an employee with Saskatchewan Wheat Pool since Nov. 1977 when grain was delivered by half-ton trucks. Before joined GSU staff in 1992, Dale assisted as a delegate attempting to organize UGG and was the most successful of the organizers. Wagner described Markling as a great colleague, hard worker, and a great friend, and added that while he was happy

Markling was able to retire, he was sad to see him go. Convention wished Dale and his partner Mary-Lou a long, happy retirement.

- Wagner announced another impending retirement of Dennis Piasta who plans to retire in the autumn. Piasta is a currently a Local 14 (Richardson Pioneer) member working out of Kindersley and he is a long-time active member of GSU going back to Saskatchewan Wheat Pool days. He has a long history of being involved in GSU and became particularly active since those elevators spun off from Viterra to Richardson, including bargaining the new contracts. Dennis has been a member of the Defense Fund board for eight years. Convention delegates joined with Wagner in wishing Piasta well and thanking him for his support and service over the years.

In finishing his remarks, Wagner thanked North, Gerlock, Markling and Piasta adding that the union is a better place with the effort and contribution they have made on behalf of their co-workers.

Asking for and responding to questions about the annual report, Wagner advised that GSU would look for a new full-time staff representative by advertising within GSU and outside GSU within the labour movement, including asking the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour and other organizations to circulate the posting. Qualified candidates within union will have the inside track of being hired into the position after period of advertisements and interviews – likely in the early part of September. Any hiring decision will be subject to approval of Joint Executive Council, including whether the position will be based in Regina or Saskatoon.

Staff rep Steve Torgerson provided a quick tech check with delegates regarding their tablet battery use and charging before advising delegates they could expect to have access to join the next session's Zoom link by 1:45 p.m.

Break ~ Convention adjourned for lunch at 11:55 a.m. and reconvened at 2:00 p.m.

In reconvening convention Wagner noted that pre-COVID we would have people with us to share greetings, but today those greetings would be shared through video. Delegates watched greetings from ILWU president Rob Ashton.

Wagner asked for questions regarding the JEC report, financial statements, or business of convention that had arisen so far, and he provided answers accordingly. He noted that numbers will be updated on the financial statements prior to printing and distribution to members.

Wagner also reported that the Regina office exterior will be stuccoed as the brick mortar has been disintegrating and repointing is very expensive. The original estimate for stucco was \$40,000, although Wagner expects the cost to now be higher. There will also be an assessment of whether the windows should be replaced prior to the stucco work.

Wagner advised that our rental for GSU's Saskatoon office space includes space and administrative services. It didn't make financial sense to purchase separate office space for one person.

RESOLUTIONS

President Brown began the review of resolutions.

MOVED by Dave Barrett, seconded by Barb Healey that the election procedure for the GSU 2021 policy convention set out in pages 34 to 36 of the convention workbook be adopted.

Carried

MOVED by Michelle Houlden, seconded by Darryl Knelson that the preliminary report on convention expenses be approved subject to a final report being presented to the semi-annual meeting of the Joint Executive Council.

Carried

MOVED BY Sharlene Tetrault, seconded by Brian Cowan that GSU continue to make an annual donation of \$2,000 to the Unemployed Workers Help Centre.

Carried

MOVED BY Kailee Krueger, seconded by Sheila Tran that GSU continue to make an annual donation of \$500 the Saskatchewan Union Retirees Federation.

Carried.

Wagner read aloud a report of organizations who had received donations from Grain and General Services Union in 2021.

MOVED BY Dave Barrett, seconded by Jim Brown that GSU oppose any exemptions of grain and grain milling companies from the 2019 amendments to Part III of the Canada Labour Code.

Carried

MOVED BY Sheila Tran, seconded by Craig Reiman that GSU lobby for paid sick leave in federal and provincial labour standards legislation.

Carried

MOVED BY David Barrett, seconded by Lynn Shaw that GSU lobby and bargain for more extensive paid compassionate leave to become part of our collective agreements as well as the Canada Labour Code and Saskatchewan Employment Act.

Carried

MOVED BY Brian Cowan, seconded by Ben Scott that GSU press all of the employers directly and through OH&S committees for clear and contemporary workplace policies against bullying, harassment and violence, including accessible complaint investigation processes and workplace training for all employees and management.

Carried

MOVED BY Sheila Tran, seconded by Craig Reiman that the Executive Committee submit a motion to the 2021 annual meetings to reduce the additional membership dues being paid into

the GSU Defense Fund to \$5 per member per month effective January 1, 2022.

Defeated

A video greeting from Saskatchewan Federation of Labour President Lori Johb was shared.

MOVED BY Gaylene Kennedy, seconded by Barb Healey that sections 4.01 and 4.02 of GSU Bylaw 4 – Meetings be amended to read:

“4.01 Annual meetings: notice of annual meetings shall be provided to members’ at least five calendar days in advance of the meeting. Meeting notices may be provided by email, regular mail or workplace distribution.

4.02 General meetings: in addition to the methods described in section 4.01 above, Local and Sub-Local elected officers may provide notice of meeting in person or by telephone call or text message.”

Carried

MOVED BY Dion Elliott, seconded by Sharlene Tetrault that section 4.07 of GSU Bylaw 4 – Meetings be amended to read:

“To participate in any GSU membership vote members must attend an authorized meeting where the vote is conducted. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the JEC or Local and Sub-Local executive committees may order advance polls, absentee ballots, mail ballots and electronic voting to facilitate participation in any secret ballot votes, including, but not limited to votes on strike action and/or related to agreement renewal bargaining.”

Carried

MOVED BY Ben Scott, seconded by Justin Shauf that section 5.05 of GSU Bylaw 5 – Joint Executive Council be amended to read:

“The Joint Executive Council shall meet at least twice annually. Business of the Council may also be conducted via conference call, video link or email.”

Carried

MOVED BY Sheila Tran, seconded by Kailee Krueger that sub-section (a) of GSU Bylaw 10.09 Settlement Ratification/Rejection and Strike Votes be amended to read:

“(a) To be binding collective bargaining settlements or offers of settlement must be ratified by a majority of members who vote at a general membership meeting(s) or by mail ballot or by electronic ballot as directed by the Executive Committee of the Local.”

Carried

MOVED BY Barry Zimmer, seconded by Sheila Tran that sub-section 5.15 of GSU’s constitution be amended by designating the first seven paragraphs as sub-section 5.15(a), by deleting the

eighth paragraph that says the office of General Secretary shall be filled by election and by adding the following new sub-section 5.15 (b).

"5.15 (b) Subject to approval by the Joint Executive Council, vacancies in the General Secretary position shall be filled by the Executive Committee through a recruitment and hiring process. The Executive Committee may include additional members of the Council and/or members of the GSU staff to assist with recruitment and hiring.

The Executive Committee shall determine the ability and qualification requirements of the position and all aspects of the candidate vetting and selection process. The Executive Committee may advertise for candidates within and outside GSU's membership."

This amendment will become effective March 26, 2021.

Carried

In the discussion surrounding the resolution above, Wagner said he was planning to give plenty of advance notice of his intention to leave and to give the incumbent an opportunity to work with him during transition. Houlden stressed that it was important to have a unified body and frank discussion to assess candidates in an open and honest way.

MOVED BY Michelle Houlden, seconded Dion Elliott that section 5.21 of GSU's constitution be amended to read:

"5.21 A vote on any question at GSU Policy Conventions and meetings of the Joint Executive Council may be by show of hands or voice or electronic ballot, except in the case of election of officers when voting shall be by a secret paper or electronic ballot."

Carried

The Zoom polling option was opened. Staff representative Steve Torgerson explained that the resolution would appear onscreen for electronic voting after it had been moved and seconded.

MOVED BY Ben Scott seconded, by Tanya Thiessen that section 5.22 of GSU's constitution be amended to read:

"5.22 The Joint Executive Council may submit any motion it chooses to be voted on by members of the union. Voting on motions submitted by the Council may occur at membership meetings or by mail or electronic ballot as directed by the Council. A majority of fifty percent plus one of the votes cast shall be required to carry or defeat a motion. The Council or their designate shall oversee the conduct of voting, counting of votes and reporting the results to members. Only members in good standing shall be allowed to vote.

Carried

NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICE

Wagner reviewed the process for nominating candidates for office. He advised that following the election of the union's executive committee, convention delegates would also need to appoint a board of directors of GSU Holdings, Inc. – the single-purpose company formed as a holding company to hold title of physical property for the union when GSU's Regina office was purchased. Traditionally, GSU Holdings Inc.'s board of directors has been comprised of the executive committee plus one or two staff members for continuity. Currently president Jim Brown, former/retired vice president Brett North, general secretary Hugh Wagner and retiring staff representative Dale Markling are on the board.

PRESIDENT

Wagner opened nominations for president and announced that Jim Brown had indicated in advance of convention he was willing to let his name stand for the position.

Wagner called for additional candidates for the office of president.

Second call.

Third and final call.

Wagner declared nominations are closed.

Brown indicated his willingness to be candidate and was declared elected by acclamation.

VICE-PRESIDENTS

Wagner opened nominations for the two vice-president positions and announced that Michelle Houlden and Curtis Cousins had indicated in advance of convention they were willing to let their names stand for the position.

Second call.

Third and final call.

Nominations ceased.

It was noted that Curtis Cousins was not present to decline and has not expressed desire to decline.

Michelle Houlden agreed to let her name stand.

Wagner declared both Houlden and Cousins to be elected by acclamation and congratulated.

GENERAL SECRETARY

Jim Brown opened nominations for the office of general secretary and noted that Hugh Wagner had previously declared his willingness to be a candidate.

Second call.

Third and Final call.

Nominations ceased and Brown congratulated Wagner on being acclaimed as general secretary.

DEFENSE FUND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Before opening for nominations, Wagner advised that four candidates had declared their intention to run prior to March 10.

Wilfred Harris

Barb Healey

Darryl Knelsen

Sheldon Reiss

Doug Murray nominated Doug Kampman from Local 8

Doug Kampman accepted the nomination.

Wagner thanked the candidates for their participation and advised they have all been voted in by acclamation.

MISCELLANEOUS

Dion Elliott raised a CBC story regarding giving people time off to get vaccines to encourage people to get vaccinated.

The meeting adjourned for the day at 4:15 p.m.

DAY TWO - MARCH 19, 2021**CALL TO ORDER**

President Brown called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

General Secretary Hugh Wagner introduced GSU legal counsel Ronni Nordal who has been working with the union for 20 years.

ADOPTION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Brown asked if there was further discussion or questions regarding the union's financial statements. Hearing none, Wagner said delegates should always feel free to ask any questions that arise regarding GSU's financials statements.

MOVED BY Leon Martineau seconded by Lynn Shaw that GSU's 2020 audited financial statements be approved and included in the 2020/2021 annual report to members.

Carried

MOVED BY Ryan McNabb, seconded by Dave Barrett that the 2021 GSU operating budget estimate presented by the general secretary be approved. Carried

ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT TO MEMBERS

MOVED BY Barb Healey, seconded by Gaylyn Kennedy that the draft annual report to members, as amended at this convention, be approved for distribution to GSU members by posting it on the GSU website for viewing and downloading. Carried

GSU CONSTITUTION

MOVED BY Dave Barrett, seconded by Darryl Knelsen that section 9.9 of GSU's constitution be amended to read:

"9.9 A vote on any question at a membership meeting shall be by show of hands or voice, except in the case of election of officers when voting shall be by secret paper or electronic ballot. A majority of fifty percent plus one of the votes cast shall be required to carry or defeat any motion or elect an officer. Only members in good standing shall be allowed to vote."

Carried

MOVED BY Bruce Thompson, seconded by Sharlene Tetrault that section 9.12 of GSU's constitution shall be amended to read:

"Local membership meetings shall be held at least three times annually or on the call of the Local President or any five members of the Local."

Carried

MOVED BY Dave Barrett, seconded by Derek Webb that Appendix A (Local 1) of GSU's constitution be amended by including Sub-Local 1.11 comprising the members of GSU working in Strongfield. Carried

MOVED BY Scott Jordison, seconded by Gaylyn Kennedy that Appendix D (Local 15) of GSU's constitution be amended by moving Aberdeen, Colonsay, Delisle, and Viscount from Sub-Local 15.2 to Sub-Local 15.3 and by deleting Central Butte from sub-Local 15.3.

Carried

MOVED BY Ryan McNabb, seconded by Jordan Jeffersen that Appendix H – Internal Complaint Procedure, section 1. be amended to include email. Carried

MOVED BY Dave Barrett, seconded by Dion Elliott that GSU's administration review the Union's Harassment Policy and Internal Complaint Procedure to determine whether they are consistent with current requirements and to recommend changes to the policies at the next meeting of the Joint Executive Council. Carried

MOVED BY Lynn Shaw, seconded by Brent Pelechaty that the incoming Executive Committee examine GSU's constitution in relation to representation on the Joint Executive Council to determine whether any adjustments to Locals' representation are required. Furthermore, that this examination be conducted and completed for consideration at the 2021 semi-annual meeting of the Joint Executive Council. Carried

MISCELLANEOUS

MOVED by Craig Reiman, seconded by Jim Brown that GSU support any local pursuing of sick leave benefits and group benefits coverage for all workers, regardless of age. Carried

MOVED by Michelle Houlden, seconded by Kaylee Krueger that Grain and General Services Union shall undertake to amend its communications, policies, and where possible, collective agreements to include gender-neutral language wherever possible. This is to reflect the reality that there are many different ways an individual can identify themselves as and that gender-specific language can be exclusionary. Carried

Ken Helmkey raised the issue of arbitrary hiring decisions that are the result of but not limited to favouritism and ageism, ultimately resulting in marginalization, low morale, and other negative outcomes for employees. He also wanted employers be notified of possible systemic abuse in hiring process which undermines and belittles career achievement. Helmkey also raised his desire for companies to follow the guidelines they promote - such being a team player and having a respectful workplace.

After considerable discussion, Wagner said that many good issues have been raised, and rather than put together a hasty resolution that may fall short of the mark, perhaps table it to work on and bring back to the Joint Executive Council's fall meeting. Specifically, the recommended resolution to work on would be that GSU develop a policy to promote fairness and equity in employment practices with all the employers it bargains with.

Sheila Tran requested that information be prepared on the Defense Fund so people know what it does and how much it costs. Tran offered the examples of how much Local salary is, how much would be paid in benefits, things (if any) a group actually must do when on strike, how much would that would cost us, etc.

Wagner said the accounting process keeps track of what each local pays in over time. What a local receives after their contributions is a loan to be repaid with terms subject to negotiation

with Defense Fund Directors. Wagner added that in his estimation, once a local was on strike for over a month, they are fighting for their lives.

MOVED by Sheila Tran, seconded by Michelle Houlden that GSU administration develop potential scenarios around impact and costs of strikes and lockouts that would draw on the GSU Defense Fund, giving a number of examples of average wages, costs, etc. in a hypothetical bargaining dispute situation. Carried

MOVED by Jim Brown, seconded by Brett North that Michelle Houlden and Steve Torgerson replace retiring member Brett North and retiring GSU staff member Dale Markling on board of directors of GSU Holdings, Inc. Carried

Wagner advised that in acknowledging long-time and dedicated service to the union by awarding lifetime memberships, there are a number of departures and retirements where we have not yet filled that obligation.

MOVED by Michelle Houlden, seconded by Cindy Manahan that past GSU president/vice-president Carolyn Illerbrun, retired staff member Dorothy Merk, former GSU president and staff member Lawrence Maier, and long-serving member Dennis Piasta, long serving member and union officer Brett North, and former member and current staff member Dale Markling be made honorary lifetime members of Grain and General Services Union.

Carried

Wagner indicated each will be presented with a plaque, and that in the fall when we have our Joint Executive Council meeting, the SFL convention, or other gatherings of members and officers, we will have a retirement reception.

OATH OF OFFICE

The newly elected officers took the Oath of Office.

ADJOURNMENT

Wagner congratulated the elected officers and thanked convention delegates for their participation.

Brown seconded Wagner's appreciation. In closing, he thanked everyone for participating in this new convention format and added that while he wished we could have been together in person and got to know fellow delegates from different sectors, he was pleased with what had been accomplished.

The convention adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

President

General Secretary

Attachments:

GSU Financial Statements