

United Teachers of Dade
2200 Biscayne Boulevard
Miami, Florida 33137

Council of Building Stewards
April 17, 2008

Approved Minutes

This regular meeting of the Council of Building Stewards was called to order by President Aronowitz at approximately 6:00 p.m. Mr. Mike Sharpiro led the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Aronowitz announced to the Council of Stewards the passing away of Ms. Leslie Berry, a very dedicated UTD employee who will be missed.

Adoption of Agenda: It was moved by Esther Garvett and properly seconded to adopt the agenda as presented.

Approval of Minutes: It was moved by Thomas Nunn and properly seconded by Esther Garvett to approve the minutes of February 21 and March 20, 2008 as presented. Motion carried.

Agenda

Solstice Dental Plan presentation: Art Pappas and Yami Hernandez

Mr. Pappas informed the Council of Stewards that STARMARK has changed its name to Solstice and has partnered with United Health Care. They are now offering a PPO and a pre-natal dental program. Ms. Hernandez reported that members who had STARMARK benefits before do not need to re-enroll unless they want to make changes to the plan.

President Aronowitz reminded the Council that this is a members-only benefit. If Stewards need further information, they are asked to call Ms. Yami Hernandez.

President's Report: Karen Aronowitz

Health Insurance Update

President Aronowitz acknowledged the Stewards that had participated at the School Board meeting, and those who participated at the Rally for their tremendous effort in the health insurance issue.

A video regarding the health insurance crisis was shown to the Council of Stewards, including a clip from yesterday's School Board meeting, when Dr. Solomon Stinson announced that the benefits would stay the same this year. President Aronowitz reminded Stewards that she is anticipating an increase in the cost of insurance for 2009.

President Aronowitz reminded the Council of Stewards that since this is a tentative agreement, bargaining has been scheduled for next week and members of the UTD bargaining unit must ratify the agreement. Stewards are urged to ask colleagues to vote yes on the Ratification and ask those who are not members to join – we must show the School Board that we stand together.

Discussion followed by Stewards.

Legislative Update

President Aronowitz reported that things do not look good in Tallahassee, the NBCT funding has been decimated by 45%, and to make matters worse the Taxation Budget Reform Commission, most of whom were appointed by former Governor Jeb Bush, can place anything on the ballot including class size and they have placed a voucher bill that expands vouchers. President Aronowitz reiterated that education is on the chopping block and the more categoricals we have from Tallahassee the worst it is for bargaining.

President Aronowitz reminded the Council of Stewards that Dr. Crew had announced at the School Board meeting that he was not extending DROP. Mr. Joe Minor met with M-DCPS officials regarding DROP, and he was told that Dr. Crew's comments at the School Board meeting were meant for administrators – but it is Joe's recommendation for people to be aware, because there will be very few rehires. President Aronowitz also reported that UTD will be involved in any decisions regarding reduction in force with M-DCPS and Stewards will be informed.

Discussion followed by Stewards.

Zone/Lift Initiatives

President Aronowitz asked Stewards to review the information in the packets regarding the new LIFT Learning/Leader in Feeder Teams) initiatives. President Aronowitz reported that only one school will have an extended day, which is West Homestead Elementary School and the they will follow the regular contract day except for five days of professional development before regular school begins and teachers will be paid their daily rate for each of the those five days.

President Arnowitz also stated that we are still in negotiations with the district and UTD will be holding a special meeting for Zone/LIFT schools in a couple of weeks in order to keep everyone informed.

Secretary/Treasurer's Report: Fedrick C. Ingram

Secretary/Treasurer Ingram informed the Council of Stewards that on Monday, UTD's proposed Budget for 2008-2009 will be mailed, and Stewards will have ample time of review the budget prior to the May meeting, at which time the Budget is officially presented to the Council. Any questions regarding the Budget should be directed to either Ms. Gladys Podnar at UTD, or Mr. Ingram.

Financial Management Review

Mr. Ingram reviewed the Financial Management Review as of February 29, 2008 and Year-to-Date report with the Council of Stewards. Mr. Ingram reported that we currently have 18,314 members, and we currently own the back lot. We now have the certification of the deed to the lot which is insured and we now have to maintain the lot.

President Aronowitz also informed the Council of Stewards that some of the monies received from the Tornillo settlement will be used to offset the costs of maintaining the lot. President Aronowitz also stated that since what we owe AFT is at zero interest we are not in a pressured situation to hold a "fire-sale" on the lot, and we will try to hold on to the land for now. We are currently renting space and we will see what we do in the future.

Discussion followed by Stewards.

First Vice President's Report: Artie Leichner

Deferred Pay Issue

First Vice President Leichner reported members had concerns that their deferred pay plan could not carry them through the entire summer. Therefore, Artie has been meeting with the district to address this issue. Mr. Leichner reported that in order to have input from all of our members, we will be sending out an email with a survey to members regarding how they feel about this issue. Mr. Leichner further explained that according to the IRS new ruling, no changes can be made during the work year once a deferred plan has been chosen – so members must keep this in mind.

President Aronowitz reported that this would be a members-only survey and the computer will filter out non/members answers; when we do surveys, we are asking for input from the membership to the leadership.

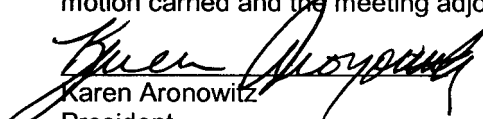
Target Tallahassee Update

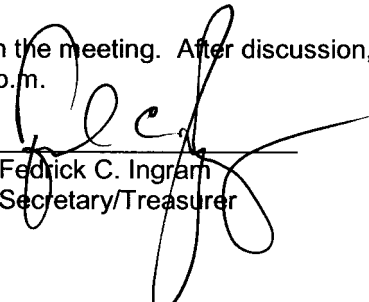
Mr. Leichner stated that twenty-five UTD members had participated in Target Tallahassee this year and it was a very distressing experience –with the budget cuts. Mr. Leichner took this opportunity to acknowledge the Stewards who participated in Target Tallahassee. Mr. Leichner reported that he is looking into filing an adequacy lawsuit in order to fund public education in this State.

Discussion followed by Stewards.

Adjournment

It was moved by Esther Garvett and properly seconded to adjourn the meeting. After discussion, motion carried and the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.


Karen Aronowitz
President


Fredrick C. Ingram
Secretary/Treasurer