

Draft Minutes of
The East Aurora Council of the AFT Local 604
February 19, 2026

In attendance: Ann Snodgrass, Aviva Pollack Paradise, Amy Van Cura, Alan Scott, Alison Mann Nile, Anndella Bee, Becky Roireau, Beth Cotter, Christy Harding, Danielle Grady, Dalila Sanchez, Eileen Pasturczak, Henry Johnson, Iliana Ochoa, John Burkhalter, Jill Doyle, Jon Kuehl, Judy Durham, Jennifer Gentile, John Fanning, Kara Bown, Karen Mueller, Kristi Pokornowski, Lisa Samp, Lorraine Garciacano, Melinda Thomas, Michelle Hanna, Mary Taylor, Nicole Connolly, Nicole Thayer, Patrick Bednarik, Stephanie Campbell, Sara Lojewski, Sandra Williams, Tim Hollins, Trevor Schrage, Victoria Haier

Building Representatives, Executive Council Officers, or Senators Not In Attendance: Aishia Jefferson, Arlette Gomez, Angie Sanchez, Brittany Peterson, Beth Eadens, Brian Henricks, Cyn Citro, Carrie Snyder, Dulce Jonsson, Dawn Stanfa, Elaine Halleran, Fatima Ballesteros, Gloria Salinas, Jessica Sheldon, John Devine, Jeff Hansford, Janel Jaros, Jodi Eppenstein, Julie Melendez, Jessica Fisher, Jessica Sheldon, Joy Caro, Justin Skattum, Joyce Ladewig, Kaliegh Soumar, Kim Stolpestad, Lisa Pena, Mary Carol Smith, Mara Clucas, Michelle Taylor, Pablo Macias Contador, Pamela Miller, Stacey Boyce, Sandra Vazquez, Sandro Bonilla, Stephanie Hansen, Susan Salinas-Ramirez, Tim Snyder,

Becky: Motion to begin 2/19 House of Delegates?

Kristi Pokornowski, Jill Doyle.

Welcome to those who came for the open meeting. We love having guests.

We don't have any senators' reports this week but next meeting we'll have senators' reports but take a look soon in the Google Classrooms for this week's materials.

Alan: Carrie shared some materials. I will scan and post it soon.

Secretary's Report:

- Reviewed union meeting minutes from 01/15/26 [minutes](#).

Motion to approve: Mary Taylor, Judith Durkham - Approved. Pass, all. Nays, none. Abstains, none.

Treasurer's Report:

- Reviewed [January](#) budget report

Becky: Did anyone have any questions or concerns about the budget? No.

Motion to approve?

Motion to approve: John Burkhalter, Beth Cotter - Approved. Pass, all. Nays, none. Abstains, none.

President's Remarks

- **Hustle update**

Becky: I sent out our first Hustle message yesterday. Who got it?

SHOW OF HANDS.

Becky: Those who did not get it, please use this QR code on the Newline.

Melinda: Did you send out a QR code for joining the AFT? After creating it, I found out it was a 7 day free trial.

Becky: Sorry to hear that.

But with Hustle, we will be using it to send short union messages. And it will be things you need to know about.

Rep: The QR code worked!

Becky: There are limited texts. They sent very strict rules so we can't bother you at night or on weekends. I couldn't even send, "Thanks for reaching out."

But here is the big thing, as I have done many times, if you hit "opt out," you can get back in, but there will be many, many steps. So understand, those going with it will get a text and they need to accept it and not opt out unless they really don't want any messages.

Questions?

I've created a drive that will include resources you can share with their members, for instance, during the 10 minutes of union time. I'll share that tonight or tomorrow.

Melinda: We said to staff they'd be receiving things in two weeks.

Becky: Okay, so, Hustle can only autosign. There are about 1200 names in there and it sends to all the members. But I'm going to assign building reps staff to contact. But it only assigns randomly. If you have more than one rep, it's easy. But in buildings with more than one rep, you'll need to decide: Do you want to split it up? Or have one designated person do it? You can either do that now or later with their materials. Then you'll be able to send building specific texts to your group.

This is a big thing to get off the ground.

- **Elections**

Becky: This is the year we do officer elections. Per the constitution they take place between April 15 and May 15th, and so it aligns with the local elections.

An election committee will handle the election. No people on the ballots will handle ballots, or be involved.

Melinda will be the chair of the committee.

Any discussion?

Melinda: Anyone else really want it?

LAUGHTER.

Becky: You cannot be on the committee and run.

Rep: If we are having an election in our building, say, due to retirement, do we run that election at the same time as the officer election?

Becky: Yes.

Motion? All in favor say yay?

Action:

- Motion to approve committee lead

Motion to approve: Trevor Schrage, Nicole Thayer - Approved. Pass, all. Nays, none. Abstains, none.

Negotiations: (20 minutes) (uninterrupted)

- Negotiations Committee

Becky: This is the end of the open meeting portion.

Non-HoD Member: Thank you.

Becky: Tell your friends to come.

CLOSED MEETING BEGINS

Becky: Negotiations updates, we are officially on our way. We met twice. And we have our thirteen big ideas, what we call topics moving forward. We shared ours, and they shared theirs.

It has been collaborative. Long days. But we are committed to transparency. We will be sharing a Joint Statement after each meeting.

We will be sharing some slides that our members can be presented on Monday.

Melinda: Would you show slide 3? I just wanted to point out that if something is in red, you are supposed to put your names on the slide.

I don't want you presenting and it says, "Share your building rep name here," like it came from AI or something.

Becky: Negotiations Committees: We need to address if any of us gets unseated, the bargaining team remains the same. This was suggested by the Local. You have no idea what my opinion is, because I'm not sharing it. But if you want to share this structure, it is up to you, I don't have a horse in this game.

We are having elections. And because of SEIU, we started later. And so we just started negotiations. The negotiators are the Executive Council. If anyone was unseated, the current negotiators would be out, and the new would be in.

Rep: Is there any way to split the difference so the current team remains but anyone new who gets elected as officers goes in as a process observer?

Becky: I don't think we could get all the new people. It is very matched. We would invite the new person to come in and observe.

In summary, the problem, selections happen while bargaining may be ongoing. The solution: An ad hoc committee to lock in the team. The goal: Continuity and stability for the union.

Rep: How long do you think it might go on?

Becky: It is hard to say. But we don't want to rush it.

Rep: Are you negotiating another five year contract?

Becky: No. We've seen the results of a long contract.

Rep: When would the new team come in?

Becky: The last day of school.

Rep: An ad hoc committee would mean you'd still negotiate?

Becky: Yes.

Other schools do it differently. In some, officers aren't part of the bargaining team. But it gets sticky because the officers are negotiating.

It is ad hoc, which means set up, then dissolved when their work is done.

Rep: This would be voted on by us, not the whole union?

Becky: That is how representative democracy works.

Rep: Does everyone understand what we are voting on?

Rep: I have no skin in this game. I'm just curious who is running for what, but let's say someone is unseated, and they are part of negotiations, they'd be forced to continue negotiations.

Becky: No-one would be forced. If they wanted to continue.

We have two process observers. The district has process observers.

Rep: Anyone brought in new, they would be observers.

Becky: Only the president.

Rep: I just wanted to make sure it is understood.

Rep: The reason why we don't want more people, the district might want to bring in more people. So, the idea is if we have a bargaining strategy and shared mindset and we're working towards the same goal, but if we change our goals/strategy midstream, it might hurt solidarity. We don't want the elections to mess up the elections. It might sound legalistic to get all the way through these very complicated negotiations without changing things midstream. It sets

off my alarm bells. But a public organization like a union can fall into a trap.

Becky: This group has to make a big boy, big girl decision.

Rep: If anyone is unsure, let's be 100% aware if we have questions.

Becky: Is there anyone in the room who cannot support the creation of an ad hoc committee?

We can put it up for a vote right now.

No-one raised their hand, not when you leave and behind our backs. It is a big decision.

Things did not go fast.

Rep: Is it anti-democratic to say, if you are going to vote against it? Please share.

Becky: This is what democracy looks like.

Rep: Why wouldn't we want this option?

Rep: Anyone voting will know.

Alan: You'd asked why you might not want to do it. Maybe it is felt that contract negotiations aren't going well. May a few contracts get voted down and people want a new team to take stab at it.

If we approve it [ad hoc committee], could we then later vote it down?

Becky: If we vote on it, I don't know that we'd later want to vote it down.

Rep: We would have to vote again.

Rep: If we approve this, how would we describe it to the members?

Rep: It would be protecting the integrity of the process.

Rep: I know there are a few here who are upset that our VP of Office isn't office but a TA. But you guys will be negotiating for us but she isn't Office. It isn't an attack or anything, but people do text me, message me, it's just that pocket of Office Staff members.

Rep: The message would be they are working as a team. And Office is represented.

Sandra: Sandro is the VP of Support Staff.

Rep: No, I mean Office Staff.

Becky: It doesn't matter. We don't say, *Wrong bargaining unit*. We would never say that.

Rep: For the newer people, with the BBT, we put this in place two contracts ago, all reps and senators, we-

Becky: Wait. I have a whole slide about it.

Rep: But if they are concerned, we have multiple of every category, they come back and say, *Here is the language they are considering*, then we debate it. At the Support Staff levels, and they aren't all at the table. But they are here. And that gives those people to give insights. AND if it doesn't get approved, they go back.

Becky: People do not hesitate to contact us.

Sandra: One thing I shared with the team in the past is, if we get to a place where we need to contact our people, we will contact a smaller group to get feedback.

Rep: I get it. I'll vote. But, whatever. The last contract, those job descriptions were promised within a year, but it never happened. You've seen the Office Staff job descriptions. The discrepancy is really hard. Five years. It is a shitshow, honestly.

Becky: I would rather walk away from this position...this process cannot be rushed through.

I think we are really committed on this team.

Sandra: Five years ago, we couldn't control Dr. Norrell.

Rep: We are voting for everyone.

Becky: Are we all clear on what we are voting on? We are going to take a roll call vote. We had a robust debate about it.

An ad hoc committee will negotiate until the contract is approved and then the committee is resolved.

Action:

1. Motion to approve ad hoc negotiation committee - Approved. Pass, all.
Nays, none. Abstains, none.
- Big Bargaining Team Pledge

Becky: It is a representative democracy. It is about sharing, discussing, and debating.

Voting on conceptual agreements. And carry a united message, which is the most important part.

So, we have this, a pledge, including links, it is the common commitment.

We represent all three bargaining units, putting the collective wins before individual bargaining units.

Sometimes we win, sometimes we lose, sometimes it's neutral.

We try to do consensus, if possible.

We protect sensitive information while keeping our members informed.

Can I be honest? In the past, there has been massive leaks. By the board, many groups.

I don't even go to the board because I don't want to be in a space where things might get asked.

This protects the future negotiations with the district.

Huge, huge. We will publicly support the final contract. We debate, we vote. Once you have gone through this process, why is it important to have a united front?

Rep: If you won't speak up here, it will create division and confusion.

Becky: As we have new relationships with the board and the superintendent, there are a lot of people uncomfortable with that change.

But mutual respect is the backbone of a union.

Rep: It is like, *Keep your complaints in the family.*

Becky: Debating together, that's healthy. So when you leave, I'm okay with this.

Rep: Once the decision is made, going back and saying, I didn't like this decision does not-

I am very much aware, it is hard to keep your mouth shut. So, the response is, there was a lot of debate, but this was what the majority of the reps wanted.

Rep: Or this was what was best for all of us. We all represent each other. Which is where we derive all our power.

Becky: Constructive feedback vs destructive criticism.

All the feedback we've gotten pointed to these thirteen buckets. We have done our due diligence. There are surveys. You have conveyed information.

I will pass this out. We will discuss this, then vote.

It includes a progressive discipline process. Adam was pretty impressed with this because his didn't have that. We have a process for holding people accountable.

You can have a few minutes to look at them. Then we'll take a vote. Then you can sign them if you want to.

Rep: Are we going to find out what the thirteen-

Becky: We've already done that a million times but we'll do it again.

I'm going to give you a couple of minutes to read it.

Rep: The idea is you are a House of Delegates member. But this is overlapping, but present. But if you aren't going to do this, but it is legit. But we wouldn't want you in the group where we share negotiation messages.

If you are going to be a part of us communicating about the process, this is what you wanted to do, together.

Becky: You will have a dual role. And I'll be clear: This is confidential, or that is confidential. So there is not a grey area.

Rep: And this is specifically about contract negotiations?

Becky: Yes.

Rep: Are you going to share this?

Becky: Yes. All this. We'll share as much as we can.

Rep: Just a slight grammar issue-

Becky: A dependent clause..

Rep: #2. "While" needs to go away.

Becky: I thought I'd taken it out.

Rep: #2. The very first word. Take it out.

Becky: Cross it out, and initial it.

And the only thing is different about the progressive discipline, it is voted on by our negotiation team, then the BBT.

Just sign it. Just make it clear if you don't want to sign it.

Rep: I will adhere to confidentiality, but at the same time still sharing info.

I've had people yell at me. Why aren't you sharing what you are negotiating? Tell us what you are doing?

Becky: Now having been this far into this process, if I knew that you were telling everything I said, I would not speak at the table. And if I was HR, I would really not speak at the table.

You need to understand what we are negotiating isn't going out to the whole world. And also too, one tentative agreement doesn't tell a whole story, that is why they are parked, because it is a story. We are standing in there for you guys. It is a whole story. When you pull things out, it doesn't tell a story. Does that make sense?

REPS AND SENATORS SIGNED AGREEMENT

- Conceptual Agreements

Becky: We have come to two conceptual agreements so far. But this would be a great way to walk through the process. If we take at least one CA to work through this.

Now you are putting on the BBT hat. You are acting as the Big Bargaining Team now. And we will go on.

These were defined at the table.

Tentative agreement is agreed upon, written, and parked until ratification of the CBA.

Conceptual agreements starts as an idea and the Table Team builds on it during bargaining. It comes back to the BBT, who discuss, and approve the draft. Then it goes back to be written as a TA.

Rep: Can you explain, ranges?

Becky: You might say, for sick days, we approve between X# and Y#. It would be preloaded, the expectation, the ranges for agreement.

Rep: What about things that don't have a range?

Becky: I don't understand your question.

Rep: There would have to be some language that doesn't have a numerical range.

Rep: When appropriate, they approve ranges.

Rep: I took it literally, there would be ranges for everything.

Rep: Just for clarity, those who have been here a while, we had one contract, we were forced weekly to provide detailed lesson plans. That was extra work we had to do. An extra two hours a week of work to format that. There would not be a range for that particular language.

Becky: They have things they want as badly as we want, and not everything is mutually beneficial.

Don't think the district is not bringing up the work day. It is not to our benefit. It is everyone up, or people lose something. How do we deal with something we know they are going to bring up?

We are not going to win 100% of everything.

Rep: Over the years, our contract continues to incrementally get better.

Becky: Consensus today. Is there anyone who cannot move forward with it? If anyone cannot move forward, then we ask again. We go back and forth until we reach total agreement.

This is confidential. I don't want to hear from a million people tomorrow.

Sandra: Typically where we go rogue, is conversations between us and admin.

Becky: If your principal wants to get info about negotiations from you, they aren't your friend.

So, the first thing we did was pick a topic that was lowkey, non-contraversial.

We told all your stories. Material Stipends. You never get your money back, unclear parameters, inconvenient, lots of work of employees, including Office Staff.

Solution: Defined audience of licensed PEL education. Automatic payment of \$200 stipend per year.

Rep: What does PEL stand for?

Becky: Anyone who has a license including those who don't have a classroom.

And late hires also receive stipends on Feb 15th.

Rep: Instead of buying stuff, they'll just get the money.

Becky: Yes.

Rep: Some Office Staff can get people discounts.

Alan: It just means you don't need to apply for reimbursement any more. Wouldn't you still be able to order whatever you want still?

Rep: No.

Becky: We thought this was a huge win.

Rep: A lot of people don't use it at all, because it is a huge hassle.

Rep: We are limited to where you can order from.

Becky: Not any more. You can use the money for whatever you want.

Rep: It changes from secretary to secretary. I can tell you, the process is all over the place.

Rep: That is a big win.

Becky: I thought everyone would be cheering. I can't tell you how many times I've been told, you went over a dollar.

Is there anybody can't live with this or support this moving forward?

Can we get a motion to approve? Conceptual agreement #1?

Sandra: Our team has been wanting to be clear about not wanting to vote over the summer.

Rep: If we don't know the dollar amount, should we vote on it? We will be taxed on it.

Becky: All you agree to the concept the whole teacher bargaining unit will get paid X on December 15th. Late hires, February 15th.

Rep: Do we feel strongly it should be more?

Becky: Yes.

Rep: Right now, we're voting on the process, not on the money?

Becky: Yes. Any other questions.

Action:

1. Motion to approve Conceptual Agreement 1

Jill Doyle, Eileen Pasturczak - Approved. Pass, all. Nays, none. Abstains, none.

We'll do #2, a video call, to do Conceptual Agreement #2.

Adjourn.