

AFT 2121 Special Executive Board Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2020, Virtual Meeting, 4:00-5:00 pm

Present: Mary Bravewoman, Kathe Burick, Dayna Holz, Tim Killikelly, Wynd Kaufmyn, Alisa Messer, James Tracy, Yvonne Webb, Jenny Worley; Staff: Chris Hanzo, Athena Waid

Absent: Joe Berry, Patricia Nunley

Item
1. Call to Order
<p>2. Special Meeting Topic: Plan for AFT 2121 Elections during COVID-19 Crisis</p> <p>On March 16, 2020, the AFT Election Commission (Chair Kathleen Duffy, Craig Kleinman, Ann Vanderslice) recommended that AFT 2121 postpone the April/May Union elections until this Fall, 2020 due to the COVID-19 emergency.</p> <p>Draft proposed course of action:</p> <p>A. Executive Board, in emergency meeting via Zoom, considers recommendation to suspend/postpone election.</p> <p>Reasons: (1) Commission does not believe the election would receive “the attention it deserves under the current circumstances.” (2) Health and safety of those staff and members involved in handling of a mail ballot election; (3) shelter-in-place restrictions.</p> <p>B. If EB recommends, first order of business at the March 24 General Membership meeting (to be conducted by Zoom) will be to (1) waive relevant AFT 2121 Constitution provisions governing timing of election and terms of office; and (2) suspend election and postpone until Fall, 2020, and extend of all terms of office until end of month following Fall 2020 election.</p> <p>C. Option: prior to March 24, we poll the membership on the question of whether to postpone the election until the Fall. Results presented at March 24 GM meeting.</p> <p>D. If Executive Board approves this course of action, we immediately inform the membership of the recommendation, and of the fact that the postponement will be voted by the General Membership at the March 24 meeting.</p> <p>The virtual General Membership Meeting scheduled for March 24 will proceed as planned. Additional concerns discussed:</p> <p>A. Regarding safety of handling ballots: concern about Election Commission members coming into office to count ballots, risks due to handling hundreds of envelopes that have been touched and licked.</p> <p>B. Risk of minimal participation by members who have other, pressing concerns due to this crisis and shift in work.</p>

- C. Reassigned time for officers: if leadership elections take place in fall semester, incoming and outgoing officers with significant reassigned time may not be able to change teaching load mid-semester. If we hold elections in fall, officers would need to take office in January 2021.
- D. It is likely that things will not be back to “normal” in fall, and we may face significant unforeseen challenges that would not make the election any easier to facilitate.
- E. If we have the election in spring as scheduled, we may want to extend the nomination deadline.

An alternative, online election method was discussed. We received recommendations from CFT for two companies that provide electronic voting platforms that have been used by other unions in elections: Ballot Point and Simply Voting. Jenny has received a quote from Ballot Point and is waiting on a quote from Simply Voting.

Ballot Point is able to provide a service where they mail ballots to members with instructions for how to vote remotely. Votes are anonymous and secure, and there is capacity to have an observer from the union, which would be one or more members of our Election Commission. AFT constitution does not allow email voting, but this company has worked with AFT in the past to comply via mailed ballots with online voting.

In the past, members have expressed serious concerns about online voting. If we proceed with an electronic voting platform, it is with these concerns in mind, while recognizing the unique nature of our current situation. If we proceed with online elections, the format will only apply to the current cycle of leadership elections and will not affect Precinct Rep elections, already rescheduled for fall, which have less stringent ballot requirements and can be conducted through interoffice mail.

m/s/p Allocate up to \$5,000 for election for contract with electronic ballot service.

m/s/p Recommend to Election Commission that we move to an electronic platform for this election and proceed according to the approved timeline.

m/s/p If the Election Commission approves the use of an electronic platform, the President, in consult with the Election Commission and Executive Director, is authorized to choose one of the two recommended vendors and purchase the service.

3. Adjournment