

Let me say this about that

—By Gene Klare



Fast enters Hall of Fame

BILL FAST, 88, a retired port agent for the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association (MEBA), stands in the spotlight as the newest member of the Labor Hall of Fame. He was given that honor by the sponsoring Northwest Oregon Labor Retirees Council, which is affiliated with the Portland-based Northwest Oregon Labor Council (NOLC) of the AFL-CIO.

Fast retired in 1988 after serving as MEBA's Portland port agent for 22 years. He and his wife, Beverly, live in Lake Oswego in Clackamas County.

IN HIS CAREER running the MEBA office, Fast was active in a number of organizations. He served as president of the Portland Maritime Trades Council and of the Multnomah County Labor Council, which has since become part of NOLC. He was president of Portland-based Labor's Community Service Agency and was president of the Willamette Democratic Society. His civic service included eight years as a governor-appointed member of the Port of Portland Commission. Another facet of his work was serving as a consultant to the the Marine Cooks and Stewards Union in the Portland area.



BILL FAST

William Martin Fast was born on Oct. 4, 1918 in Kingston, Idaho, west of Kellogg in the metals mining district of the Gem State's Panhandle. After graduating from high school, he followed his father into the lead and silver mines, working for the Bunker Hill Co. Bill moved to Seattle in 1941 and

joined the U.S. Merchant Marine, becoming a member of MEBA. He shipped out of West Coast and East Coast ports in World War II and served on ships transporting supplies to U.S. military forces in various war zones. After the war, Fast made Seattle his home port. When he was not at sea, he became active in politics and worked on election campaigns of Washington's Democratic U.S. Senators Warren Magnuson and Henry (Scoop) Jackson. Later, in Portland, Fast was a labor co-chairman for Jackson when Scoop tried for the Democratic presidential nomination.

AFTER BECOMING MEBA'S man in Portland, Fast traveled Oregon with Democratic U.S. Senator Wayne Morse in his 1962 re-election campaign. Although he's a Democrat, he supported several MEBA-endorsed Republicans for public office, including Mark Hatfield and Bob Packwood, who became U.S. senators in the latter 1960s, and Vic Atiyeh, elected governor in the 1970s. Fast helped Democrat Les AuCoin get elected to Congress and supported Aaron Brown and Tom Moultrie in their elections to judgeships at the Multnomah County Courthouse; both had worked as union members before becoming lawyers. Atiyeh appointed Fast to the Port Commission and also appointed two other union leaders to the Port; he's the only governor ever to name three unionists to the Port's governing board. Fast's political activity also included being the Oregon labor chairman for Richard M. Nixon's successful 1968 presidential run because Nixon had promised to support increased construction of ships in the U.S. In 1976, MEBA and Fast supported Democratic presidential candidate Jimmy Carter in his successful run for the White House. Fast and his wife Beverly attended Carter's inauguration. Fast also supported Congressman Peter DeFazio, U.S. Senator Ron Wyden and others, including Congressman Wendell Wyatt.

As a longtime Merchant Mariner, Fast was among those who campaigned for Congressional approval of veterans' benefits for the merchant seamen of World War II. He still serves on the board of directors of the United States Merchant Marine Veterans League. He told the NW Labor Press that the League has only 80

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PDC Board wants more time to amend new construction wage policy

Plans to amend a two-week-old Portland Development Commission construction wage policy were pushed back by the PDC Board at its Jan. 24 meeting.

On Jan. 10, the PDC Board adopted a policy to pay construction workers state prevailing wage rates on private projects that receive more than \$1 million in funding from the quasi-public agency, which serves as the development arm of the City of Portland.

In addition to wage rates, the new policy also calls for specific hiring goals for women and minorities on a project-by-project basis.

At the Jan. 10 meeting, Commissioner Charles Wilhoite expressed concern that the policy didn't include language that gave PDC the ability to levy economic sanctions on developers who failed to meet stated hiring goals. After discussing the issue, the Board directed PDC staff to amend the policy to include enforcement actions and to bring it back for a vote on Jan. 24.

At the Jan. 24 meeting, the revised wage policy included language for

economic sanctions, but didn't set specific dollar figures. Wilhoite said any fines should be pooled and earmarked for "diversity organizations."

During public testimony, attorney Jim Francesconi, speaking on behalf of the Carpenters, Operating Engineers and Laborers, said the unions support the wage policy in general, but he pointed to a couple of "loopholes" in the policy that "will certainly cause controversy down the road."

One provision states that "when the total floor area of publicly-owned space is less than 50 percent of the total floor area of the combined public-private space, the policy shall not apply to the construction of the privately-owned space unless this portion of the project receives \$1 million or more in PDC resources."

The other provision says: "if projects constructed privately include public and private ownership portions that can be separated for construction purposes, the public portion of the project shall be subject to the policy and the private portion shall be exempt from the policy."

Francesconi said that bringing ownership back into the equation is what caused so many problems in the first place. "Ownership injects a whole lot of confusion," he said. "I think you're setting yourself up for a whole lot of controversy."

Francesconi, a former city commissioner and mayoral candidate, said the Operating Engineers also would like to see demolition included in the \$1 million threshold. As it stands, the wage policy states that demolition and environmental remediation will be consistent with rules under the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries.

Other suggestions the Board heard for amending the construction wage policy included adding incentives as well as sanctions to hiring goals; mandating apprenticeship training on projects; requiring nonunion contractors and training programs to submit annual affirmative action reports (the policy instructs only affiliates of the Building Trades Council to file reports); and exempting certain trades from working on projects if they don't meet affirmative action goals.

PDC Chairman Mark Rosenbaum asked, and the Board agreed, to delay a vote on amending the policy until its next meeting on Feb. 14. "I think that after the discussion today, we need to bring it back," he said.

NOTE: John Mohlis, executive secretary-treasurer of the Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Council attended his first meeting as a commissioner of the PDC on Jan. 24. He was appointed to the Board by Portland Mayor Tom Potter and confirmed by a unanimous vote of City Council on Jan. 17.



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