

May 25, 2023

AFSCME Local 696 General Membership Meeting
Unofficial Notes by Evelyn Flint and J. Matthew Catron

- 5:50: Matt enters
- 5:52: President Dinkins announces the meeting is on the 6th floor because another Local is using room 5-1
- 6:00: No sign-in sheet list available. Matt counts 20 members.
- 6:04: Members looking around confused towards sign in table. No sign in sheet announced yet, but executive board members start lining up.
- 6:05: No meeting minutes, handouts, information.
- 6:06: Small impromptu Tina Turner sing-a-long up front.
- 6:08: Definite line at sign-in table even though no sign-in sheet announcement made yet.
- 6:10: Sign-in sheet is now available.
- 6:12: Evelyn signs in at #12.
- 6:15: President Dinkins apologies for elevator confusion.
- 6:16: President Dinkins announces there will be a special guest speaker.
- 6:17: Vice President Nathaniel Brown hands out thick packet of informational materials relating to AFSCME District Council 33 and Local 696. This packet does not include meeting minutes or treasurer's reports.
- 6:21: Evelyn estimates 37 people with a headcount.
- 6:22: Business Agent Mark Weaver apologizes for confusion related to entering the room- most of the 6th floor is having the carpets scrubbed.
- 6:23: Audrey blesses the food in Christian prayer.
- 6:26: Matt signs in at #28.
- 6:30: The card we received in the mail stated the meeting would begin at 6:00. The meeting is now 30 minutes behind schedule.
- 6:32: 35 names on sign-in sheet.
- 6:33: District Council 33 President Ernest Garrett enters the room.
- 6:37: President Anthony Dinkins invites non-Christian prayer. Calls for prayer for Local 696 Secretary Tori Rodgers. Former 696 President Bobby Davis invites members to donate their PTO to Tori.
- 6:39: President Dinkins invites District Council President Ernest Garrett to speak.
- 6:39: The meeting has not been called to order.
- 6:39: Garrett addresses the membership.
 - Starts with just finding out about mailers members have been receiving from the Freedom Foundation. The Freedom Foundation is a conservative union-busting firm funded by millionaires. They want to weaken unions- do not listen to them!
 - DC33 spent \$0 endorsing any candidates

- Garrett mentions solidarity with District Council 47
 - Different Councils and Locals may disagree, or have internal disputes, but when it comes to the City, we are one entity.
- DC33 is financially stable with regards to health and welfare. Invites members to talk to him about health and welfare in 2 weeks.
- Garrett says Philadelphia City employees are the poorest municipal workers in the United States. He continues that no mayoral candidate for the 2023 election would firmly promise to ensure on-time payments for workers.
- Garrett briefly mentions something about how OnePhilly is a mess.
- 6:46: A member asks Garrett why he endorsed Jeff Brown in the 2023 Mayoral Primary Race
- 6:46: Garrett explains that all DC33 officers met with the mayoral candidates for vetting. He was not impressed. The City of Philadelphia made concessions for the Philadelphia Eagles and TastyKake but still pays its employees low wages. He called Brown a “breath of fresh air.” Brown promised a subsidy “for women” for childcare.
- 6:51 Garrett expresses that a 3% raise isn’t going to do City workers any good, and goes on to explain that DC33 is in a strong position for 2024 contract negotiations. The City does not believe workers can last long in a strike
 - Garrett and the DC33 Executive Board sold a union-owned plot of land at 4700 chestnut for \$7 million dollars, then bought a certificate of deposit at a bank at 4% interest over one year.
 - Garrett conducted an audit to cut DC33 spending to save more money for negotiations
 - Garrett discusses the December 2022 rally at City Hall, calling it a “union meeting,” and how and why it was canceled- he leveraged our negotiating power to get the City to pay the healthcare bills it owed the union
 - AFSCME is the organization that directly pays the healthcare bills. The City contributes much of that money- they pay DC33, DC33 pays IBX
 - Mentioned that people still getting dropped from medical is not okay.
 - Garrett reached out to Parker, who introduced the legislation that eliminated the city’s Rule of 2- which now allows for nepotism, favoritism, racism, etc. He expresses that he doesn’t care who the mayor is, he only cares that the mayor supports workers. He explains that he and Parker were once had a close working relationship
 - Garrett explains that he believes union members can endure a decently-long strike with DC33’s current assets, something about sent over \$5 million and “that’s what you call house money” to take care of people during a strike
 - 6:58: Someone else asks about Jeff Brown again.
 - 7:01: Garrett talks about how a successful strike would require 5 weeks/3 paychecks covered for everyone.
 - Garret said to invite him back in 3 weeks Re: Health & Wellness.
- 7:00: Sharon Thorpe counts 37 members at the meeting.
- 7:02: Garrett continues speaking

- He discusses holiday and AL Day negotiations [Context: In 2021 DC33 negotiated 5 AL days instead of the previous 4]
- Garrett discusses the petition to make Eid a holiday for the state of Pennsylvania and asks members to sign
- 7:04: J. Matthew Catron asks Garrett what the deadline for the Eid petition is- he doesn't know, but will get the information to President Dinkins, who nods in agreement.
- 7:05: Garrett continues speaking
 - Garrett was appointed to Josh Shapiro's cabinet. He did not say the name of the position. [I was unable to find further information independently. -Matt]
 - Garrett discusses staffing concerns and how the City is offering bonuses to cops and prison guards. Mentions a committee with Councilmembers about retention and recruitment, \$235mil added to budget for that.
 - Garrett firmly asserts that the City must increase pay
 - Garrett explains that the City's annual budget has increased by \$235 million
 - Garrett does not want a contract signing bonus- he wants a Cost of Living Adjustment. Talks about how he never bragged about the last contract being great.
 - Garrett congratulates Darlene Booker-Jones on an award for service to the City of Philadelphia
 - City Councilperson Isaiah Thomas called for this award. Garrett refused it for himself, instead suggesting that it be given to a City Worker and texting his Executive Board to ask for nominees.
 - Garrett describes inviting politicians to come and visit City workers and refusing their photo-ops- for example, not letting them ride in the garbage trucks
 - Garrett tells a story about a South Philly man in dire financial straits as a reminder of why he's doing what he's doing
- 7:20: T.E.A.M chant.
- 7:22: Garrett thanks members for their time
- 7:22: Local 696 President Dinkins stands and begins explaining the thick packet from the beginning of the meeting. The meeting has still not been called to order.
 - Dinkins primarily reads from the packet, but makes the following emphases:
 - Make sure your insurance plan covers whatever procedure you are doing BEFORE you do it.
 - Dinkins specifically mentions dental
 - The city does not "give" holidays- unions fought for them
 - Dinkins mentions a time "when he worked for the City"- Dinkins resigned from his City position in 2016, possibly 2017. He is not a current City employee.
 - Dinkins reminds us not to get on the sick abuse list
 - If you have chronic health issues, get enrolled in FMLA
 - Reminds members to use Legal Services on 10th floor
 - William Braveman lost the election for Judge

- 7:42: Something about “we don’t really use lawyers cause we get in them books and do it ourselves”.
- 7:43 Former President Bobby Davis hands Dinkins a note. Neither of them remark on it.
- 7:43: Dinkins continues covering the packet of information.
 - Management is not your friend
 - Assert your Weingarten rights any time you are uncomfortable with a meeting with a supervisor
- 7:48: Tony gives out his cell phone number: [REDACTED] (Redacted for publication. Contact info@696rabblers.com for President Dinkins’ personal cell)
- 7:50: Member Aileen Haggerty asks how Dinkins plans to distribute this information to members who are not there. She is told “Not today” by another member, who adds, “You work with them, don’t you?” Dinkins replies that the packet will be made available on the website. Aileen asks, “what website?”. Dinkins replies, “sbu696”.
 - I believe Dinkins is referring to his campaign website, <https://sbu696.com>. This website has been down since early April, 2023.
- 7:52: Dinkins organizes ride shares.
- 7:53: Dinkins makes motion to adjourn meeting but then halts it, instead calls a second time to donate PTO to 696 secretary Tori Rodgers. He specifies that it is vacation time, not sick time.
- 7:56: Dinkins informs the membership that he is also accepting cash donations for Tori.
- 7:57: Motion to adjourn
- 7:57: Meeting adjourns