

Local 696 Constitution



Departments of Finance
and
Library Employees

AFSCME
District Council 33
affiliated with
AFL-CIO

Bobby C. Davis, President
Lillian A. Randolph, Business Agent

Approved July 9, 2013

CONSTITUTION FOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA,
DEPARTMENTS OF
FINANCE AND LIBRARY EMPLOYEES
LOCAL 696

PREAMBLE

Workers organize labor unions primarily to secure better wages and better working conditions.

We believe that they also organize in order to participate in the decisions which affect them at work. One of the fundamental tenets of democratic government is the consent of the governed. Unions are an extension of that idea.

To these principles and idea [sic] we hereby dedicate the efforts of Local 696, AFSCME, AFL-CIO.

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this organization shall be Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Departments of Finance and Library Employees Local 696 of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

ARTICLE II

Affiliations

The local union shall be affiliated with Philadelphia-Eastern Pennsylvania Public Employees District Council #33 of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, the Pennsylvania, AFL-CIO, and the Philadelphia Council of the AFL-CIO.

ARTICLE III

Objectives

The objectives of Local 696 shall be:

- A. To promote the organization of workers in general and public employees in particular.
- B. To promote the welfare of the membership and to provide a voice in the determination of the terms and conditions of employment: we are committed to the process of collective bargaining to achieve this end.
- C. To promote and vigorously support all legislative action and political means to achieve collective bargaining for all organized public employees.
- D. To cooperate with other labor organizations to achieve the objective of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organization.

Article IV

Membership and Dues

Section 1. All employees of the Departments of Finance and Library of the City of Philadelphia, and parking meter collections employees of the Philadelphia Parking Authority are eligible for membership in this local union, subject to the requirements of the Constitution of the International Union.

Section 2. An applicant for membership shall sign an application which reads as follows:

“To the City of Philadelphia— You are hereby authorized and empowered to withhold from my earnings, union dues as prescribed from time to time by the District Council #33 of American Federation of State, County, and Municipal

Employees, AFL-CIO, which money you shall pay over to the Treasurer of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, District Council #33. This power is binding in accordance with the Agreement, any supplement or addition there-to and the ordinance relating thereto.

Section 3. Membership dues shall be payable monthly in advance to the local treasurer and in any event shall be paid not later than the 15th day of the month in which they become due. Any member who fails to pay their dues shall be considered delinquent, and upon failure to pay dues for two consecutive months shall stand suspended. Provided, however, that any person who is paying his/her dues through a system of regular payroll deduction shall for so long as he/she continues to pay through such deduction method, be considered in good standing.

Section 4. The bi-weekly membership dues of all locals affiliated with District Council 33 shall be nineteen dollars (\$19.00) per member.

ARTICLE V

Meetings

Section 1. Regular meetings of this local shall be four (4) in number per year and shall be held on the third Thursday of March, May, September, and November respectively.

Section 2. Special meetings may be called by the local president, a majority of the local executive board or by $\frac{1}{4}$ of the membership. Notice for a special meeting must contain a specific agenda.

Section 3. Meetings shall be held when a quorum of fifty (50) members are present. If quorum is not met, meeting becomes informational only.

ARTICLE VI

Officers, Elected Offices, Nominations, and Elections

Section 1. The officers of Local 696 shall be a president, business agent, vice president, treasurer, and secretary. In addition to the officers, seven at-large executive board members shall be elected to the executive board of Local 696. These 12 shall constitute the local union executive board. There shall also be elected three trustees and two sergeants-at-arms who shall not be members of the executive board. In addition, steward/delegates shall be elected at-large; the number of steward/delegates shall be based on the ration of one (1) delegate per fifty (50) members.

Section 2. All elected positions shall be for a term of three (3) years beginning in 2014.

Section 3. Nominations for offices shall be made at a special general membership meeting in 2014 and every three (3) years thereafter. Fifteen days' advance notice shall be given to the membership prior to nominations.

Section 4. The president shall appoint an election committee at the November general membership meeting. The first meeting shall be in December. No candidate for office shall serve on the election committee.

Section 5. In order to be eligible for either nomination or election to any office, a member must be in good standing for a period of at least one (1) year prior to the date on which the election is held.

Section 6. Elections for all offices shall be by secret ballot and two (2) ballots will be established, one for steward/delegate and one for all other offices. Any eligible candidate may run on both ballots. Voting will occur in the month of March and the balloting shall be so conducted as

to afford to all members a reasonable opportunity to vote. At least fifteen (15) days advance notice shall be given to the membership prior to the holding of elections.

Section 7. All matters concerning nominations and elections in this local union shall be subject to the provisions of Appendix D, entitled Elections Code, of the international Union Constitution.

Section 8. Vacancies in office shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term by vote of the executive board.

ARTICLE VII

Duties of Elected Officers

Section 1. The president shall preside at all meetings of the local union and of the executive board. He/she shall be a member of all committees. He/she shall countersign all checks drawn against the funds of the local. He/she shall appoint all chairpersons to standing committees and special committees, while filling all committees with members at large when at all possible. Each appointment must be approved by the executive board. He/she shall keep informed on all matters pertaining to the organization and shall be charged generally with the responsibility for the supervision of collective bargaining contracts entered into with the City of Philadelphia. By virtue of his/her office he/she shall be a member of the District Council 33 Executive & Health & Welfare boards and shall also be a delegate to all conventions affecting the good and welfare of this local and of which the local's due to play a part. He/she shall report to the general membership at all general membership meetings regarding the progress and standing of the local and regarding his/her official acts.

Section 2. The business agent can handle and process all grievances, but must handle all grievances from the third

level forward. He/she shall, along with the president, appoint a chief steward. He/she shall meet with all stewards monthly and report to the president all aspects pertaining to his/her position. He/she shall be a delegate to all conventions affecting the good and welfare of this local and of which the local is due to play a part. He/she shall be a member of the District Council 33 executive board and shall report on the affairs of the union coming within his/her jurisdiction at all regular and special meetings of Local 696. He/She shall report to the general membership at all general membership meetings regarding the progress and standing of the local regarding his/her official acts.

Section 3. The vice-president upon notification of the executive board shall, in the short term absence of the president or in his/her short term inability to serve, act on behalf of the president. He/She shall preside over chairpersons committee and report to the executive board all actions being taken.

Section 4. The secretary shall keep a true record of the proceedings of all membership meetings and all executive board meetings. He/She shall be responsible for notification of special and general membership meetings as well as special and scheduled executive board meetings. The secretary shall handle all official correspondence of the local.

Section 5. The treasurer shall receive and receipt for all monies of the local union. He/She shall deposit all monies so received in the name of the local union in a bank or banks selected by the executive board, and money so deposited shall be withdrawn only by check signed by the president and the treasurer or in the absence of the president by the vice-president or business agent. He/She shall keep an accurate record of receipts and disbursements and shall prepare a monthly operating statement of the financial transactions of the local and submit them at each regular meeting of the local. He/She

shall act as custodian of all properties of the local union. He/She shall at the expense of the local union and through the International Union give a surety bond for an amount to be fixed by the executive board of the local union. He/She shall pay all bills by check, which shall be countersigned by the president or in the absence of the president by the vice-president or business agent. He/She shall prepare an annual budget for approval by the executive board and general membership as a financial guideline. He/She shall at all times adhere to the guidelines set forth in the AFSCME Financial Standards Code. The Treasurer shall meet bi-weekly with the president to handle the financial obligations of the local.

Section 6. The two sergeants-at-arms shall at the meetings, determine that all persons are members and entitled to be present, and execute orders given by the president for the maintenance or order and decorum at the meetings.

Section 7. The trustee shall review all financial documents of the local and cause to make a review of all documents and holdings of the local in a secure place. The trustees shall adhere to the practices set forth in the AFSCME Financial Standards Code. He/She shall make or cause to be made at least annually, an audit of the finances of the local. Any trustee missing three (3) consecutive trustee meetings without acceptable excuse shall be automatically removed from office. (Any member on leave of absence is excluded from consecutive meeting removal process.)

Section 8. The executive board shall be composed of the president, business agent, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and seven (7) members elected at large for a period of three (3) years. The executive board shall be the **governing** body of the local union except when meetings of the local union are in session. All matters affecting the policies, aims and means of accomplishing the purposes of the local not specifically provided for in this constitution or by action of the membership at a regular or special

meeting shall be decided by the executive board. The executive board shall hold regular meetings once every month on the second Thursday except during the months of July, August, and December.

A special meeting may be called by the president or by a majority of the membership of the executive board. A majority or the **members** of the executive board shall be required for a quorum. A report from the executive board shall be **made** to the membership at the following meeting. All members of the executive board much ^[sic] be **present** in all general membership and special general membership meetings. Any member of the executive board missing three (3) consecutive unexcused executive board meetings shall be automatically removed from office. (Any member on leave of absence is excluded from consecutive meeting removal process.)

Section 9. The chief steward shall be appointed by the president and/or business agent. He/She shall report directly to the business agent. In the absence of the business agent, he/she is to report to the president. He/she shall perform other responsibilities as assigned by the business agent.

Section 10. The steward/delegates shall be at-large. They shall be members of the Local 696 steward board and delegates to District Council 33. The duties of a steward/delegate shall be to represent members in the grievance process at levels one and two. They shall work with the Business Agent to tackle on-the-job issues by developing new tactics and strategies. Third level grievance ^[sic] shall always involve the business agent; or in the absence of the business agent the president. Because of the diversity of local 696 work sites, steward/delegates may be called upon to represent members outside of their department.

Section 11. Any steward/delegate missing three (3) consecutive unexcused District Council 33 or three (3) local stewards' meetings will be removed. (Any member on leave of absence is excluded from consecutive meeting removal process.)

Article VII

Miscellaneous Provisions

Section 1. This local union shall at all times be subject to the provisions of the Constitution of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

Section 2. Except to the extent specified in this constitution, no officer of the local union shall have the power to act as agent for or otherwise bind the local union in any way whatsoever. No member or group of members or other person or persons shall have the power to act on behalf or otherwise bind the local union except to the extent specifically authorized in writing by the president of the local union or the executive board of the local union.

Section 3. The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall govern this local union in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the constitution and special rules of this local union or of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

Section 4. All charges levied against any member of Local 696 must be presented to the local's secretary and heard on the local level before submitting charges to District and/or International Levels.

ARTICLE IX

Amendments

This constitution may be amended, revised, or otherwise changed only by a vote of two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the membership voting on such proposed change and such change shall take effect only upon written approval of the International President. Proposed amendments to this constitution must be read at a regular or special meeting of the local union and read and voted on at a subsequent meeting of the local union, adequate and proper notice having been given to the membership prior to the date on which the vote is taken.

APPROVED BY:

Lee Saunders
International President

Approval Date: July 9, 2013

What Lies Behind Us
And What Lies Before Us,
Are Tiny Matters Compared To
What Lies Within Us

“Ten thousand times has the labor movement stumbled and bruised itself. We have been enjoined by the courts, assaulted by thugs, charged by the militia, traduced by the press, frowned upon in public opinion, and deceived by politicians.

But notwithstanding all this and all these, labor is today the most vital and potential power this planet has ever known, and its historic mission is as certain of ultimate realization as is the setting of the sun.”

Eugene V. Debs
1894

**PHILADELPHIA FINANCE AND LIBRARY
AFSCME LOCAL 696
3001 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104**

Notes

This document was transcribed by Evelyn Flint from an official copy of the Local 696 Constitution in 2021. It was proofread, printed, and bound by J. Matthew Catron in 2024.

Misspellings and apparent typographical errors are transcribed directly from the Local 696 Constitution, marked with [sic]. The formatting closely resembles, but does not perfectly replicate, the official Local 696 Constitution. **This is not an official document, but its information is accurate.**

It is our hope that through reading and sharing the knowledge of our Local's governing documents that you will become a labor activist within Local 696- an advocate for a more transparent, more effective Local Union.

In March 2023, Flint, Catron, and several other labor activists ran for office within Local 696 under the name, "The Rabble Rousers." Due to election interference and unfair election practices, the election was overturned, and run a second time in July. The July election was also overturned, and run a third time in November, where Flint won a seat on the Executive Board.

The November election also had a three-way tie vote for one Steward/Delegate position among Flint, Sharon Thorpe, and Deanna Jones. Thorpe withdrew from the race. A runoff election was held in December. It, too, was overturned.

The runoff rerun was held in March 2024. Jones won the Steward/Delegate race.

Flint and Jones became the first non-incumbent candidates in decades to join the ranks of Local 696 officers.

Flint, Jones, and the rest of The Rabble Rousers sought office because they perceived lack of transparency, adherence to outdated practices, and poor worker advocacy from Local 696.

You are holding this booklet because they believe that all workers should take part in the governance of the union.

The future of Local 696 is in your hands.

Supplementary Material

In addition to this booklet, it is recommended that you familiarize yourself with additional documents related to AFSCME.

- The AFSCME **International Constitution**, **Local Union Election Manual**, and **Judicial Panel Rules of Procedure** can be found at <https://afscme.org/about/governance>.



International
Constitution



Local Union
Election Manual



Judicial Panel
Rules of Procedure

- The AFSCME **Officer's Handbook** and **AFSCME Steward's Handbook** can be found at <https://afscme.org/about/governance>.



Officer's
Handbook



Steward's
Handbook

- The AFSCME **District Council 33 Constitution** can be accessed by contacting the District Council 33 President. **215-895-3300**.
- The AFSCME **Financial Standards Code** can be found at afscmetreasurer.org .



- **The Rabble Rousers** continue to maintain their website: <https://696rabblers.com>, where they can be contacted.



Additional Information

General Membership meetings for Local 696 are held on the third Thursday of March, May, September, and November respectively. In 2024, those dates are **May 16, September 19, and November 21.**

- Read how to take part in Local meetings here <https://afscme.org/about/governance>.



- **Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (RONR):** <https://robertsrules.com>.

Upcoming election years for Local 696 are **2026, 2029, 2032, and 2035.**

You now have what you need to bring about the change you deem necessary for your Union. Build coalition with your coworkers. Share this document freely. Use the contact information above to request additional copies if needed, or to meet with the workers who have begun the reformist movement.

Empower your coworkers. Empower yourself.

“I am not a Labor Leader. I do not want you to follow me or anyone else; if you are looking for a Moses to lead you out of this capitalist wilderness, you will stay right where you are. I would not lead you into the promised land if I could, because if **I led you in, some one else would lead you out.** You must use your heads as well as your hands, and get **yourself** out of your present condition; as it is now the capitalists use your heads and your hands.”

Eugene V. Debs