

Vancouver area labor council issues endorsements for general election

Takes no action in mayor's race as unions are split between Pollard and Leavitt

VANCOUVER — Ballots have been mailed to residents eligible to vote in Washington's general election.

The Clark, Skamania, Klickitat Central Labor Council has issued endorsements in several races in Southwest Washington.

The labor council supports Jack Burkman for an open seat on the City Council, Position 1. Burkman is running against Bill Turlay for the seat being vacated by incumbent Pat Jolota.

The labor council also endorsed Anne McEnery-Ogle for Position 3. She is challenging incumbent Jeanne Harris. Harris has endorsements from Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757, Vancouver Fire Fighters Local 452, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48.

The labor council did not take a position in the hotly-contested race for Vancouver mayor. That race pits incumbent Royce Pollard against City

Councilor Tim Leavitt.

Leavitt outpolled Pollard by 43 votes in the August primary, out of 20,493 ballots cast.

Pollard has been endorsed by Vancouver Fire Fighters Local 452, District 6 Fire Fighters Local 1805, IBEW Local 48, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 4, Teamsters Joint Council No. 37, Painters and Allied Trades Council 5, Iron Workers Local 29, Iron Workers Shopmen's Local 516, Cement Masons Local 555, Laborers Local 335, and Teamsters Local 58.

Leavitt has support from Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757, American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees Local 307 VC, the Vancouver Police Officers Guild, and UNITE HERE Local 9.

The Vancouver City Council is nonpartisan.

In Battle Ground, the Clark, Skamania, Klickitat Central Labor Council supports incumbent Michael Ciraulo for City Council, Position 1; Michael Dalesandro, Position 4; Adrian Cortes, Position 5, and incumbent Bill Ganley, Position 6.

The Battle Ground City Council is nonpartisan.

...AFSCME says relations are frayed

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involved in decision-making around the cuts was preempted and rebuffed by management.

City Commissioner Randy Leonard, a former president of Portland Fire Fighters Local 43, had a different account. Leonard said he took measures to ameliorate the layoffs. He hired a laid-off AFSCME member to answer phones in his office, and placed others in jobs he created in the Water and Fire bureaus, and in the Bureau of Environmental Services. And he said he took his own two-week unpaid furlough, directed managers to do the same, and dedicated that the savings go to BDS.

Leonard faulted the union for not taking a proposal to BDS members to vote on a furlough — which he said would have generated enough savings to avoid nine layoffs.

Local 189 President Carol Stahlke said the union agreed to a two-week furlough, but negotiations stalled over how the furlough days would be taken. Stahlke said the union's relationship with Leonard, normally considered a pro-union stalwart, has frayed since the beginning of summer.

AFSCME endorsed Mayor Sam Adams, and Commissioners Nick Fish, Amanda Fritz and Leonard in last year's general election.

Local 189's current four-year con-

tract runs through June 2010.

Stahlke said about 60 of the laid off BDS employees are represented by Local 189 members. To help them access benefits and weather the transition, Laborers Community Services Agency has hired laid-off BDS worker Pat Philpott as a "peer advocate."

Philpott is also a member of Communications Workers of America Local 7901 and has chaired the Allied Printing Trades Council. In the mid-1990s he worked at the Northwest Labor Press.

Philpott's first day as a peer advocate was Oct 8. He can be reached at 503 539-7677 or by e-mail at PDX-peer@gmail.com.

...Boeing wants no-strike clause

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their power," said Bob Petroff, directing business representative of Portland-based IAM District Lodge 24. "They know that they can stop the company from producing an airplane. They possess the skills that Boeing needs, and Boeing can't go anywhere else to get them."

And the work they do is extraordinarily profitable for the company: Boeing posted a \$2.7 billion profit last year, \$4 billion in 2007, and \$2.2 billion in 2006. The combination of the company's profitability and their skills enables Machinists to make up to \$39.89 an hour under the most recent contract, plus generous health and pension benefits.

But union leaders say they couldn't have gotten or kept those gains without the strike. Boeing Machinists struck for 48 days in 1989, and for 69 days in 1995. In 1999 they reached agreement days before a strike was to begin, and in 2002, gave major concessions after the 9/11 attacks dealt a blow to the air-

line industry. They struck again in 2005 for 28 days, and in 2008 for 58 days.

"My members have asked me what my opinion is, and I've been very candid about it," Petroff said. "I will not give up the right to strike. The only weapon we have is our right to strike."

Strikes aren't an act of sabotage, Kelleher says.

"These strikes are always triggered because Boeing comes at us with take-aways," Kelleher said, "not because we're trying to get more."

Boeing, despite its profitability, has proposed that union members give up benefits like retiree health care and spousal survivor benefits. Yet union member wages and benefits account for less than 4 percent of airplane costs, Kelleher said.

"A strike is a grave step," Kelleher said. "People don't make that decision lightly. Anybody who believes otherwise hasn't walked a picket line and went without a paycheck."

IAM general president Tom Buffenbarger has said the union is "all ears" if Boeing wants to talk about a no-strike

pledge or any other issue. But it would be a negotiation, and Boeing would have to be prepared to give something substantial in return. Boeing Machinists current contract doesn't expire until 2012, and the union is under no obligation to modify or extend it.

The union has faced tremendous public pressure from politicians and newspaper editorial boards worried that Boeing will locate elsewhere. But some labor leaders think the union is being targeted as a distraction from Boeing's real problems with the 787: Its much-vaunted global supply chain isn't working out, and customers have already canceled 75 orders. Parts are arriving late, or are defective and have to be remade. Parts from different suppliers aren't fitting together properly. For the union, it's a case of "I told you so."

"I can remember saying as early as 1983 that if you continue outsourcing more and more of the plane, eventually you're going to lose control of your product and you're going to become hostage to your vendors," Kelleher said.

The one 787 part that's on time, Kelleher said, is the vertical fin, and it's built in Fredrickson, Washington, located 11 miles southeast of Tacoma, by IAM members. For the Dreamliner to succeed, the union argues, Boeing will need to consolidate more operations in-house.

Still, Machinists leaders say they take the threat of locating elsewhere seriously, and are ready to hear proposals. As Kelleher points out, Boeing already has a no-strike clause — the current agreement. It can unilaterally guarantee labor peace by dealing fairly with the union come negotiation time.

In April, both sides committed to improve the relationship to break the cycle of strikes.

"Wouldn't it be great," Kelleher said, "if at the contract opener we announced we had a tentative agreement for members to vote on and did it all without the media focused on us?"

"Like everyone else in Washington," Kelleher said, "we want to grow aerospace jobs and make sure this stays the largest aerospace cluster in the world."



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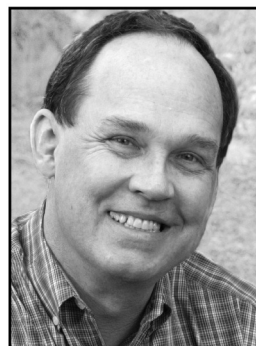
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We are the Friends to Bring Jack Back. He needs your vote to return to Vancouver City Council. Please join us in supporting him.

Clark Central Labor Council, Electrical Workers PAC 48, Dan & Val Ogden, IAFF Local 452, ATU Local 757, Tom Burkholder, Harold Abbe, Gay Lincoln, AFSCME Local 307VC, Ed Barnes, Harry Glaus, Dianne Hibbard, Laborers Int. Union Local 335 and hundreds of others.

Go to www.BurkmanForCouncil.com to learn more!

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