



International Secretary-Treasurer

Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, AFL-CIO
43rd Annual Board of Directors Meeting
Las Vegas, NV
April 28-30, 2015

International Secretary-Treasurer Remarks

43rd AFA-CWA Board of Directors Meeting

28 April 2015

Good morning sisters and brothers.

Once again I stand before you, but before I begin, let me say a word about the previous speakers.

CWA District 9 Vice President Laura Reynolds enlightened us about the predicament of labor in Nevada. How amazing that this resulted in a state-wide ballot decided by only 11 votes. Then we heard from TTD President Ed Wytkind, who informed us of the global consequences in aviation due to the activities in the Gulf States, which brings this message so close to home in our industry.

And, we have heard the visions of AFA President Sara Nelson and Vice President Deb Sutor. These are two visionary women. I cannot overstate the commitment and dedication that each of these women bring to AFA. The theme for our Board Meeting this upcoming year is "Stronger Together / Better Together," but I can assure you that this has been our mantra from the first day of our term. From that first day, I take great pride and pleasure in being part of this Officer team.

We haven't met in Las Vegas since 2010, or was it 2011, or both? And it wasn't here, but across the street at Bally's - then the CWA Convention was within months. Let's have a show of hands - how many of you were here those short 4-5 years ago... Ok, so a little less than half, so a little more than half have not been here for those four or five years since we last met in Vegas. So, if we were talking about the next generation - a lot of that generation is here. That's very pleasing. It's very good to have all of the new faces in just the past few years.

Well... has anyone been lucky? No... You're no fun... I was hoping to secure new revenue streams. But, who comes to Vegas, to plan a revenue stream... oops... that would be us...

But not just Revenue. We will actually decide upon Budgets, and most importantly - Priorities !

So, let's focus a minute - where are our priorities - What are they again... ?

Number 1 Priority - Organizing: We must ensure all Flight Attendants have the protection of a collective bargaining agreement. We focus on Stronger Together / Better Together, so we endeavor to bring all Flight Attendants to AFA.

Also, every day we focus on Negotiating contracts; Defending these contracts; and, Providing Daily Representation. This is the Day Job - it is all essential !

But what is the Time Frame? It is the Next Session... Next Arbitration... Next Email...

These are the Short Term Priorities: 12 months or less !

Can we adjust to look and act beyond just the proverbial “next” ?

I know the difficulty in departing from the Day Job... We got to do it - - ME too. I find myself focused on MY Day Job - - Sometimes working today's email, but not the agenda for tomorrow's conference call... Sometimes it's difficult getting past today... then tomorrow...

We can excel if we look to the Medium & Long Term: 12-36 months and beyond. We can look out into the future – our future and our members' future to make sure that we address priorities that are long-term. This will make the Union stronger, and make this Union better.

So, let's talk about it: Medium & Long-Term; and get down to it – I'm talking Dollars & Cents!

Revenue, that's the issue at hand. More accurately, it's the revenue reduction given members from US Airways and AirTran are no longer with us.

So I'm disappointed you haven't been “lucky” here in Las Vegas– but we are not going to get through this with luck, we are going to get through this with methodical planning and looking to making some strategic decisions. So we will devise a budget with reduced income that will address all of our priorities, and it will address these through an approved budget. Now that budget, it really is just a plan. It's a plan for going forward.

We should really ask ourselves: Are we any good at planning ?

Yes – Damn Good! Take this current fiscal year as an example. I see that your expenses were within just one percent of your budgets - overall Union-wide, that means that you're ninety-nine percent on plan. Now when I went to school, ninety-nine percent was A+. So how many people, show of hands please, where here last year for approval of the budget?

Okay, that's a lot of hands. Now everybody else, raise your other hand and give them a hand.

The performance in the previous year was very similar - Very Good !

So, how many were here last year ? Raise hands... Good – most !

These people received proposals, debated, amended, voted, and approved a good plan. You have proven you can manage your tightened budgets; you have proven you can satisfy priorities; and, and you have proven you can keep expenses within budgets.

So, take credit – for the past 2-3 years you made good budgeting decisions

What next – This year is a bit more difficult – but there are solutions. There are viable solutions contained in the Agenda Items. Use that good track record of making budget decisions as the basis to make bold decisions this year. Make decisions that will better position our Union for the Medium and Long-Term. Make the bold decisions... don't be afraid of change... and have confidence in your decisions – they have been good decision before! You're on it – Stay on it !

How do we address the “Difficult Number” – Do we use \$2.1M from our Reserves to balance the budget, or do we look towards other solutions?

We know, that you know, that balancing a budget from reserves is NOT a good option !

We do have a long list of “Viable Solutions”

Let's NOT talk about cuts to LEC and MEC Budgets. Let's consider keeping the amounts the same! We talked about the good plan that is working well! You have proven you can satisfy priorities within current budget amounts, so let's just keep these budgets the same. If you agree, this is a great savings: \$600K

Let's talk about the Mobilization Fund and SIF. This agenda item is really just a “catch-up & clean-up” to update the C&B to our existing practice. If you agree with that agenda item: \$400K

These two: \$1,000,000!

Imagine – Get home, and tell your members “In Vegas, I saved the Union a Million Bucks.”

Not luck – Methodical decision-making from a strategic perspective! Good work – now just another decision or two about another Million - \$2.1M.

Let's talk about next year's 2016 BOD Meeting, which is only 10 Months from now. What if you move it out to June 2016? Not strategic decision, but a tactic that pushes those costs out a year. By kicking the can, or as we might say since we are in Vegas, “kicking that coin”: \$200K.

Let's talk Advanced Leader Training: Another tactic is to defer from Spring until Autumn. Again, kicking that coin: \$75K.

Let's get back to a strategic decision: Big topic – Biennial BOD Meetings.

Do we really need to amend the C&B every year? We want to ensure you have an opportunity to meet and interact annually. You have let us know that is your priority, so it is our priority as well. This is accomplished with the proposed agenda items. This is not “kicking the coin,” but a strategic decision: \$200K.

These five items: \$1,500,000 !

All can be achieved through the advanced agenda items or just a motion from the floor.

Let's change subjects – Let's go back to my Day Job – Yes, I have one too !

Who are we in the Office of the Secretary-Treasurer?

On one side of the house is Betsy Tettelbach, Director of Finance and Personnel, who also supervises Barbara Liggins, who is now our Accounting Department of one. On the other side of the house is Bob Kenia, Director of Membership Services, who supervises Karen Lee, Anita Epps, Michelle Dean.

Two names I have not mentioned are Atsede Tsegay in Accounting and Irell Thompson in Membership. These two women will be taking the Voluntary Separation in May, and will take with them over 50 years of experience and dedication to our Union. We wish them well !

These two individuals comprise 2 of 9 members of Staff, so we also ask for your patience as we transition. We will continue to provide the services that you expect – we will do more with less, but it might be a little different, or take a little longer.

What are we currently doing?

In the Accounting world: We process and pay AMEX, PTEV, Bills; we complete the US Government-required year-end: LM Reports... and year-end is approaching, so after 5/31 – watch for the email series! We also generate B&E Reports, and the Budget Letters. You all know about these letters, sometimes referred to as “Over Budget Letters.” I sign each and every one of them after reviewing your B&E Report. I also put that hand-scratched squiggle of a message in the top-right... You all know my handwriting... As an aside, this year I have written Good / Very Good / Excellent on more of these letters than ever before. Again, I thank you for your ability to control spending !

In the Membership world:: We process dues – collect dues and send statements; We update membership data; and we conduct elections. Massive amounts of work by very few members of Staff !

On top of these, we address other projects: Planning BOD & Executive Board and other Meetings; Work on Petitions and Recall Meetings; participate in Seniority Integrations; and more...

What are we planning for the future?

We've listened – We've heard you... We are moving to the electronic...

Re AMEX – We are leaving the archaic GERS system to CONCUR – an App Driven system used by some Federal Agencies. We know you're not in love with GERS, but as we introduce Concur, remember, this is change, and it might be hard...

Re PTEV – We are leaving the paper behind, and transitioning to electronic expense reports... Again, CONCUR is the new system, and the time frame will be this summer. Again, Change... remember – Hard – Expect transition hick-ups in the transition from a paper system to a DOL compliant electronic system. We thank Annie Hill who has made this possible

Re Other electronic vehicles – There is a list! We have a Membership Application and DCO form currently in the testing phase; We are planning a Secretary-Treasurer's App; We will make forms and info available online; and we will have a S-T portal once the new website is up and running.

All of this is part of taking the administrative burden off your plate... So you can focus on membership and provide that member to member representation that members need and want.

We want the administration to be more efficient so you can be more effective in representation.

I'm probably running on a bit long, so let me end simply...

Thank you for what you are doing for our members all day – every day !

Let's have a successful Board Meeting - Let's make plans for a successful future !