



BUFFALO NEWSPAPER GUILD

The Frontier Reporter

Winter 2021/22

2021 was a tumultuous year, challenging but filled with accomplishments

By Sandy Tan, Guild President

At some point, I'm sure we've all felt that the oppressive gloom of 2021 might last forever. As Guild president and as a reporter, there were many days when I had a front-row seat overlapping waves of bad news. I was writing about the Covid health crisis and working with fellow bargaining team members to negotiate the toughest Guild contract negotiations of our careers.

And just when we seemed to wrap things up, Alden Global Capital, "destroyer of newspapers," tried to take over our parent company, Lee Enterprises.

Do I wish I had an easier year? Of course.

But looking back, I also feel tremendously grateful and proud. Grateful to be part of a team that managed to accomplish so much under such difficult circumstances, and proud to know that I, alongside smart and committed union colleagues, managed to meet some of the greatest challenges our union has ever faced.

We more than held our own. Consider all the Guild has accomplished since the fall of 2020.

Over the course of 10 months, our union brainstormed, researched and negotiated against a new corporate owner looking to dismantle core pillars of our union contract. We reached out to the community in ways we'd never tried before. And we succeeded.

We launched paid social media campaigns, contracted with a public relations adviser, convened a digital jurisdiction subcommittee, pitched stories to Poynter and other online journalism news outlets, staked yard signs, purchased two digital billboards -- one down the street from The Buffalo News and one that was mounted to a truck circling Lee Enterprises' headquarters. We clipped fluorescent signs on our monitors. We launched call-in campaigns and a petition drive that gathered more than 1,800 signatures and hundreds of comments.

We Zoomed our brains out. We spent thousands of dollars and were committed to spending thousands more.

Through the work of our Guild Alumni Chapter, we solicited statements of support from community, labor and elected officials, including State Assembly members

and senators, countywide elected officials, and the Western New York Area Labor Federation. Even Congressman Brian Higgins and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer weighed in.

And we did all this work in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ultimately, we negotiated a new contract that provided raises for all, with our lowest-paid members seeing some of the biggest gains. We safeguarded important retirement benefits and job security language. We introduced new contract terms that promote journalism ethics in a digital age, promote diversity and protect against discrimination.

Did we make compromises in the end that could result in people leaving The Buffalo News? Sadly, yes. Did we give everything we had to secure the best possible deal to keep The Buffalo News a place where someone can build a career?

We did.

Our mobilization work last year didn't end with us. The Buffalo Newspaper Guild played a key leadership role in building the mobilization strategy for the Unions of Lee Enterprises, 12 unions at Lee-owned newspapers, who banded together to fight Alden's bid to takeover Lee Enterprises -- an effort that may be resurrected again in the future.

Beyond mobilization and negotiations, we worked through the challenges of keeping our members informed at a time when so many of us remain separated. We continued to meet the bread-and-butter responsibilities of addressing employee concerns, meeting with management to ensure that contract violations are avoided or addressed, and welcoming new employees.

If we could successfully navigate the challenges of 2021, we can face anything. I have been buoyed by the many messages of support and appreciation from Guild members who recognize what we managed to achieve in the face of so much adversity.

It takes a lot of people to accomplish so much, and I hesitate to name individuals because so many played a role. But I am compelled to thank our full-time Guild administrator, Kim Leiser; vice presidents Aaron Besecker and Rachel Lenzi; and bargaining team members Mike McAndrew, Diana Gawron and Joan Portman. I cannot adequately convey here how important their work and outsized commitment has been to the Guild this past year.

We learned many important lessons in 2021 that will serve the Guild well in the future.

One of those lessons is, we need to raise our profile in the community. We all need to be evangelists for our own cause. We need people to understand why our union matters. Because when the going gets tough, we'll need the community to stand with us.

We also need a steady stream of new energy, new perspectives and new ideas.

While I never take for granted the support and faith our members have placed in the current leadership team, I would also say that if you think there is no greater role for you to play, or that you lack the experience to meaningfully contribute, you would be wrong. This is your Guild. However strong or weak it is depends on you.

In the coming months, engaging more Guild members in the leadership and support of our union will be a top

priority of mine. I expect to see a changing of the guard this time next year. My second term as Guild president expires at the end of December. In fact, all officer positions will be up for election. Vacancies also exist on the Executive Committee and other subcommittees. I encourage anyone curious to learn about how they can make a difference to please contact me at santan716@gmail.com.

Some leadership reshuffling has already begun due to employee departures and other work priorities. Within the last few months, Aaron, who previously served as vice president of grievances and contract compliance, transitioned to vice president of mobilization and communication, and reporter Steve Watson slid into the role of Guild secretary. Beginning this month, Hilary Osborne, the steward for Prepress, takes on the role of treasurer. Refresh Editor Scott Scanlon rounds out the team as the new vice president of grievances.

As I enter my sixth year as Guild president, I know that I and other dedicated Guild leaders have made a real difference in the lives of many. We saved jobs. We prevented exploitation and did our part to create a fair playing field for all. We have loyal members who appreciate and support our union mission. So when I say I feel grateful and proud, that's why.

Despite the new challenges that may await us in the months and years ahead, I can look back on the past 15 months and know we have the intelligence, strength and will to meet whatever comes.

Key Guild events since the spring of 2020

- May 2020 – Publisher Warren Colville announces his retirement and is replaced by Lee Enterprises' Tom Wiley.
- July 2020 – Phil Fairbanks, former Guild president, retires from The Buffalo News, remains on the Executive Committee until September 2021.
- August 2020 – Guild negotiates new contract for Tonawanda News members that provides raises and ensures future raises with rising minimum wage.
- October 2020 – Preparations begin for main contract negotiations with Lee Enterprises. Buyouts given to newsroom sports clerks and print desk employees. All sports clerks take the buyout.
- January 2021 – The News shuts down two weekly Sun papers, the Lancaster-Depew Sun and Twin Cities Sun, resulting in the layoff of three Guild members. The West Seneca Sun and Orchard Park Sun are merged into a single weekly.
- July 2021 – The newsroom goes on a two-week byline strike. The Guild bargaining team and Lee/News management reach a tentative agreement on July 31 after five months of active bargaining.
- August 2021 – Tentative agreement ratified by members in 75-1 vote. The deal results in a 5% raise over contract term; additional raises for low-wage Guild members; enhanced pension benefits; 401K contributions; permitted outsourcing of Accounting, Inside Circulation and Design Desk with enhanced severance; loss of "economic instability" job security clause; additional anti-discrimination and diversity provisions; online labeling of sponsored content.
- November-December 2021 – Alden Global Capital attempts to purchase Lee Enterprises but ultimately fails in first effort. Unions of Lee Enterprises wage collective effort to fight purchase.

Comings & Goings from The Buffalo News/Sun papers

Comings

Eric Duvall / Editorial
Katherine Fitzgerald / Editorial
Ashley Franklin / DM
Liku Gao / Editorial
Jon Harris / Editorial
Tadeo Huazo / Editorial
Andy Kapturowski Jr. / DM
Erika Rodriguez / Inside Circ
Charlie Specht / Editorial
Jacob Tierney / Editorial-Suns
Ben Tsujimoto / Editorial

Goings

Anthony Alli / DM
Jason Baum / Editorial
Melissa Bellomo / Editorial-Suns
Brandon Bradley / DM
Jonah Bronstein / Editorial
Sydney Bucholz / Editorial-Suns
Vic Carucci / Editorial
Anthony DiStasio / DM
William Doepp / DM

Rich Donaldson / Editorial
Phil Fairbanks / Editorial
Diana Gawron / Inside Circ
Sharon Gleason / Editorial
Eric Keppeler / Sun
Donna Kramer / Inside Circ
Thomas Krause / DM
Maria Kulpa / DM
Myra Logronio / DM
Felice McMillion / ABC
Keith McShea / Editorial
Nathaniel Mendelson / Editorial
Anne Neville / Editorial
Milt Northrup / Editorial
Alexander Ode / DM
Donald Ode / DM
Shauna Parkinson / DM
Jason Pomietlasz / Editorial
Ellen Przepasniak / Editorial
Jay Rey / Editorial
Lisa Thiel / Inside Circ
Matt Walker / Inside Circ
Jean Westmoore / Editorial
Thomas Woodward / DM

Next meeting

The Executive Committee will meet on Jan. 11. The committee will establish a meeting calendar for 2022 at that meeting.

Meeting Minutes

Local Meeting Minutes: Oct. 13, 2021

President Sandy Tan called the afternoon meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. Tuesday Oct., 13, 2021, via Zoom.

Vice President/Grievances Aaron Besecker informed members the grievance committee and executive committee the day before had discussed two items of concern. The first was the issue of tweets, sent from the Buffalo News account, that are sponsored content (mainly food-related) but not labeled as such in the tweet.

The Guild is raising this as an issue with the company and hopes to get its cooperation in resolving it, Besecker said. Second, Guild leaders are concerned about the outsourcing of ABC work to a Lee site in Richmond, Va. No Guild member has lost a job, but the company didn't provide notice of the work shifting out of town. The Guild plans to send a letter to The News raising its concerns about how it was handled.

Tan addressed the changes in how The News is processing expense reports, given the shift in work to Richmond. She said the Guild has heard of some members having issues in getting expense reports processed or not getting the full amount owed to them. She asked if anyone on the call has had a similar problem but no one spoke up.

Tan, filling in for Vice President for Mobilization Rachel Lenzi, said that now that The News is owned by Lee Enterprises, it's important the Guild maintain a higher profile in the community. That's why said she was disappointed with the turnout of members for the South Buffalo Labor Day Parade. She said we need member participation in activities and events now more than ever.

Tan pointed out that members may have noticed more security around The News parking lot recently. She said management wants to have more guards around to keep an eye on the parking lot, where there have been some concerning incidents. She also noted the company that has cleaned The News for about three decades lost its contract with The News and will be replaced with a new contractor.

Tan said members should keep an eye out for future offerings of Guild-branded swag, such as shirts, lanyards and face masks. Some members chimed in with their own ideas, such as Guild-branded beer in a partnership with a local brewery.

Tan also provided some guidance on retirement benefits, noting the pension enhancement won't come until Lee freezes the Guild pension. She urged members who have recently retired, or are considering retiring soon, to wait to start drawing from their pensions until the pension is frozen and the enhancements take effect. She said it also may be smarter to wait to leave The News until the pension is frozen. She also noted company 401K contributions won't begin until the pension is frozen. The amount is determined by years of service at the time the pension is frozen. And, she said, workers continue to accumulate years of service toward their pensions until it is frozen.

Tan also said the Guild is planning to hold a holiday party on Friday Dec. 3. However, following some discussion, organizers agreed to look at a Thursday night for the event as well.

Tan adjourned the meeting at 12:38 p.m.

A similar general meeting was held in the evening. It was started by Tan at 5:30 p.m. and was ended at 6:29 p.m. Forty members total attended the two meetings.

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes: Oct. 12, 2021

President Sandy Tan called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 12, 2021, on Zoom.

The executive committee has not received the minutes for its July meeting. Motion/Second/Carried Besecker/Harrington to approve the minutes of the Sept. 15 executive committee meeting.

Grievance Committee Report

Vice President/Grievances Aaron Besecker said the Guild has noticed more tweets from The Buffalo News account that aren't labeled properly as sponsored content. The food-related and recipe articles linked to in the tweets are labeled as sponsored content on The News' site but not in the tweets themselves. The grievance committee met to discuss this. Members believe the Guild is in the right on this and are optimistic this can be resolved with better labeling.

He also started a discussion about some of the changes taking place in ABC, where The News and Lee have shifted expense processing and other work to Richmond, Va. The News did not provide the four-months' notice required under the new contract. But no Guild employees lost their jobs. Other members, including Vice President/Mobilization Rachel Lenzi, raised concerns about the process to get expense reports fulfilled now. In the end, the executive committee agreed to send a letter to News management highlighting its concerns about how this change was handled.

Mobilization Committee Report

Lenzi noted the success of the happy hour held the previous week at Hofbrauhaus and said the next edition of the Frontier Reporter will mention the E.J. Mays Scholarship and include a roundup of social events, a recounting of mobilization efforts and a recap of negotiations from Tan.

President's Report

Tan said The News has added more security, including reopening the guard shack at the parking lot, in response to some recent concerning incidents in the lot.

She also pointed out The News has ended its contract with its longtime cleaning company and hired a new contractor. Tan expressed regret that workers many Guild members have gotten to know over the years will not be returning.

Tan urged Guild members to reach out to journalists they know and encourage them to apply for the many openings in the newsroom.

She said she hasn't heard anything about when all newsroom employees will have to return to the office full-time nor when the pension will be frozen. The pension enhancements won't take effect until that time.

Old Business

The bargaining team has held its first meeting to prepare for the pre-press contract negotiations but Tan said she doesn't know when bargaining with The News will begin.

Administrative Officer Kim Leiser said there's nothing new to report on contract talks for the Guild-represented independent print shops, three of which need new agreements.

New Business

Tan said the Guild should consider offering some new, Guild-labeled apparel because it's been a long time since it's had any produced for its members. There was discussion around what types of clothing or apparel would appeal to members. Leiser suggested new polo shirts because the last time the Guild offered polo shirts was for its 75th anniversary. Lenzi suggested knit caps and T-shirts. Typographical nightside steward Mark Hanover. Others suggested face masks and ID lanyards.

Members then discussed whether and when to hold a holiday party. Members agreed it was a good idea to hold one again this year after not holding a holiday party in 2020. Members tentatively settled on Friday Dec. 3 and Leiser said she would begin getting quotes from different venues, including Templeton Landing, which has hosted the past few such parties.

Tan adjourned the meeting at 6 p.m.

Attendance: President Sandy Tan, Vice President/Grievances Aaron Besecker, Vice President/Mobilization Rachel Lenzi, Treasurer and Inside Circulation steward Diana Gawron, Secretary Steve Watson, Administrative Officer Kim Leiser, District Manager steward Joan Portman, Typographical dayside steward Hilary Osborn, Typographical nightside steward Mark Hanover, Editorial delegate Scott Scanlon, Editorial delegate Mike Harrington.

Excused: Past President Phil Fairbanks, Editorial delegate Mark Sommer.

Absent: Sun co-steward Francesca Bond, Sun Newspapers co-steward James Farrell, ABC steward Alva Hill, Editorial delegate Dave Robinson, Editorial nightside steward Mike Pesarchick, District Manager alternate delegate Bob Snyder, Editorial alternate delegate Jeff Miers.

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes September 2021

President Sandy Tan called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 15, 2021, on Zoom.

Tan noted Keith McShea vacated the Guild secretary's position. Tan nominated Steve Watson from Editorial to fill the position for the remainder of McShea's term, which runs through December 2022. There were no other nominations for the post. Motion/Second/Carried Tan/Besecker to approve Watson's appointment as secretary. Tan welcomed Watson to Guild leadership.

M/S/C Leiser/Pesarchick to approve the minutes of the April 14 executive committee and the April 28 general membership meetings.

M/S/C Leiser/Sommer to approve the minutes of the May 17 executive committee and May 19 general membership meetings.

Tan said the executive committee still is waiting to receive the minutes of the June and July meetings from its former secretary.

New Business

Tan addressed two new, part-time work agreements in Editorial with former, full-time Guild members Sean Kirst and Lou Michel. Generally speaking, Tan said, the Guild objects to allowing a full-time Editorial member to work on a part-time basis unless the member retires first.

Tan then asked for the executive committee's approval of the two Editorial agreements. Administrative Officer Kim Leiser noted the two deals are done already. Tan then asked for the Guild's support of the Kirst and Michel agreements. M/S/C Sommer/Scanlon to endorse the two agreements.

Tan said the Western New York Communication Workers of America Council has asked the Guild to support a golf tournament that provides funding for its E.J. Mays Scholarship Fund. M/S/C Tan/Lenzi to approve spending \$200 for the tournament.

Tan said it's a tradition that whenever Guild members receive raises or signing bonuses in a contract, the Guild's administrative officer is granted the same raises and bonus. M/S/C Tan/Besecker to grant Leiser a 2% raise and \$1,000 signing bonus in line with the terms of the new Guild contract.

For a number of reasons, the CWA sector convention planned for Oct. 16 in New Orleans will be held as a virtual event instead of an in-person gathering, Tan said. Leiser is a delegate to the convention. Now that it is a virtual program, Tan sought approval to participate. M/S/C Besecker/Hanover approved Tan's participation in the virtual convention.

Tan noted the Guild has been setting meeting dates one month at a time for much of this past year. Tan proposed setting executive committee meetings for Oct. 12, Nov. 10 and Dec. 8 with a general membership meeting on Oct. 13. M/S/C Osborn/Gawron to approve the four meeting dates.

The executive committee then discussed the Guild's proposed budget for the 2021-22 fiscal year that begins Oct. 1.

Leiser provided an overview of what was budgeted for the 2020-21 fiscal year, which concludes at the end of September; what has been spent to date; and what is budgeted for the new fiscal year.

This leaves the Guild with total investments of about \$1.4 million and a bank balance of \$136,000, Leiser said.

The finance committee approved a \$176,827.04 budget and recommended the full executive committee approve it for the fiscal year starting Oct. 1.

M/S/C Watson/Scanlon to approve the budget and explore options for the Guild's bank balance.

The 18-month contract the Guild negotiated on behalf of the 10 members of the Typographical Unit will expire at the end of 2021, Tan said. Those negotiations also will start soon and the bargaining team includes Tan, Leiser, Typographical dayside steward Hilary Osborn and Typographical nightside steward Mark Hanover. M/S/C Besecker/Gawron to approve the members of the bargaining team (as a contingency vote in case Tan can't, on her own authority, appoint those members). Grievance Committee Report

Vice President/Grievances Aaron Besecker said the Guild has one outstanding grievance, dating back to March, in Inside Circulation, that officers thought would be addressed in bargaining but it wasn't.

The Guild is in the process of setting up a meeting with the company to discuss the situation, Besecker said. Some of it involves work that, due to Covid-19, the Guild allowed management to perform, but now that people are back in the office there's no reason for this to continue, Besecker said.

This is the only open grievance, as far as Besecker knows.

Mobilization Committee Report

Vice President/Mobilization Rachel Lenzi reviewed the Guild's efforts to use social media as part of its contract mobilization efforts. She said, within our membership, there was a good amount of engagement in the campaign, especially within Editorial, when it came to sharing posts and changing avatars. She noted 1,800 people signed the Guild's petition and the Guild website got a lot of traffic, as well. She said paying to boost the Guild's Facebook posts helped them reach a wider audience, while doing the same with Twitter posts didn't have a similar return on investment. This is a lesson learned for the next campaign, Lenzi said. This was a challenging mobilization effort because, for much of it, Guild members couldn't be together, she said.

Lenzi also noted the good turnout for the Guild picnic at Como Lake Park. This prompted discussion of whether to have another Guild happy hour at some point in the future.

Tan then noted 12 active Guild members participated in the Labor Day parade in South Buffalo. This number doesn't count the retirees and children of members who took part.

Leiser said, compared to recent parades, this was a good turnout.

Tan said the turnout was disappointing given the Guild's efforts during the contract mobilization campaign to build stronger ties with the wider community. Lenzi suggested reinforcing this point at the next general membership meeting.

Tan then asked about the status of the Frontier Reporter. Lenzi asked if the Reporter must be distributed in print form or if an electronic version is sufficient. Leiser said the Guild bylaws state the Reporter must be printed. Tan asked who had helped former Reporter editor Colin Dabkowski design the publication. Leiser said it was Editorial members Ellen Przepasniak and

Christina Wilemski. Tan said she would contact Przepasniak and she and Lenzi would prepare a plan for the Reporter in time for the next executive committee meeting.

Tan also noted the Guild spent \$25,000 on mobilization efforts this year, "which, for us, is a stunning amount of money." The last time the Guild spent this much, about a decade ago, the organization had applied for a grant from the CWA, Tan said.

Besecker added a thought on mobilizing, asking whether it would be better for messengers to try to reach the members of their messenger lists through mass text messages instead of by email. Tan thought this might be a good idea but she and Besecker wondered about the logistics of it. Osborn said she's gotten some mass texts from retail stores and the American Civil Liberties Union but she wonders, with the rise of spam calls and spam texts, whether Guild texts could make their way to members.

"That could have mixed results," Osborn said.

"It could be an opt-in thing," Tan said, with Lenzi agreeing it would be worth asking members to opt in to Guild messages. Leiser said the CWA regularly sends out political text messages.

Tan asked Leiser, Lenzi and Besecker to explore the Guild's use of text messages.

Finance Committee Report

See the earlier budget discussion. Nothing else reported.

President's Report

Tan said the company is bringing Liku Gao, a page designer, back as a temporary Guild member in Editorial.

"There's a lot going on on the hiring front," Tan said. She noted Jon Harris would join the business desk in Editorial. Watson said Harris is set to start Sept. 27, likely as the business of health care reporter.

Another full-time hire in Inside Circulation is coming, Tan said, along with some part-time district managers.

And Tan said she understands the company soon will adopt the IVR phone system, which should help employees better handle the many calls coming in from unhappy customers.

The signing bonuses included in the newly approved contract should reach members in October, Tan said. They amount to \$500 for part-time members and \$1,000 for full-time members.

Leiser read a thank you note from the family of Eugene McShea, the late father of former Guild Secretary Keith McShea, for a \$75 charitable donation the Guild made in his memory.

Old Business

The ratification vote for the new contract was 76-1.

Leiser said the Guild has spent about \$21,000 on lost time, which is money the Guild pays to reimburse The News when employees spend work hours in bargaining instead of their News duties. This figure, Leiser said, only covers lost time through June 30 and does not include the final month of bargaining.

"So the total will be much higher," Tan said.

Leiser updated the executive committee on the audit into the finances of the Typographical Unit performed by the state Department of Labor focusing on the unit's final year of existence before its union merged with the Guild. The audit was prompted by failures to file some reports on time and discrepancies within those reports, Leiser said. The filing of a terminal report brought the audit to completion, Leiser said, and all matters regarding the former typographical union are finished.

Tan adjourned the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

Attendance: President Sandy Tan, Vice President/Grievances Aaron Besecker, Vice President/Mobilization Rachel Lenzi,

Treasurer and Inside Circulation steward Diana Gawron, Secretary Steve Watson, Administrative Officer Kim Leiser, District Manager steward Joan Portman, Typographical dayside steward Hilary Osborn, Typographical nightside steward Mark Hanover, Editorial delegate Mark Sommer, Editorial delegate Scott Scanlon, ABC steward Alva Hill, Editorial delegate Dave Robinson, Editorial nightside steward Mike Pesarchick.

Excused: Past President Phil Fairbanks, Sun Newspapers co-steward James Farrell.

Absent: Sun co-steward Francesca Bond, District Manager alternate delegate Bob Snyder, District Manager delegate Latrice Carr, Editorial delegate Mike Harrington, Editorial alternate delegate Jeff Miers.

Local Meeting Minutes May 2021

President Sandy Tan called the meeting to order at noon Wednesday, May 19, 2021 via Zoom.

Vice President for Contract Enforcement Aaron Besecker said that most of the current grievances would be handled as a part of contract negotiations.

Vice President for Mobilization and Communication Rachel Lenzi thanked members for their participation in several mobilization initiatives, including social media, lawn signs and videos; she also urged that members wear Guild masks.

Tan said she has seen very early signs of progress in negotiations as a result of mobilization.

Tan discussed the mobilization committee's most recent meeting and asked for feedback from members.

She also detailed public support that the Guild was receiving.

After an update on the quote-unquote "optimization" plans that have wreaked havoc with circulation, a part-time district manager shared how this situation has stressed the DMs.

Tan adjourned the meeting at 12:57 p.m.

Approximately 25 Guild members attended the meeting.

A similar meeting with similar-sized attendance was held at 5:30 p.m.

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes May 2021

President Sandy Tan called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. Monday, May 17, 2021 via Zoom.

Secretary Keith McShea acknowledged that he owed the committee general and executive minutes for February and executive minutes for March.

Motion/Second/Carried Sommer/Gawron to approve the executive committee minutes for April.

Grievance Committee Report

Vice President for Contract Enforcement Aaron Besecker said that most of the current grievances would be handled as a part of contract negotiations.

Included among them is a grievance involving the sports pagination clerk work that the Guild contends is being done by Lee Enterprise non-Guild employees. Besecker said Lee has posted for a position which as described matches most, if not all, of the job duties formerly handled by News clerks. News clerks were all bought out in 2020.

He said that some inside circulation developments would be covered during the discussion of negotiations.

Mobilization Committee Report

Vice President for Mobilization and Communication Rachel Lenzi reported on the mobilization committee's meeting earlier today as it pertains to contract negotiations, including social media initiatives and in-office efforts.

President's Report

Tan provided an update on bargaining, which was supplemented by Administrative Officer Kim Leiser.

Old business

Tan discussed the continued problems in circulation caused by a so-called "optimization" plan by management which has led to delivery delays, the loss of several independent contractors who deliver the paper, massive overtime hours for district managers and continued and escalating frustration from subscribers.

Tan said that upper management was unaware of many of these problems until they were notified by the Guild. She said that the company said they would address the situation, and it did to some degree, increasing financial incentives for employees and posting for additional positions.

Joan Portman said that she had never seen anything like this circulation situation in her 39 years at The News. "I feel kind of sad that the situation has gotten this bad. I can't even describe it."

New business

The committee discussed what role the Guild should play, if any, regarding The News having employees who had been working remotely to return to One News Plaza.

M/S/C Tan/Lenzi to have the Guild donate \$75 to the Manatee County Food Bank in the memory of Eugene McShea.

Tan said that there would be general meetings at noon and 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday.

Tan adjourned the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

Attendance: President Sandy Tan, Vice President/Grievances Aaron Besecker, Vice President/Mobilization Rachel Lenzi, Treasurer and Inside Circulation steward Diana Gawron, Secretary Keith McShea, Administrative Officer Kim Leiser, District Manager steward Joan Portman, Editorial nightside steward Mike Pesarchick, Editorial delegate Mike Harrington, Editorial delegate Mark Sommer, Editorial delegate Scott Scanlon, Editorial delegate David Robinson, District Manager alternate delegate Bob Snyder, Typographical dayside steward Hilary Osborn.

Excused: Sun Papers steward James Farrell, Past President Phil Fairbanks.

Absent: Typographical nightside steward Mark Hanover, Editorial alternate delegate Jeff Miers.

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes March 2021

President Sandy Tan called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. Tuesday, March 9, 2021 via Zoom.

Tan and other committee members warmly welcomed James Farrell, a new executive committee representative from the Sun Papers.

There are no minutes to approve.

Grievance Committee Report

Vice President for Contract Enforcement Aaron Besecker reported on current grievances.

* The committee approved filing a grievance as a Guild member promoted to management is still doing Guild work, including answering emails.

* There is a DM issue in that The News has decided DMs will negotiate contracts — that must be bargained before it can be done: it is a unilateral change that needs to be bargained; it is also an unfair labor practice because it's been bargained before. Right now this issue is being dealt with as part of the bargaining process.

* Administrative Officer Kim Leiser spoke with TNG officer Marian Needham about our second grievance about

sponsored content online; that issue will likely be something the Guild emphasizes during bargaining.

* Management rejected the grievance over sports pagination clerk work, and the Guild is seeking more information about this.

Mobilization Committee Report

Vice President for Communication and Mobilization Rachel Lenzi provided an overview of steps being taken during bargaining, including the face masks and buttons, which members will share via photos that the Guild will put out via social media.

Lenzi and Tan were hopeful that a music video would be put together by some members.

music video hoping to put together

There will be more mobilization discussion after the bargaining update, said Tan and Lenzi.

President's Report

Tan provided an update on bargaining, including a meeting that took place yesterday.

The News delivered a presentation by two actuaries about the pension plan, while the company had several counter proposals. The Guild is in the process of hiring its own actuary. The Guild also made several counter proposals.

Old business

The committee revisited the Teledoc proposal from two meetings ago.

Leiser obtained more information from the Philadelphia group which offers the service; she sees Teledoc as being a service we offer to our part-time members. "It's essentially health-care coverage for our members," she said, noting that there are a total of 75 part-time members of the Guild. She said that it would cost \$57 per member for 12 months of coverage.

Tan noted that the only stipulation would be that if the cost of the premium goes up, it would come back before executive committee.

Motion/Second/Carried Leiser/Gawron to approve The Guild signing up for TeleDoc and approving a maximum cost of \$4,275 per year, for a maximum of 75 members at \$57 per member; and that this plan will be renewable as long as the cost does not change; the Guild will revisit TeleDoc if the rate increases.

New business

M/S/C Besecker/Lenzi to approve Leiser's attendance of a two-day virtual symposium held by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service at a cost of \$75.

The symposium covers how to prepare and build a case for arbitration, what do arbitrators look for, etc.

M/S/C Tan/McShea to set Guild executive meetings for Wednesday, April 14 and Monday, May 17 and set a general meeting for May 19 at noon and 5:30 p.m.

Tan adjourned the meeting at 6:13 p.m.

Attendance: President Sandy Tan, Vice President/Grievances Aaron Besecker, Vice President/Mobilization Rachel Lenzi, Treasurer and Inside Circulation steward Diana Gawron, Secretary Keith McShea, Administrative Officer Kim Leiser, Sun Papers steward James Farrell, District Manager steward Joan Portman, Editorial delegate Mike Harrington, Editorial delegate Mark Sommer, Editorial delegate Scott Scanlon, Editorial delegate David Robinson, Past President Phil Fairbanks.

Excused:.

Absent: Typographical dayside steward Hilary Osborn, Typographical nightside steward Mark Hanover, Editorial

nightside steward Mike Pesarchick, District Manager alternate delegate Bob Snyder, Editorial alternate delegate Jeff Miers.

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes February 2021

President Sandy Tan called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2021 via Zoom.

Motion/Second/Carried Harrington/Gawron to approve the executive minutes for December 2020 and January 2021 once typos are corrected.

Grievance Committee Report

There was no report; Vice President for Contract Enforcement Aaron Besecker was excused.

President's Report

Tan informed the executive board of a large local company who was interested in supporting the Guild in some way; the board discusses various possible methods.

Tan said she had a brief email exchange with publisher Tom Wiley, who said he would be open to a meeting with Guild members or executive committee members.

Mobilization Committee Report

Vice President for Communication and Mobilization Rachel Lenzi said the Guild would be rolling out its mobilization campaign in coordination with the start of bargaining. There would be a Twitter campaign including pinned tweets, "something that is visible and shows our solidarity." There will be weekly or biweekly mobilization activities focusing on members displaying buttons, magnets, window clings, etc. via selfie photos.

Tan said that the Guild was looking for additional members to form a mobilization committee.

Old business

Tan referenced the Guild survey results and reviewed them briefly.

Negotiation update

Tan and Administrative Officer Kim Leiser summarized the first negotiating session on Tuesday. Originally there were sessions planned for Thursday as well as the following Tuesday and Thursday, but those were called off by the Guild after management's proposals were unprecedented in size and scope.

"What we told them was, 'we need a lot more time to come up with an appropriate response,'" Tan said.

Tan said District Manager Steward Joan Portman is joining the bargaining team, replacing Besecker, which Tan said worked out well because the company has made several proposals relative to DMs.

Leiser went through all of the company's proposals, which would be disseminated to membership via an email flyer.

Tan and Leiser discussed the Guild's current proposals as well as a handful of proposals that the Guild was working on formulating.

The committee discussed the various proposals as well as mobilization.

M/S/C Fairbanks/Harrington to have the Guild spend up to \$10,000 to hire an actuary to do a separate review of the pension plan between the Guild and The News.

Members discussed the general membership meeting, which will be held Wednesday.

Tan and Phil Fairbanks discussed communicating with the Guild alumni chapter.

The teledoc proposal was tabled to next month's meeting.

M/S/C Fairbanks/Gawron to move a general meeting up to Monday, Feb. 15 at noon and 5:30 p.m., both via Zoom.

Tan said the executive committee would be called on more frequently as negotiations continue.

After a discussion, the committee decided that a bargaining bulletin update will be emailed out and not shared on the Guild website. An additional discussion was held regarding the recipients of the bargaining bulletin.

Tan adjourned the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Attendance: President Sandy Tan, Vice President/Mobilization Rachel Lenzi, Treasurer and Inside Circulation steward Diana Gawron, Secretary Keith McShea, Administrative Officer Kim Leiser, District Manager steward Joan Portman, Sun Papers steward Lian Bunny, Editorial delegate Mike Harrington, Editorial delegate Mark Sommer, Editorial delegate Scott Scanlon, Editorial delegate David Robinson, Past President Phil Fairbanks.

Excused: Vice President/Grievances Aaron Besecker.

Absent: Typographical dayside steward Hilary Osborn, Typographical nightside steward Mark Hanover, Editorial nightside steward Mike Pesarchick, District Manager alternate delegate Bob Snyder, Editorial alternate delegate Jeff Miers.

Local Meeting Minutes February 2021

Executive Officer Kim Leiser called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. Monday, Feb. 15, 2021 via Zoom.

Mobilization Committee Report

Vice President for Communication and Mobilization Rachel Lenzi said the Guild would be rolling out its mobilization campaign in coordination with the start of bargaining. There would be a Twitter campaign including pinned tweets, "something that is visible and shows our solidarity." There will be weekly or biweekly mobilization activities focusing on members displaying buttons, magnets, window clings, etc. via selfie photos.

Grievance Committee Report

Leiser said there are three active grievances: sports clerk work being done outside the unit; inside circulation work being done outside the unit; and a grievance filed over sponsored content.

The sponsored content grievance was filed for the second time; the first time for violating contract rules over labeling, which was rejected by The News; the second time for violating the contract's journalistic standards clause, which was also rejected by The News.

President Sandy Tan arrived and detailed the proposals by Lee Enterprises/The News.

"Their proposals really do amount to the biggest assault on our contract since anyone working here can remember,"

Tan went over the numerous proposals.

"I wish I could tell you this would be easy bargaining, but obviously based on these proposals, it will not be. That was a lot. We have our own set of proposals that we will be proposing."

A question and answer was held on The News' proposals. Members asked about how our contract compares to other Lee contracts; the bargaining timeline; other Lee papers' outsourcing situations; if The News realizes how outsourcing design work would affect the nightly workflow in terms of flexibility;

Leiser said the bargaining team could not go over The Guild's many own proposals because The Guild has not yet made them during bargaining.

Tan said district manager and executive committee member Joan Portman has joined the bargaining team as there are very specific DM issues brought up by company.

The next bargaining meeting will be next Thursday, Tan said.

A question was posed about the company's pension proposal and the timeline for the discussion of that during bargaining.

Tan turned to mobilization. "Just because they are introducing this tough set of proposals doesn't mean that we don't have the power to fight back."

Tan put out a call for Guild members to join the Mobilization Committee.

Approximately 25-30 members were in attendance on the Zoom call.

Further questions was posed regarding the district manager proposals and the pension proposal.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:57 p.m.

Another general meeting was held via Zoom at 5:30 p.m. at which many of the same topics were discussed.

There were approximately 30 total Guild members on the Zoom call.

Members mentioned two more incidents of freelance digital stories that Guild members construed as being traditional core coverage performed by Guild members.

After the company's proposals were explained, members asked questions regarding Lee's end game; about proposals that have yet to be fully explained by management (which are regarding outsourcing of page design work, print desk work, inside circulation work and accounting work); management's claims behind their pension proposal;

Tan said the opening proposals did not include anything in the way of health care or wages.

"They know that we have to put a contract before members that our memberships will support," Tan said.

"We are a really, really strong union," Tan said. "That's why we have near-model contract language, that's because we have been super, super unified."

Members asked questions regarding Lee consolidating work and if more work could be transferred to The News; and about how The Guild's contract stacks up against other Lee paper contracts.

Executive Committee meeting minutes: Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2021

President Sandy Tan called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2021 via Zoom.

Motion/Second/Carried Portman/Fairbanks to approve the minutes for both the executive and general meetings for November.

Grievance Committee Report

Vice President for Contract Enforcement Aaron Besecker said the grievance committee approved a grievance regarding the labeling of sponsored content. This sponsored content grievance is similar to the one filed by the Guild in October (which was rejected by News on basis of the language relative to online content vs. print), but this grievance is being filed under the journalistic standards clause.

Past President Phil Fairbanks said the journalistic standards clause has been invoked many times by the Guild during discussions with management on a variety of issues, but he could not remember a time in which it has been cited in a grievance.

Besecker provided an update on the grievance regarding the collection, editing and "cleanup" work that was part of daily pagination clerk shifts in the sports department. Following the buyout of four sports clerks and the reassignment of another,

that work is now being done out of the Lee Design Center in Roanoke, Va.

The grievance was filed on Dec. 14. A meeting between the Guild and The News was held on Jan. 6, including Tan, Besecker, Administrative Officer Kim Leiser, Secretary Keith McShea and The News' Tammy Turnbull and Margaret Kenny.

Besecker said the company has not made a decision about what to do with the grievance.

He said the grievance committee and Guild officers believe the Guild has a very strong grievance. He said the Guild warned The News about this situation ahead of time.

M/S/C Besecker/Fairbanks that the Guild spend up to \$1,000 in attorney's fees if The News formally rejects the sports pagination clerk grievance and if Marion Needham of The Newspaper Guild endorses moving forward with the grievance.

The motion passed unanimously.

Other committee members strongly agreed with the grievance because of the concern that The News could possibly attempt similar moves in other departments.

Besecker said the committee is monitoring a situation in Inside Circulation regarding jurisdiction; a member who was hired by management is apparently performing the same job duties they did as a Guild member.

He said a similar grievance was filed in October regarding ABC.

Mobilization Committee Report

Vice President for Communication and Mobilization Rachel Lenzi said plans are in the works for the start of bargaining.

Possible ideas included a "care package" of items for members which would include things like yard signs, face masks, buttons, lanyards and/or window clings.

"Protect Local Journalism" is a working title for the effort.

Tan noted that this effort could be a costly one, but that this is an issue in which the Guild should tap into its defense fund if necessary.

M/S/C Lenzi/Snyder to transfer \$8,000 into the workplace strategies fund for mobilization efforts.

The motion passed unanimously.

Bargaining may begin the second week of February, Tan said. Lenzi said a social media effort will align with the start of negotiations.

President's report

Tan discussed the federal government's new PPP program and how many newspapers are eligible for it; Sen. Chuck Schumer will be holding a video call with newspaper personnel on Wednesday. Tan asks if anyone would like to attend the meeting; Editorial Delegate Mark Sommer will do so.

Sandy mentioned the Guild did have a nice mentorship program going with the Sun Papers, but the program will continue to benefit the remaining Sun employees.

Old business

Tan provided a brief bargaining update. She said that an initial off-the-record meeting with The News was scheduled for Wednesday, and that the meeting may help the Guild's preparations for negotiations. The full bargaining team is scheduled to meet Thursday to discuss the Guild's potential proposals; the digital jurisdiction committee has met and will be meeting again next week.

New business

Tan discussed The Sun papers, which will see the Twin City and Lancaster/Depew Suns closing on Jan. 22 as well as the merging of the Orchard Park and West Seneca papers. The move resulted in the layoff of two Guild part-time reporters and

one Guild full-time designer; one of the Sun editors being let go as well, Tan said. Tan said Sun management had considered laying off another part-time Sun reporter, but the Guild pointed out that the contract stated that layoffs had to go in order of seniority, so that reporter was not laid off.

Tan said she thought she was about to sneeze. But then she didn't.

"Oh I want to sneeze. Hmm, I guess it's not coming."

Tan said the Sun closings are "really sad news for us. We had nine Guild members for the Suns. Now we are down to four."

Tan said that New York State's new sick leave law "will benefit Guild members."

The law expands the time off employees can take and also expands the eligibility of those who can be cared for with sick time, and employers may not ask about the nature of the illness nor require medical attestation.

Leiser said "is an extreme expansion of what we can use our sick time for."

Leiser told the committee about Teledoc, a telephone-based medical coverage system that is able to be used regardless of any medical insurance; it costs \$57 per year, which covers members and dependents. The service, in which doctors can write prescriptions, is provided to all of Philadelphia Guild's members.

Leiser said that the Philadelphia Guild said it cut down on its emergency room usage by \$200,000 in the first year alone. Teledoc also has psychologists and mental health care available via phone.

Leiser thinks Teledoc is something the Guild should offer its members.

The Guild would pay the Philadelphia Guild \$57 per member, per year. Leiser said if our Guild goes through Philadelphia, the cost would be \$57, if not, the cost is much higher.

Leiser said being able to offer Teledoc to part-timers without any health care coverage would be "outstanding" and that she will be gathering more information about it. The committee agrees that this is something to consider. She said it could be "amazing" for Tonawanda News workers represented by The Guild.

The next executive meeting will not be scheduled due to the again-changing work schedule for Tan. "We will play it by year."

Tan adjourned the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

Attendance: President Sandy Tan, Vice President/Grievances Aaron Besecker, Vice President/Mobilization Rachel Lenzi, Treasurer and Inside Circulation steward Diana Gawron, District Manager alternate delegate Bob Snyder, Secretary Keith McShea, Administrative Officer Kim Leiser, District Manager steward Joan Portman, Typographical dayside steward Hilary Osborn, Sun Papers steward Lian Bunny, Editorial delegate Mark Sommer, Past President Phil Fairbanks.

Excused: None.

Absent: District Manager delegate Latrice Carr, Typographical nightside steward Mark Hanover, Editorial nightside steward Mike Pesarchick, Editorial delegate Mike Harrington, Editorial delegate Scott Scanlon, Editorial alternate delegate Jeff Miers.

Executive Committee meeting minutes: Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2020

President Sandy Tan called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2020 via Zoom.

No minutes this month.

Tan made a desperate plea for volunteers to join the Lonnie Hudkins Memorial Singers.

Grievance Committee Report

Vice President for Contract Enforcement Aaron Besecker said that a grievance in ABC was resulting in management saying they are looking to hire people to perform work that has been done by management.

The grievance committee approved of a grievance regarding the collection, editing and "cleanup" work that was part of daily pagination clerk shifts in the sports department which is now being done out of the Lee Design Center in Roanoke, Va.

Mobilization Committee Report

Vice President for Communication and Mobilization Rachel Lenzi said she was finishing up the next issue of the Frontier Reporter

She is crafting a letter to membership regarding a request by The Newspaper Guild concerning a situation in Pittsburgh involving sexual harassment. The committee agreed with Lenzi in that our letter should include a link to a New York Times story on the Pittsburgh situation as well as information on how to report incidents of sexual harassment.

Lenzi said the Twitter thread about sponsored content was received very well.

Her holiday cards update, along with Administrative Officer Kim Leiser: Cards were ordered, gift cards are ready; The Guild got a 5% discount on the gift cards. Leiser said the total cost was "just a hair over \$4,000" (\$453 for greeting cards, \$110 in stamps, over \$3,000 for gift cards).

Leiser asked for volunteers to assist with envelope-stuffing and stamping.

Old business

Tan told the committee about a bargaining team meeting coming up on Friday; that an off-the-record meeting with management was scheduled for early January; and bargaining is slated to begin the second week of February.

A bargaining survey has been drafted and it should be ready to send out by Friday, Tan said.

The Guild's meeting calendar has been in limbo due to changing press conference schedules for County Executive Mark Poloncarz, which are covered by Tan. Tan said the Guild would likely schedule meetings "quarter by quarter until we're out of this mess."

Motion/Second/Carried Besecker/Osborn to schedule Guild executive meetings on Tuesday, Jan. 12; Tuesday, Feb. 16 and Tue. March 9; and a local meeting on Wed. March 10.

New business

Tan and Leiser said there are several shops represented by our Guild who are behind on dues, the committee discussed various methods to possibly repair these situations.

Tan adjourned the meeting at 5:46 p.m.

Attendance: President Sandy Tan, Vice President/Grievances Aaron Besecker, Vice President/Mobilization Rachel Lenzi, Treasurer and Inside Circulation steward Diana Gawron, Secretary Keith McShea, Administrative Officer Kim Leiser, Typographical dayside steward Hilary Osborn, Sun Papers steward Lian Bunny, Editorial delegate Mike Harrington, Editorial delegate David Robinson.

Excused: Past President Phil Fairbanks.

Absent: District Manager delegate Latrice Carr, District Manager steward Joan Portman, Typographical nightside steward Mark Hanover, Editorial nightside steward Mike Pesarchick, Editorial delegate Mark Sommer, Editorial delegate Scott Scanlon, District Manager alternate delegate Bob Snyder, Editorial alternate delegate Jeff Miers.

Local Meeting Minutes November 2020

President Sandy Tan called the afternoon meeting to order at noon Tuesday, Nov. 17, 2020 via Zoom.

Vice President for Contract Enforcement Aaron Besecker said "The News rejected" a grievance related to sponsored content on BuffaloNews.com and that a situation in ABC was nearing settlement as management said work would be returned to the Guild. He also mentioned a district manager issue relative to scheduling that is being looked into.

Vice President for Mobilization Rachel Lenzi told members that the Guild will be updating its contact information for all members ahead of negotiations.

President Sandy Tan provided an update on the sports clerk and print desk buyouts.

Tan discussed the remote work survey.

Tan told the members that the Guild negotiating team would be made up of: Kim Leiser, Sandy Tan, Aaron Besecker, Diana Gawron and Mike McAndrew while Keith McShea and Caitlin Dewey will be part of a digital jurisdiction subcommittee.

Tan told members a survey would be coming and highly encouraged everyone's participation.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:29 p.m.

A similar general meeting was held in the evening. It was called to order by Tan at 5:30 p.m. and was adjourned at 6:32 p.m.

24 Guild members attended the afternoon meeting; 22 members attended the evening meeting.

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes November 2020

President Sandy Tan called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. Monday, Nov. 16, 2020 via Zoom.

Motion/Second/Carried Tan/Leiser to approve the executive committee minutes for September.

Tan reported that four sports clerks took the buyout offered by The News, while clerk Ted Wasko moved to the prepress department in a transfer that was negotiated as part of the buyout agreement between The News and the Guild.

Grievance Committee Report

Vice President for Contract Enforcement Aaron Besecker said "The News swiftly rejected" an Oct. 13 grievance related to sponsored content on BuffaloNews.com. Management rejected the grievance by citing the Guild's nonexclusive jurisdiction to the online news product.

Another October grievance involves management doing Guild work in ABC; management had told the Guild that work was being done by Guild workers, but that was not the case. Executive Officer Kim Leiser said that the head of accounting said the work would be returned to the Guild.

Leiser and District Managers Steward Joan Portman discussed a scheduling situation related to training sessions.

Mobilization Committee Report

Vice President for Mobilization/Communication Rachel Lenzi said she would be requesting updated contact information from members for the purposes of updating the messenger list.

Secretary Keith McShea asked if a social media post regarding the sponsored content would be appropriate, which would perhaps include the worst examples of the stories/advertisements. Lenzi, Aaron Besecker and committee members agreed.

Tan asked about the Frontier Reporter; Lenzi said it was close to being finalized; Tan said she would love it out soon.

New business

Upcoming bargaining and negotiations were discussed.

M/S/C Robinson/Harrington to name Kim Leiser, Sandy Tan, Aaron Besecker, Diana Gawron and Mike McAndrew to the

Guild bargaining team. Motion carried unanimously; Besecker abstained from the vote.

Keith McShea and Caitlin Dewey will be part of a digital jurisdiction subcommittee, Tan said.

Future meeting dates were discussed. Dates that had been provided on an agenda are being withdrawn due to the Erie County Executive's Covid-19 press conference schedule making it difficult for Tan to cover those and attend meetings on the same day.

The next scheduled meeting remains Wed. Dec. 9.

Tan encouraged the committee to consider what kind of questions/topics they would like to see covered in a survey the Guild is preparing for its membership prior to bargaining.

Tan said that in lieu of a holiday party that the Guild send a holiday card to members with a little gift, perhaps an ornament. The committee discussed the matter and several suggested gift cards to all members.

A \$20 gift card was suggested; various forms/stores were discussed; Robinson suggested it be from Tops, The News' largest local sponsor.

M/S/C Fairbanks/Portman to transfer \$3,000 from the Guild checking account to its social activities line for the purposes of purchasing \$20 Tops gift cards to every dues-paying member.

A Sun papers mentoring program was mentioned, where the Guild would match up News reporters with Sun personnel. The Guild is soliciting for volunteers who would be mentors.

Besecker mentioned now that sports clerks no longer work at The News following the buyouts, that the Guild should monitor how their work is being distributed. McShea agrees to check up on this.

Tan adjourned the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

Attendance: President Sandy Tan, Vice President/Grievances Aaron Besecker, Vice President/Mobilization Rachel Lenzi, Treasurer and Inside Circulation steward Diana Gawron, Secretary Keith McShea, Administrative Officer Kim Leiser, District Manager steward Joan Portman, Typographical dayside steward Hilary Osborn, Sun Papers steward Lian Bunny, Editorial delegate Mike Harrington, Editorial delegate David Robinson, Editorial delegate Mark Sommer, Past President Phil Fairbanks.

Excused: District Manager alternate delegate Bob Snyder.

Absent: Typographical nightside steward Mark Hanover, Editorial nightside steward Mike Pesarchick, Editorial delegate Scott Scanlon, Editorial alternate delegate Jeff Miers.

Local Meeting Minutes September 2020

President Sandy Tan called the afternoon meeting to order at noon Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2020 via Zoom.

Vice President for Contract Enforcement Aaron Besecker said the grievance committee approved two grievances, one regarding sponsored content and one regarding management doing Guild work in ABC.

Tan discussed the remote work survey the Guild conducted with its members.

Executive officers discussed the #ThisIsGuildWork campaign.

Tan discussed the buyouts that management is offering to the print desk and sports clerks.

Officers fielded questions about how bylines on the new web site do not specify that reporters are (or are not) Buffalo News reporters; a desire for more local control of the web site; the Guild's position regarding the buyouts and the economic instability clause; what News editor Mike Connolly's budget entails; possible hiring of "content producers" that was mentioned in management's departmental meetings which announced the buyouts; and more.

The meeting was adjourned by Tan at 1:03 p.m. 29 Guild members attended.

* * *

A similar general meeting was held in the evening. It was called to order by Tan at 5:33 p.m.

Besecker and Leiser discussed the grievances.

Vice President for Mobilization and Communication Rachel Lenzi discussed the #ThisIsGuildWork campaign.

It was noted that the executive sports editor has a longstanding history of writing up news that appears in print. "We've made it clear that we're not going to stand for that," Tan said.

Officers fielded questions on: control of the pension; the question of hiring "content producers;" what tasks currently performed by sports clerks would have to still be accounted for if they all took the buyouts and more.

The meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m. 25 Guild members attended.

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes September 2020

President Sandy Tan called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. Monday, Sept. 28, 2020 via Zoom.

Motion/Second/Carried Besecker/Harrington to approve the executive committee minutes for July and August.

Tan said that the Tonawanda News mailers approved a new contract by a vote of 13-1. Administrative Officer Kim Leiser noted that the new contract included raises for part-timers and full-timers.

The committee welcomed Typographical Unit representative Hilary Osborn, who was participating in her first meeting.

Finance Committee report

Treasurer Diana Gawron said Leiser presented the 2021 budget. David Robinson said the budget is being recommended to the executive committee by the finance committee.

Due to rising internet costs, Leiser will transfer the office phone line to her personal wireless account and connect to the internet through her phone.

The committee recommended that \$140,000 be transferred to the defense fund, where it would be a better investment.

M/S/C Gawron/Pesarchick to approve the proposed budget for 2020-2021 and transfer 140,000 from the Guild checking account to the Guild's defense fund managed by Level Financial. The motion passed unanimously.

M/S/C Portman/Gawron to allow the Guild to transfer its current internet service and landline phone to a separate mobile phone account, which will be held by the administrative officer, at a cost savings to the Guild.

President's Report

Tan noted the passing of Lew Jeckovich, a longtime member of the Typographical unit.

M/S/C Osborn/Pesarchick to have the Guild make a \$50 donation to the American Diabetes Association or the preferred charity in memory of Lew Jeckovich's passing.

Tan reviewed the survey to members regarding equipment and working from home.

The committee had a lengthy discussion about the buyout negotiations between the Guild and management regarding the print desk and sports clerks.

M/S/C Tan/McShea to grant Tan and Leiser the authority to submit the Guild proposal to The News that:

print desk members be offered 52 weeks of severance, with the ability to allocate payments to health care premiums through the end of the year;
and that sports clerks be offered eight additional weeks of severance pay in addition to their contractual severance, have priority consideration for the immediate opening of a full-time position in Prepress, and have priority consideration for future openings for which they would be qualified.
Tan discussed her recent meeting with Publisher Tom Wiley and mentioned that Wiley and other executive members will be at the Oct. 1 socially-distanced gathering at The News featuring food from Guild member and food critic Andrew Galarneau.

Grievance Committee Report

Vice President for Contract Enforcement Aaron Besecker said the committee voted to approve two grievances.

One involves management doing Guild work in ABC; management had told the Guild that work was being done by Guild workers, but that was not the case.

Another involves the prevalence of sponsored content on BuffaloNews.com that has become an issue since the move to the new Lee Enterprises-based web site.

Mobilization Committee Report

Vice President for Mobilization/Communication Rachel Lenzi said the #ThisIsGuildWork campaign has been continuing for the last three to four weeks. The committee discussed the status and goals of the campaign, and Lenzi said she intends to communicate the urgency of the campaign at the general membership meeting tomorrow.

"As long as we keep this front and center, management will know that we are serious," Lenzi said.

Lenzi said the Frontier Reporter copy is in and that it's just a matter of finding time to post it. Tan said "let's try to get that done before the next executive meeting."

New business

There was a discussion regarding customer service and district managers, where policy may be being changed without talking with the Guild. Leiser and Gawron will talk to managers about this.

Tan adjourned the meeting at 7:18 p.m.

Attendance: President Sandy Tan, Vice President/Grievances Aaron Besecker, Vice President/Mobilization Rachel Lenzi, Treasurer and Inside Circulation steward Diana Gawron, Secretary Keith McShea, Administrative Officer Kim Leiser, District Manager steward Joan Portman, Typographical nightside steward Hilary Osborn, Sun Papers steward Lian Bunny, Editorial nightside steward Mike Pesarchick, Editorial delegate Mike Harrington, Editorial delegate David Robinson.

Excused: Editorial delegate Mark Sommer, District Manager alternate delegate Bob Snyder.

Absent: ABC steward Felice McMillion, Typographical dayside steward Mark Hanover, Past President Phil Fairbanks, Editorial delegate Scott Scanlon, Editorial alternate delegate Jeff Miers.

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes August 2020

Vice President/Contract Enforcement Aaron Besecker called the meeting to order at 5:09 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 19, 2020 via Zoom.

Motion/Second/Carried Fairbanks/Harrington to approve the minutes for the June executive committee meetings.

Grievance Report

Vice President/Contract Enforcement Aaron Besecker reviewed the Grievance Committee meeting held just before the executive committee meeting.

A letter from Besecker and Secretary Keith McShea was written to management about our concerns about work being

done by a Niagara County freelancer as well as actions by the executive sports editor.

President's Report

President Sandy Tan talked with management about equipment and said Guild members can expense work-related expenses that are incurred at home. Expense reports can be emailed to executive assistant Amanda Gentilcore.

Different equipment needs were discussed.

A Google survey will be conducted by the Guild so we can gauge members' needs and communicate those needs to management.

Mobilization Report

Vice President/Mobilization Rachel Lenzi said that a new edition of the Frontier Reporter is being worked on, but with no one going into the office, there seems to be no point in actually printing it. The next issue will include a story on Phil Fairbanks, the Typographical contract and the freelancer issue.

Lenzi addressed an issue of the timeliness of tweets that have been a part of the freelancer mobilization effort.

"We need to streamline the process," she said, stressing that we need to get something, edit it, "and get it out so it doesn't lose timeliness."

There was a discussion about the Guild Twitter account and whether all tweets needed to be reviewed before being tweeted out. The committee landed on that any potential tweet should be run by another officer before it is published.

A mobilization social media committee was discussed and then formed: It will consist of Lenzi, Besecker, McShea, editorial delegate Mike Harrington and Sun Papers steward Lian Bunny.

In an effort to expedite the tweeting process, the committee will communicate via text, email and Google Doc before forwarding potential tweets to Tan and Administrative Officer Kim Leiser for approval.

Further discussion of the freelance mobilization effort was tabled until later in the meeting.

President's Report

Tan reported on Tom Wiley's session at One News Plaza in which he discussed his strategy for The News.

She said she is still trying to meet with Wiley.

The committee discussed plans to honor Phil Fairbanks and Jane Kwiatowski and said that they would see if the veteran reporters would be interested in a Zoom celebration/happy hour, tentatively the week after Labor Day.

District Manager delegate Joan Portman volunteered to represent the Guild by driving a car in a Labor Day car parade.

There was extensive, wide-ranging discussion about the freelancer mobilization effort.

The committee said that Facebook was an avenue the Guild should use in addition to Twitter, and that members should be reminded to retweet Guild tweets and to use the hashtag #ThisIsGuildWork.

The new committee's role in forming tweets was revisited, with an outline set in which three officers would need to sign off on a particular tweet. McShea said the ideal procedure would be for the committee to come up with a tweet it supported unanimously, and then send it to Sandy and/or Kim via text for approval.

Tan adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Attendance: President Sandy Tan, Vice President/Grievances Aaron Besecker, Vice President/Mobilization Rachel Lenzi, Treasurer and Inside Circulation delegate Diana Gawron, Secretary Keith McShea, Administrative Officer Kim Leiser, District Manager steward Joan Portman, Sun Papers steward Lian Bunny, Editorial nightside chief steward Mike Pesarchick,

Editorial delegate Mike Harrington, Past President Phil Fairbanks.

Excused: None.

Absent: ABC chief steward Felice McMillion, Typographical nightside steward Mark Hanover, Typographical dayside steward Karen Hipp, Typographical delegate Kathy Mooney, Editorial delegate David Robinson, Editorial delegate Scott Scanlon, Editorial delegate Mark Sommer,

District Manager alternate delegate Bob Snyder, Editorial alternate delegate Jeff Miers.

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes July 2020

President Sandy Tan called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. Wednesday, July 15, 2020 via Zoom.

Motion/Second/Carried Besecker/Fairbanks to approve the minutes for the May executive and general Guild meetings.

M/S/C Fairbanks/Mooney to approve the minutes of the typographical unit negotiations.

Grievance Report

Vice President/Contract Enforcement Aaron Besecker wanted to get the committee's opinion on the executive sports editor writing posts that go online and sometimes get rewritten for print.

The committee discussed including its objection to these kinds of actions by the executive sports editor in a letter to management.

An issue involving a Niagara County stringer has said stringer writing during the week, when he has been a weekend contributor for years. Various items have been written on weekdays. The committee also agreed that this would be included in a letter to management.

Besecker reviewed the freelance mobilization effort the Guild undertook earlier in the summer, noting that a hockey freelancer had not had his work published since our mobilization, and that the digital columnist's work seemed to "take a step back." However, Besecker and members were concerned about a recent column regarding the Buffalo Braves that appeared to be in the core coverage area.

Besecker said that if management continues to publish freelance posts that the Guild should call it out.

Besecker and Secretary Keith McShea are to work on some tweet language in response to the Buffalo Braves column.

Mobilization Report

President Sandy Tan thanked the Guild for the blackout campaign work but noted that the #ThisIsGuildWork efforts were not as robust and that tweets were mostly among executive committee members. Tan did also note that the hockey freelancer had not been published and said that it was a "successful" social media campaign.

Tan said the next Frontier Reporter is due out in August and is to include a farewell to Phil Fairbanks, the new typographical unit contract, a summary of the freelance issue, and the News' new publisher, among other items.

President's report

President Sandy Tan discussed the departure of Vince Chiaramonte from management, along with related moves of the temporary elevation of Terry Lew to design editor and the bringing back of LiKu Gao as a temporary Guild member.

Tan also said the Guild's sent flowers in support of a member whose father died.

Administrative Officer Kim Leiser and Tan yesterday were involved in the first negotiations with the Tonawanda News, the publisher of the Lockport and Niagara Falls papers; the Guild represents a group that is the equivalent of The News' mailers. There will be another meeting in two weeks.

Tan said she is supposed to have lunch with publisher Tom Wiley; a previous lunch appointment was canceled.

Old business

The Typographical unit contract was unanimously approved, Tan said.

It was a “very gratifying” membership meeting at Millennium Hotel, Tan said, as most members showed up and asked lots of questions in a four-hour meeting. The tentative agreement was based on 12 people taking buyouts, and 12 have signed up, Tan said.

Kathy Mooney said it was a good meeting and that she was also very happy with the response from members as 18 of 22 showed up. “I think they really appreciate the Guild now,” Mooney said.

Tan noted that the Guild is going to need Typographical representatives on the executive committee as Mooney and Karen Hipp will be taking the buyout.

“I really feel good that I was a part of something to leave it better than what had been left behind,” said Hipp.

Past President Phil Fairbanks said “from Day One, Sandy and I realized that the two of you were the voices of the members, and ... we needed to gain your confidence. Thank you for making this happen.”

Mooney said, “we couldn’t be in better hands now,” as she and Hipp noted that the people that are still part of the unit have a “renewed energy” and have “never had this kind of representation before.”

“It feels good, it’s a good accomplishment,” Hipp said.

The bargaining team is scheduled to get together for a meal at Karen’s house soon, Tan said.

New business

M/S/C Fairbanks/Scanlon to approve that no Guild dues will be taken out of paychecks that Typographical unit members are receiving as part of their buyouts, as has been past practice for the Guild with other buyouts.

Tan said that hopefully most members had received Guild reimbursement checks from the furlough weeks; those monies are offset by the lost time account that The News provided The Guild.

Tan and Leiser said that originally the News was going to pay some of the monies to members; when The News said those monies would be paid as a bonus and would have corresponding tax implications, the Guild decided to take all the monies as lost time and thus send out the reimbursement checks to its members.

Tan and Leiser noted that the Guild has already spent some of that lost time fund via Typographical Unit negotiations.

Leiser does not believe that the monies from the Guild counts as taxable income.

“Thank you,” said Mike Pesarchick. “Every little bit helps.”

Tan said that management has said after Labor Day would be the soonest that the newsroom would return to One News Plaza.

Tan adjourned the meeting at 6:03 p.m.

Attendance: President Sandy Tan, Vice President/Grievances Aaron Besecker, Treasurer and Inside Circulation delegate Diana Gawron, Secretary Keith McShea, Administrative Officer Kim Leiser, Typographical dayside steward Karen Hipp, Typographical delegate Kathy Mooney, District Manager steward Joan Portman, District Manager alternate delegate Bob Snyder, Editorial nightside chief steward Mike Pesarchick, Editorial delegate David Robinson, Editorial delegate Mike Harrington, Editorial delegate Scott Scanlon, Past President Phil Fairbanks.

Excused: Vice President/Mobilization Rachel Lenzi, Sun Papers steward Lian Bunny.

Absent: ABC chief steward Felice McMillion, Editorial delegate Mark Sommer, Typographical nightside steward Mark Hanover, Editorial alternate delegate Jeff Miers.

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes March 2020

President Sandy Tan called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. Wednesday, March 11, 2020 at The News’ second-floor conference room, One News Plaza.

December 2019 minutes, which had just been completed approximately 49 seconds before the meeting, were not approved.

There was no mobilization report as Vice President for Mobilization Rachel Lenzi was in Cleveland covering MACtion.

Tan mentioned that a wrapup of the State of The News meeting was distributed to members via print and not electronically.

Tan issued her President’s Report.

Tan wrote a note to News VP Brian Connolly regarding the full-page, front-page Tops advertisement.

Tan said that News managers agreed that manner that the advertisement appeared was a mistake, and that in the future a different typeface would be used, the advertising product would be labeled as such and in a more prominent position.

Tan mentioned that she sent a note to management’s Tammy Turnbull inquiring about The News’ contingency plans regarding the coronavirus, in regards to publishing, emergency plans in case of quarantine, etc., outside editorial. News Editor Mike Connelly recently sent a note to editorial employees in this regard.

Old business

Tan and Leiser provided an update on the Typographical Unit merger process.

New business

There was a discussion regarding the Gusto digital content producer; the Guild and The News have gone back and forth with different language.

Tan said that when the Guild merged with the Typographical Unit, the Guild said that a separate subcommittee of Typographical Unit members would determine how the Typographical Unit defense fund would be spent.

Motion/Second/Carried Tan/McShea to establish the Typographical Unit Defense Fund Committee, comprised of Karen Hipp, Charlie Abbott, Laura Struble and Sandy Tan

The committee held their first meeting on Tuesday.

Guild Administrative Officer Kim Leiser recapped the meeting and said there is a significant issue regarding the unit’s negotiated pension plan and a NPP withdrawal penalty payment.

M/S/C Robinson/Hipp to pay in full a \$13,700 NPP withdrawal penalty payment.

Tan adjourned the meeting at 5:50 p.m..

Attendance: President Sandy Tan, Treasurer and inside circulation delegate Diana Gawron, Secretary Keith McShea, Administrative Officer Kim Leiser, Typographical dayside steward Karen Hipp, Typographical delegate Kathy Mooney, District manager steward Joan Portman, ABC chief steward Felice McMillion, Sun papers steward Lian Bunny, editorial delegate David Robinson, editorial delegate Mark Sommer.

Excused: Vice President/Grievances Aaron Besecker, Vice President/Mobilization Rachel Lenzi, Typographical Nightside steward Mark Hanover, nightside chief steward Mike Pesarchick, past president Phil Fairbanks.

Absent: District manager alternate delegate Bob Snyder, editorial delegate Mike Harrington, editorial delegate Scott Scanlon, editorial alternate delegate Jeff Miers.

Local Meeting Minutes February 2020

President Sandy Tan called the meeting to order at 12:08 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 13, 2020 at The News' first-floor auditorium, One News Plaza.

Tan discussed updates regarding the sale of The News to Lee Enterprises that members might not have been familiar with, including that the Guild contract remains in force following the sale, and that The News building was included with the sale.

After Scott from IT saved the day by fixing the projector, a Power Point presentation on various members' research of Lee Enterprise papers was shown.

There was a brief question and answer session in which pension and health care questions were addressed.

Tan adjourned the meeting at 12:38 p.m..

Attendance: President Sandy Tan, Vice President/Mobilization Rachel Lenzi, Treasurer and inside circulation delegate Diana Gawron, Secretary Keith McShea, Administrative Officer Kim Leiser, plus about 40 members.

Note: There was also a general membership held at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 12.

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes - Special Meeting January 2020

President Sandy Tan called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2020 at The News' second-floor conference room, One News Plaza.

The meeting was called after this morning's news that The Buffalo News was sold to Lee Enterprises.

Tan informed the executive committee of what she knew about the sale.

She pointed to the two tweets that the Guild had sent out via @BuffaloGuild:

"We are shocked and deeply concerned about the sale of @TheBuffaloNews to Lee Enterprises. We care deeply about all the employees here that this affects, including the more than 200 staffers represented by the Guild.

...
Our leadership team is meeting, and we are in the process of researching and sharing what this means for our members. We will continue to do everything possible to safeguard the outstanding local journalism product that our @BuffaloGuild colleagues produce."

Tan told the committee to tell fellow members that "we're doing everything we can. We are researching this and will be communicating more with our members, and that the Guild will be doing everything possible to preserve and promote the outstanding journalism we produce."

Tan, Administrative Officer Kim Leiser and the committee discussed the Guild's contract with The News, which remains in full effect following the sale, which will close in March.

The committee discussed the next steps to take for its membership, which would be a flyer/email communication.

Tan adjourned the meeting at 12:53 p.m..

Attendance: President Sandy Tan, Vice President/Grievances Aaron Besecker, Vice President/Mobilization Rachel Lenzi, Treasurer and inside circulation delegate Diana Gawron, Secretary Keith McShea, Administrative Officer Kim Leiser, Typographical dayside steward Karen Hipp, Typographical delegate Kathy Mooney, ABC chief steward Felice McMillion, Sun papers steward Lian Bunny, editorial delegate Mike

Harrington, editorial delegate Scott Scanlon, editorial delegate Mark Sommer, Frontier Reporter Editor Ellen Przepasniak.

Excused: District manager steward Joan Portman, nightside chief steward Mike Pesarchick, past president Phil Fairbanks, editorial delegate David Robinson, district manager alternate delegate Bob Snyder, Typographical Nightside steward Mark Hanover.

Absent: Editorial alternate delegate Jeff Miers.

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