

Veterans Affairs Committee Meeting Notes

Meeting Date: January 30, 2009

10:30 - 11:30am

Desmond Hotel, Albany

The following members were present (X) means absent:

Tommie Babbs	William Borgstede
Gina Doty	James Faulkner (X)
Ronald George(X)	Aaron Godfrey
John Hain (X)	Richard Harding (X)
Angelika Gail Hrynda	Robert Kasprak
Michael Knee	George Mitchell
David Scholl	Norman Smellie(X)
Darryl Wood	

Guests: John Leirey (System Admin), and Ken Runyon (System Admin)

Items discussed were:

1. Veterans Day Parade in NY City: Bob Kasprak let us know that the parade was a big success. The UUP wreath was in an honorable location, for Senator Chuck Shumer's photograph was taken with it. Bob will bring the photos with him at the next DA in April to share.

2. Ken Runyon, UUP member returns from military service: Ken and Gina spoke on the phone and wrote many emails discussing problems/concerns Ken experienced returning from a 15 month deployment. Gina had him come tell his story to our committee which led to a passed resolution on this topic at this DA. Ken encountered these issues, which he spoke about:

--Enrolling in Tricare (which goes into effect after 12 mos), his spouse had problems due to the different regions Tricare is activated. Right now after 1 year on a deployment, the UUP insurance is void and Tricare takes over. It would be beneficial to have the UUP insurance cover the member until they return. It may be necessary to involve AFT, AFCLC in this matter to request legislative action for change.

--When he returned back to duty, it was not a smooth transition for him to get back to his original job, for someone else was filling his shoes in his absence. Eventually this change

occurred.

--In 2004 he deployed for 8 mos of computer training (in his field of UUP work now), and when he returned this 8 mos. wasn't counted towards his "permanent appointment track" (it was rectified due to his diligence of pushing the issue).

--There is no literature within UUP to guide military returning union members on what to do. Whenever he spoke to supervisors, SUNY, Human Resource employees/directors they all interpreted the rules of SUNY and USERRA differently.

3. Resolution Drafted and Presented at this DA: A resolution was drafted and fine-tuned by Gina Doty and John Leirey (Ken's UUP supervisor, who was at this meeting) to present to the DA on January 31st. Here are discussion points:

--There are 3 parts to this issue: what are our rights, create an educational document, and last educate all parties and enforce the regulations/laws already on the books.

--It would be beneficial for us to know how many UUP members have deployed and returned to ensure their rights were not infringed. Repair the damage once we know it has occurred.

--It would be beneficial to find out what NYSUT does for returning military members, for Ken told a story about someone he worked with that had no issues returning to their NYSUT work. NYSUT was aware of USERRA and the rights of the member.

--Ken spoke to USERRA (Uniformed Svs Employment & Reemployment Rights Act) representative named Dan out of Utica who was a huge help in Ken obtaining knowledge on his rights and having people listen. This document has been around for many years, and SUNY has adopted what it says, but Ken found out from his research SUNY did not know very much about the policies this document has nor how to enforce it. Gina will find a USERRA representative to talk to us at our April DA committee meeting so we are informed.

4. Long Island Veterans Home has 80 UUP members: Gail Hrynda let us know about the possible budget cuts the governor wants to instill involving Medicaid. If the cuts occur, it involves 80% of the vets in this home's care, and a 27% cut in the revenue in this facility. There are 5 veteran homes in the state of NY, and this is the only one with UUP members working within it.

--80 UUP members work at this facility and budget cuts most likely will affect the care these members give our vets.

--Gail made copies for all the tables at the DA to inform others of this problem.

5. Other comments: Another issue briefly discussed at this meeting was finding out if time spent in the military service can be counted to buy back. Other unions have this already, but UUP does not. There are different types of veterans now, and the laws often speak only about the Vietnam era veteran. They should continue to be included, but there are other campaigns since Vietnam (Desert Storm, Grenada, and now).

The meeting adjourned at 11:35am. Our next meeting is set already for Friday, April 24, 2009 10:30am - noon.

BLUE: annotates "action" item

Meeting notes taken by: Gina Doty, co-chair

(any corrections, contact Gina)