

## AFT Local 6262 – Executive Board Minutes

Location: Zoom

December 3, 2022

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**Attendees:** Dan Portillo, Warren Heaton, Aaron Silverman, John Francis, Frank de los Reyes, and Pete Virgadamo

**Absent:** Jessica Small

**Guests:** 67

President Dan Portillo said that due to the extraordinary nature of this meeting, the Executive Board will dispense with its traditional format - this the meeting will be entirely devoted to strike issues and will not be recorded. Vice President Warren Heaton, while not feeling well, agreed to answer questions from the adjuncts with the help of Vice President Aaron Silverman. To protect the identity of the adjunct speakers, Secretary Pete Virgadamo decided to only give their initials and in some cases, to identify them only with an “XX” or their departments with an “XX.” Also, instead of providing an outline of what the adjuncts say, their words will be in complete sentences.

President Dan Portillo started the meeting at 2:08 and welcomed our guests, stating that we are clearly in uncharted territory. Aaron Silverman spoke next, saying that the length of our strike will be indefinite or until COC offers us a pay raise of more than 0.00% for 2020/2021. Warren Heaton then spoke about the strike authorization vote, saying that 74% of those who voted approved of the strike and that the total number of who voted will remain confidential to protect the identity of those who voted.

At that point Dan opened the meeting to questions from the adjunct faculty.

SH – Thanked the Negotiating Team and the AFT leadership for their hard work, then asked if COC can fire those adjuncts who do not submit grades?

Warren – No, we are protected by state and federal laws; there can only be repercussions for egregious behavior. You can turn in “interim grades,” that is, grades earned up to Week 15, as per instructions of Vice President Omar Torres of COC.

SS – So it’s okay as long as our grades are on Canvas?

Warren – Yes, that is all that is required.

Dan – Should we submit our grades by Monday, December 5<sup>th</sup>?

Warren – Yes, that is the best scenario; do not hold the grades hostage.

LB – If we fail to meet our contractual obligations, can we be terminated?

Warren – No, you are protected by law.

Aaron – Keep in mind that the strike vote data is confidential. It was held in mid-October, giving COC ample time to reply – but they did not.

KO – What does ‘interim grades’ mean? My final is a XX in my XX class, which is a state requirement and students need to be in class for it.

Aaron – The idea of ‘interim grades’ comes from COC, not from AFT.

Warren – Also, COC has stated that there are enough substitutes to fill all the classes. COC is responsible for completing the contract hours and will proctor Final Exams as well as other forms of final projects.

HA – What if there are not enough subs?

Warren – COC says there are enough.

HA – Can students hold it against me?

Warren – Notify your students in advance. COC is asking full-time faculty to sub. We care deeply about our students and it is COC that put us into this corner with their high administrative salaries and low wages for adjunct faculty. Dr. Van Hook earns over \$500,000 and about twenty administrators earn over \$250,000 whereas a 1% pay increase would cost COC only about \$150,000. But Dr. Van Hook and Business Services are strongly against the part-time faculty.

XX – What if there is no Final Exam ready for the students?

Warren – Then COC’s subs will have to design a Final Exam.

Dan – Students are expressing their unhappiness with possible bad Final Exams from subs. It is up to COC to get this over with and get back to the bargaining table.

XX – My assignment is a dual enrollment with a high school and the students are minors. Yet they have been supportive; which is uplifting. Yet what am I to do?

Warren – COC is responsible for providing subs to all classes, including dual-enrollment ones. COC says the students in a class should notify the college if an adjunct instructor is absent.

Warren – Said that VP Aaron Silverman was interviewed yesterday by the local newspaper, *The Signal*. He noted that students are shocked to learn that we are part-time teachers.

RA – Why strike in the Finals Week?

Warren - This process started two years ago and COC has done nothing. Also, much of our 'free work' comes at the end of the semester. COC believes we adjuncts are completely replaceable.

HA – Retaliation can be subtle, such as in evaluations...

Warren – We have dramatically strengthened the evaluation process and class assignment procedures. Between Aaron and our lawyers, we have never lost a grievance. He also praised Vice President Diane Fiero of COC who has protected adjuncts when there has been is a contract violation that has led to a grievance.

AL – How long will this strike last?

Aaron – The duration is up to COC.

Warren - When COC comes back to the bargaining table. COC does not have to put the students through this.

WH – Should students go to class?

Warren – Yes, and report to COC if there is no teacher.

DP – What if it is not possible to submit my grades by Monday?

Warren – Get your grades in as soon as possible.

Aaron – There is a long queue for adjuncts to speak.

LB – Will sections be cut in the future? They have already cut all the xx class – will there be a massive blowback?

Warren – COC needs to take us more seriously and value us more.

AP – What about emails from my chair and [strike] plans after the holidays?

Warren – First, ignore inquiries from your department chair. We are not required to answer questions from COC. The length of the strike is up to COC and can be unlimited. Take it day-by-day; and remember that Spring '23 assignments are protected.

KO – What will AFT accept to end the strike?

Warren – COC is well aware of what needs to be done. He offered several hypothetical solutions, saying that COC can even end it before Monday.

SH – Her department chair emailed her and requested that adjuncts be subs.

Warren – There is no need to answer that email and it is a violation of labor law. Email it to AFT and we will add it to the list of violations.

XX – My chair keeps asking me if I will show up and there is an email from Vice President Rian Medlin about the retro checks for the 5.26% raise, with the promise of a big raise in the future.

Warren – That 5.26% is only 1.9% over the state's COLA. AFT asked for 6% for 2020/2021 and 6 % for 2021/2022. Keep in mind that this is not about money, it's about power.

MF – I keep getting questions from my chair.

Warren – Do not answer them; the questions are an Ed Code violation.

Warren – When you have made your decision to strike, share it with your students.

Frank – Post the grades the students have earned up to this point.

AH – Adjuncts have conflicting and intense feelings about striking and the Winter Session classes.

Warren – Sign your contract for your Winter Session classes and await events.

LB – Are Spring '23 classes still protected?

Warren – Yes. He also spoke about the numbers of instructors at COC: 493 are adjuncts and 192 are full-timers, which means we are about 70% of the total faculty.

[PV – There were several quick questions about the new Health Care law.]

Warren – In regard to the Health Care law, he has no faith that COC will participate in the new law.

Warren – The system is clearly broken and we [at COC] are the poster child for adjunct abuses.

Dan – In regard to the picket line for Monday, we will meet at 8 am in front of the PAC Building, we have about 20 strike signs, and wear blue and red if you can.

XX – Can we change the grades later? Can we undo the grades of the subs?

Warren – That may not be fair to the students but we have to give that question more thought and we'll check with our attorney.

XX – Have we ever gone on strike before?

Pete – No, and in my 20 years with AFT, I have never seen COC so hard-headed at the negotiating table with our pay raise proposals, yet so willing to pay thousands of dollars to union-busting lawyers.

Warren – [Gave a last statement.] Do NOTHING.

The Open Session of our meeting ended at 4:10 pm.