

**Minutes of the WRC Board Meeting:  
September 25, 2009**

Present at the meeting were Katie Quan, Julie Martinez, Jared Watkins, Rosa Lozano, Eric Hoyt, Dida El Sourady, Ben McKean, LaMarr Billups, Mike Powers, Mark Barenberg and Thea Lee. Present via phone were Jim Wilkerson and Jill Esbenshade. WRC staff in attendance were Scott Nova, Jeremy Blasi, and Theresa Haas (Ben Hensler attended by phone).

At the beginning of the meeting, one change was made to the agenda; officer elections were moved to later in the meeting. The minutes from the May 18<sup>th</sup> board meeting were unanimously approved. Two new board reps were nominated to represent USAS and the nominees were unanimously approved. Dida El Sourady presented the Treasurer's report and made a motion that the report be accepted by the Board. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Executive Director's Report: Scott provided additional financial information and an update on university affiliations, including the recent decision of the University of Tennessee-Knoxville to affiliate. Theresa gave an update on the status of the WRC's contracts with the cities of Los Angeles and San Francisco to conduct monitoring and enforcement work concerning compliance with the Sweatfree Procurement Ordinances adopted by both cities. We are preparing to sign a new contract with the City of San Francisco that will run from September 28, 2009 to September 27, 2010. Scott gave a brief update on the national efforts to form a Sweatfree Purchasing Consortium and the ongoing discussions surrounding labor standards for federal procurement. Scott also provided an update on the Russell case and the negotiations involving Russell, the Honduran union, and the WRC.

Update on Bookstore Project: Scott reviewed the background of the bookstore project and the work the WRC has been doing since early 2008 with Knights Apparel to bring the project to fruition. The facility will be located in the trade zone that formerly housed the BJ&B factory; the factory will take several steps to ensure respect for workers' associational rights; and bargaining over wages between the factory and worker representative will be based on a floor that is approximately 3.5 times the prevailing wage in the country. Knights Apparel has agreed to provide a price to the factory that will make this possible. Knights has conducted outreach to campus bookstores and to the major bookstore operators and has received a very positive response. Scott updated the Board on recent developments, including a series of meetings in the Dominican Republic held shortly before the Board meeting. The facility has now been leased and a factory manager has been hired. Hiring of workers could begin as early as one month from now [note: hiring began in November]. WRC staff will travel again to the Dominican Republic sometime in the next few weeks to meet with the factory manager. One crucial issue is the hiring process and the WRC has been working with a local labor rights organization in the Dominican Republic, Knights Apparel, and the local union to develop a set of hiring protocols to guide the process. The initial range of products made at the factory will be t-shirts and sweatshirts, though there is interest in expanding the product

line. Scott noted that Knights is looking for other buyers to source from the factory during the off-season for collegiate apparel. Mike Powers asked about the marketing and labeling strategy and noted that the Cornell bookstore would like to provide a special section for this apparel. Scott explained that Knights is working on the naming and branding of the product and plans to work closely with stores on retail-level marketing once the basics are in place.

Scott noted that the WRC is playing the verification role for this project to monitor compliance with the project's labor standards. We have agreed that there will be a label for informing consumers of the WRC's verification, placed on the garment itself. This will also include a link to a website about the WRC, what monitoring is, discussion of living wage, etc. Scott handed out a document containing a proposed amendment to the WRC bylaws, Annex 1 of the Key Principles, to ensure that there is not a conflict between the verification role the WRC will play in this project and the organization's bylaws. LaMarr noted that this would be consistent with the role the WRC would play under the DSP and that even in the current modes of operation we investigate a factory and the statements that are made are made about the factory, rather than the products themselves and so it's a safer position to certify that the factory is in compliance, rather than the product itself. Scott noted that the factory itself will be doing cutting and sewing and that other processes will be conducted at other locations and there was a discussion about the ability to verify compliance throughout the entire supply chain for the garment. Julie moved to adopt the proposed language as written. Katie noted that a proposed change to the bylaws must be sent out to board members ahead of time before the meeting and that the noticing of this Bylaw change may not have been technically adequate. Scott proposed that a vote be conducted via email after the meeting. This was agreed [note: the vote was postponed until the January meeting because it proved unnecessary to hold it sooner, given the pace of the project].

An Executive Session was then held concerning the Russell case.

Officer Elections: Julie Martinez was nominated as board chair and was approved unanimously. Jim Wilkerson was nominated to the position of treasurer and was unanimously approved. Eric Hoyt was nominated as secretary and was unanimously approved.

Field Staff Update: Jeremy gave an update on several cases that the WRC has been working on. He also spoke about the recent military coup in Honduras and noted that there has been a deterioration of respect for human and labor rights in the country since the coup. Some of the most noteworthy aspects include a media black out, detention of public officials, labor leaders, and journalists, use of lethal force against protestors and extrajudicial killings and reports of workers required to participate in pro coup activities.

The meeting was then adjourned.