

Machinists Union challenge slate moves forward

A Portland Boeing worker is in the running for national IAM office

A team of seven candidates has cleared the first hurdle in a challenge to the national leadership of 577,000 member International Association of Machinists (IAM). The slate is led by Connecticut railroad mechanic and former union rep Jay Cronk, and it includes Pat Maloney, a Local Lodge 63 member at Boeing's Gresham aircraft parts plant.

On Jan. 25, roughly 800 local lodges around the United States held nominating meetings. Cronk's slate received nominations in about 95 of them. In 14 local lodges, candidates on Cronk's slate were the only ones nominated, and thus were automatically endorsed by those locals. The other 80-plus local lodges will choose who to endorse in meetings that are scheduled to be held Feb. 8.

In the Portland area, Maloney's Local Lodge 63 was the only local to nominate the Cronk slate; the slate of incumbent Thomas Buffenbarger was also nominated in Local 63, so it will hold the Feb. 8 special meeting to de-



PAT MALONEY

cide which to endorse.

Any candidates winning the endorsement of at least 25 local lodges on Feb. 8 will appear on the national ballot, which will be voted on by members at the first regularly scheduled meeting of each local lodge in April.

The entire process is being overseen by the U.S. Department of Labor, which found last year that IAM election rules ran afoul of a federal law, and called for a re-run election.

Besides Cronk, who's running for IAM international president, the slate includes Dale Cancienne for general secretary treasurer and five candidates for general vice president, including Maloney. Because election rules require that locals nominate for all eight general vice president positions, the Cronk slate also added three incumbent vice presidents to its list: Mark Blondin, Gary Allen, and Lynn Tucker. That means that regardless of whoever prevails in April, those three will continue on as vice presidents. Allen is currently assigned to IAM's western region, while Blondin, who for years was assigned to the aerospace division, has been reassigned to IAM's southern region.

Bernard changes mind, votes to give county ambulance contract to AMR

Clackamas County Commissioner Jim Bernard has had a change of heart and will vote to award the county's emergency ambulance service to American Medical Response (AMR).

At a commissioners work session Feb. 4, Bernard proposed that the county negotiate a new ambulance contract with AMR. He was supported by Commissioners Martha Schrader and Paul Savas, and opposed by Chair John Ludlow and Commissioner Tootie Smith.

About 140 paramedics, emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and dispatchers are members of Teamsters Local 223.

AMR won the open bidding process on April 24, 2013, as it was the only company to submit a proposal. Nonunion rival Metro West Ambulance had a bid prepared, but missed the filing deadline.

Commissioners voted 3-2 in May to "issue an intent to award" the contract to AMR, with Bernard and Ludlow dissenting. AMR then entered into negotiations with county staff and other stakeholders and came to terms on a final contract.

But when Savas and Schrader tried to move the contract forward, they were opposed by Ludlow and Smith. Bernard abstained from voting, leaving the board deadlocked at 2-2. In recusing himself, Bernard

claimed he had been "threatened" by AMR: An email by AMR General Manager Randy Lauer said he would raise money to back a candidate to run against Bernard and refers to Bernard as "enemy #1."

AMR and the Teamsters Union think that Bernard — a former mayor of Milwaukie and the board's longest-serving member (since 2008) — orchestrated putting the ambulance service contract out for bid in 2012. AMR has held the ambulance service contract in Clackamas County since 1993.

Bernard, who is up for re-election this year, denies the allegation.

The board's inaction spurred residents of Clackamas County and employees of AMR to attend weekly commission meetings and work sessions, where they pressed commissioners to finalize the contract. The county's Emergency Medical Services Council and all of the county's fire departments agreed that AMR should get the contract.

At a standing-room-only work session on Jan. 21, Bernard surprised everyone when he voted with Ludlow and Smith *not to accept* AMR's bid, and to reissue the request for pro-

posals (RFP).

AMR then filed a \$20 million tort claim demanding that commissioners approve its proposal or, at least extend its existing contract for four years. The company said confidential information had been published on the county's website that revealed trade secrets, which put it at a disadvantage should the county issue a new RFP.

Bernard surprised everyone again at the Feb. 4 work session.

"Two weeks ago, I made a decision that I felt strongly about," Bernard said. "On quiet reflection, I've realized that the decision I made was the wrong one."

Bernard apologized to residents of Clackamas County and to AMR employees, "who are my heroes."

Bernard said his goal has always been to provide the best emergency response service possible for the best price. "I failed to see that we had achieved a contract that is not only responsive, but is at a reduced price, is innovative, and has a greater partnership," he said. "These are all things that we can be proud of, and now it's time to move forward."

"I am grateful that it's not too late to do the right thing."

AFSCME backs Bailey in Multnomah County

At its Jan. 15 meeting, members of AFSCME Local 88 voted to endorse Jules Bailey for Multnomah County Commission. Local 88 represents 2,600 employees of Multnomah County. Bailey and fellow candidate Brian Wilson are vying for the commission seat vacated by Deb Kafoury, who's running for County chair.

Local 88's political action committee interviewed Bailey and Wilson, and held a forum for members to hear from the two. In the members-only discussion that followed, members praised both candidates, but Bailey was the unanimous pick in the vote to endorse.

Bailey is a three-term state representative with a stellar pro-labor voting record. In the 2013 legislative session, Oregon AFSCME awarded him a 110 percent rating: Not only did he vote in accord with the union 100 percent of the time, but he worked behind the scenes to advance legislation.

Bailey was one of only a handful of legislators to publicly criticize Gov. John Kitzhaber's "grand bargain" legislation in a September 2013 special session, and he voted against the legislation, which cut public employee pensions (PERS) and gave big tax breaks to small businesses. Ironically, the Oregonian editorial board singled out Bailey for that defiance, writing that "County voters should remember his

position on PERS reform." Bailey said he'd be only too glad if they did: Cutting pension benefits of retired workers is wrong.

For Bailey, PERS is personal, too: His father, a lifelong AFSCME member, collects a public employee pension after a career at the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development. Bailey credits his dad's union-negotiated health benefits for the affordable medical treatment he received when at age 15 he fractured his spine in three places.

As a legislator, he also helped pass "green jobs" legislation, including the law that created Clean Energy Works Oregon and set wage, benefit, and apprenticeship standards for workers on publicly subsidized residential weatherization projects.

Bailey came to labor's aid outside the Capitol too: walking strike picket lines with members of AFSCME at the Metropolitan Education Service District, officiating in a card-check unionization effort, and writing a letter to Xerox calling on them to settle a contract.

The other contender for county commission, Brian Wilson, is a commercial real estate developer and investor. At the Local 88 forum, he said all the right things on the labor litmus issues: Prevailing wage, he said, is the right thing to do, while as for "union busting" Ini-

tiative Petition 9, "it's bullshit." Wilson also earned kudos from Local 88 members for his volunteer service on countless task forces and commissions, including his work alongside the union to pass a special library funding district.

But between the two it was hard not to see Bailey as the union pick.

Bailey said he would commit to raising money to oppose IP 9, which he said is part of a national effort to attack unions.

"We don't just want to defeat it," Bailey told Local 88 members. "We want it to go down in flames."

Besides Local 88, Bailey is endorsed by Communication Workers of America Local 7901, United Food & Commercial Workers Local 555, and IBEW Local 48.

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LERC to host PERC March 20

The University of Oregon Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) will host its 28th Public Employment Relations Conference (PERC) Thursday, March 20, at the Salem Conference Center. PERC is a gathering of public sector labor relations professionals from across Oregon, including attorneys, neutrals, and representatives from both unions and management.

This year, a morning plenary session will cover recent cases before the Oregon Employment Relations Board. That will be followed by workshops dealing with labor lawyer ethics, Obamacare's impact on public employee health insurance, and mediation, arbitration, and family and medical leave and other topics. The conference will conclude with a social hour.

For more details and registration information visit lerc.uoregon.edu or contact Helen Moss at hmoss@uoregon.edu.



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