



New officers and executive board members of Oregon AFSCME Council 75 take the oath of office at the conclusion of the council's biennial convention April 21. Delivering the oath is Executive Director Ken Allen. (Photos courtesy Oregon AFSCME Council 75)

## Klatke elected president of Oregon AFSCME #75

BEND — Jeff Klatke is the new president of Oregon AFSCME Council 75.

Klatke, a member of AFSCME Local 3135 employed at Home Forward (formerly known as the Housing Authority of Portland), defeated Tina Turner-Morfit of Local 2376 (Corrections Security Plus) to win the open seat. He succeeds Gary Gillespie, who did not seek re-election.



JEFF KLATKE

The election was held at the Council's biennial convention

April 20 in Bend.

Gillespie, 61, works at the Eugene Public Library and is a member of AFSCME Local 1724. He's held a number of jobs with the City of Eugene since first hiring on in 1987, and he's held a number of titles with Local 1724 as well, including a couple of different stints as president of his local union.

He served as president — the Council's top post — for 12 years.

"It has been an honor to lead this organization, and it's a job I am proud to have held the past dozen years," says Gillespie. "But it's time for me to pull back a little on union responsibilities and make way for a new president."

During his tenure, Gillespie pushed to expand the membership, both by sheer numbers and internally by both age and interest. He's pleased, for example, that the Council takes stands on environmental issues, and he's proud that the Next Wave (under 35) movement was launched under his watch.

There were no changes in the next two spots in the Council's membership-based chain of command. Michael Hanna of Multnomah County Local 88 ran unopposed as first vice president; as did Bryan Branstetter of Local 3361 (Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution) as second vice president.

Annette Skillman of Local 2376 ran unopposed for secretary. She succeeds Marci Jo Carlton of Local 328 (OHSU), who did not seek re-election. In a contested race for treasurer, Marc Abrams

of Local 1085 (Oregon Justice Attorneys) defeated Debbie Hussey of Local 189 (City of Portland) in a close contest.

Those five statewide officers are joined on the Council's Executive Committee by six sector vice presidents, five congressional district vice presidents, and the retirees chapter president.

Over 200 delegates and alternates, along with Council 75 staff, guests and others, packed the Riverhouse Convention Center in Bend April 19-21 for the convention.

In delivering the convention's keynote address, AFSCME International President Lee Saunders said unions are under attack in ways not seen since the Great Depression.

"Last year, public sector union membership dropped for the first time ever since those statistics started being kept," Saunders warned. "We are done with 'fair weather friends.' This is not about party, this is about standing with us. If you don't, we don't care if there is a D or an R after your name, we're through. We stand together, or you don't stay with us."

Also speaking at the convention was Oregon U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley.

(Editor's Note: Don Loving, communications director of Oregon AFSCME Council 75, contributed to this report.)

## Conflict at KBOO sparks effort to unionize

KBOO-FM, Portland's community non-profit radio station, may soon be a union shop. A petition filed April 18 asks the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to conduct a union election to determine whether the station's 10 employees want to join Communications Workers of America (CWA) Local 7901.

Employees contacted the union after station manager Lynn Fitch implemented a package of personnel policy changes over which they had no say. Among the changes: Paid maternity leave was cut in half to three weeks; paid sick leave was cut in half to 40 hours a year (and the number of hours of paid sick leave employees could accrue was cut to 40 from 480); and employees were designated as "at-will."

Eight of the 10 employees signed union authorization cards, and at an April 2 staff meeting, asked Fitch to voluntarily recognize the union. But that didn't happen. So on April 18, with a mass firing rumored to be in the works, the union asked the NLRB to oversee an election.

The April 22 meeting of the KBOO board of directors was packed with union supporters there to urge recognition. Retired letter carrier Jamie Partridge — one of a crew of volunteers who host the station's weekly Labor Radio program, said the board seemed resolute in backing the changes. Partridge predicts a protracted struggle at the station.

In an interview with the Labor Press, Fitch, the station manager, disputed any

suggestion that KBOO is not a progressive employer. One employee was given permission to bring her infant to work every day, for example. But the station — which was managed collectively by staff for several years prior to Fitch's hire as executive director last fall — has been in a prolonged decline financially and in listenership.

Given a mandate by KBOO's elected board to address the decline, Fitch said she set about to bring policies in line with what's sustainable, legal and standard at other non-profits. Further policy changes are frozen, however, while the union process is resolved. Under federal law, once workers give notice they want a union, an employer is supposed to hold off making changes until it can be determined whether it's supposed to negotiate those with a union. In most cases, the NLRB holds an election about six weeks after workers request it.

No election date has been scheduled.

To discuss the recent changes, the KBOO board has called a membership meeting for May 4 at 1 p.m., at Tabor Space, 5441 SE Belmont St., Portland.

### Track CEO pay

The AFL-CIO released Executive PayWatch 2013, a searchable database tracking the excessive pay of corporate CEOs. To view the database and compare your own pay to that of a CEO, go to <http://tinyurl.com/cauuvka>.

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