

I'll apologize in advance for the length of this report. If you'd like to just go directly to parts of the report that you may have an interest in I've color coded parts for quick reference. Grey background are International Executive Board Members comments. Blue background indicate Local 551 delegates speaking.

March 11-13, 2019 the UAW held our Special Bargaining Convention. The delegates for the Constitutional Convention also serve at the Bargaining Convention. The delegates were Scott Houldieson, Tommy Kottalis, Mike Marzillo, Terri Houldieson filled in for Chris Pena on Monday and Tuesday, Aaron Straker filled in for Coby Millender, Jeff Bacon, and Kenya Townsend. Alternate delegate Steve DenHartog.

The Special Bargaining Convention brings delegates from the many different sectors of the UAW together to discuss the strategy for bargaining across the variety of UAW represented workplaces.



As the Convention started a busload of retirees arrived from UAW Local 599 Retiree Chapter in Flint, Michigan. They were chanting and carrying signs asking for help. Retiree pensions have been frozen while the cost of living, including healthcare costs have skyrocketed since the VEBA took over their healthcare coverage. I loved seeing retirees lobbying their union for improvements in their standard of living. After all they are the ones who went on strike and sacrificed so we could have the standard of living we now enjoy. Decades of concessions have lowered that standard of living.

The Convention starts with several ceremonial functions like the posting of the colors etc. Next are procedural



Report By Scott Houldieson

items – Introduction of the International Executive Board, Introduction of committees etc. The Credentials Committee reported 576 delegates from all around the UAW.

There were some positive things that came out of the Bargaining Convention. For instance, on Monday UAW International President Gary Jones announced that the International Executive Board decided to **increase strike pay benefits** from \$200 per week to \$250 per week effective immediately. Then, in January of next year strike pay would increase again to \$275 per week. This is in addition to the health insurance and life insurance the union pays while members are on strike.

Tuesday morning Secretary Treasurer Ray Curry gave a report on the union finances. The General Operating Fund balance is a healthy \$67 million. Because of the increase in union dues, the Strike and Defense Fund started this year at \$767 million and has continued an upward trajectory in January and February. Since the dues increase passed in 2014 the Strike and Defense Fund has grown on average \$44.25 million per year.

There were also items to be concerned about. A report on new technology showed some challenging times ahead for workers. Also democratic process, promised in the UAW Constitution, was not followed. The first example was when the rules for the Special Convention were read. They were the same rules as the last Convention. At the 2015 Bargaining Convention I had proposed an amendment from "Bridge the Gap" to "Eliminate the Gap" in reference to the tiered wage and benefit structure. These rules prevented me from make that amendment. This time I wanted to amend that rule so delegates could make amendments to the resolution.

Secretary Treasurer Ray Curry was chairing the Convention at this time. When he asked if there was any discussion I raised my hand and was recognized. I reminded everyone of my attempt to make a single word change four years ago. "We were discussing the issue of bringing pay equity within our units. The resolution from four years ago included the phrase Bridge the Gap. At that time I requested to amend the resolution to Eliminate the Gap to strengthen the language in that resolution. That's what our membership wanted and that's what I requested. That amendment was eventually denied because amendments to committee reports weren't allowed."

"So I would like to make a motion to amend rule number seven of the Committee Reports to allow for amendments to the report from the floor. To keep it in a reasonable manner I would propose that it match the requirement for resolutions which requires eighty eight delegates to support that."

Secretary Treasurer Curry ruled my motion out of order. He stated only a motion to adopt the rules would be allowed at this point.

I asked: "Under what rules? These rules haven't been adopted at this point so this would fall under Roberts Rules of Order. I think that's a proper motion under Roberts Rules of Order."

Secretary Treasurer Curry consulted with the parliamentarian and came back to say: "Brother there's an open motion on the floor with regard to the rules being adopted. You can appeal this decision." He then proceeded to take the vote.

One of the greatest advantages of union membership is democracy in the workplace. This decision along with a later decision to suppress the democratic process are violations of the UAW

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Constitution. As Secretary Treasurer Curry suggested I am filing an appeal.

The next portion of the Proposed Resolution read was **Political Action & V-CAP**. It opens by saying the UAW is politically active because our ability to make progress for workers at the bargaining table is tied to our ability to elect pro-labor candidates to office. We must be involved to advance the interests of workers on issues like workplace health & safety, trade policy, the right to organize, the right to a fair collective bargaining process, pensions, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and civil and human rights. One of the ways to ensure that all working Americans are represented in politics is to help elect pro-worker candidates and hold them accountable.

For discussion on V-CAP I was recognized to speak in favor of the resolution. Here's what I had to say:

"There's a couple of things I'd like to push forward in the V-CAP realm. That is that V-CAP isn't just about money. We need to get our committees active in the streets. I want to commend my union sister Kenya Townsend for organizing a bus to Washington DC for the Women's March. We need to participate in these activities as a union, as members. The Science March, the Climate March, The March for Our Lives – all of these are important political activities. They are just as important as the ballot box. In between elections we need to be active.

In addition we need to recruit our own. We need to recruit UAW members to run for political office. That would include in our contracts the need to get leaves of absences for people who are elected to represent us at the state, federal and local level – so if you are elected as a town council member and you have to serve part time in that capacity that language should be included in our contracts. Currently in the Ford Contract, where I work, only full time representatives are recognized in the contract. So we need to expand that to part time office holders as well.

Finally I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that when we come to deciding what candidates we support, we need to remember those candidates who supported us. In June of 2017 we all remember the March On Mississippi when we were trying to organize the workers at Nissan. What presidential candidate was there and had our backs and was there to try and support us in our organizing efforts? Several delegates shouted Bernie. I said Bernie Sanders was there – that's right! (Applause) We need to remember that when it comes time to endorse a candidate for the 2020 elections. Because a candidate who will walk the picket line with us, a candidate who will speak to the issues we hold dear is the candidate that we need to support. That's my opinion and I hope that's the opinion of the majority of UAW members and the Community Action Program. Thank You very much." (Applause).

Three busses of retirees came from Toledo to lobby for pension and retirement healthcare improvements. After demonstrating in the lobby they were asked to sit in the guest gallery section of the convention hall.

Our discussion of the Proposed Resolution resumed after a video of legendary UAW President Walter Reuther being interviewed in 1955 about the unions demand for profit sharing in our contract. We then held debate over the Sections **Wages and Salaries** and **Profit Sharing**. There was a lot of good discussion on these issues.

Gary Walkowicz from Local 600 spoke against the resolution. He pointed out that current retirees deserve a raise in pensions. Extremely important is the need to address lack of traditional pensions for many of our members. Gary reminded us that major strikes took place for weeks and months to win secure retirement.

Martha Grevatt from Local 869 had some concerns with the resolution. First was the concern that none of the delegates received a booklet with the submitted resolutions from local unions. Martha's local passed a resolution calling for the restoration of Cost of Living Allowance (COLA). She reminded us that COLA was won in the early 1950's and suspended during the recession and bankruptcy. "The recession is over! The companies are making obscene profits! Let's get COLA back! Delegates applauded her call for COLA restoration."

Martha also pointed out that we must take responsibility for the number of tiers allowed by the 2015 contract. In the Fiat Chrysler America (FCA) contract there are traditional tier, two pay scales for In Progression depending upon their date of hire, two tiers of temporary workers and an entire plant of lower wage scale workers at Marysville Axle. This division needs to be fixed. That's why she opposed the resolution.

Kamila Degree from Local 1700 was next to speak against the resolution. She echoed Martha's call for COLA restoration. She also talked about tiered benefits. At FCA there's a need for stronger healthcare for new workers. It takes three years to get dental coverage and five years to get vision coverage.

From our local **Mike Marzillo rose to speak in favor of the resolution**. Here's what he said: "I want to talk about this tier system. I gotta tell you we at Ford have many tiers. We have employees that as temps only work three days a week. We fight for \$15 as a minimum wage and they make just a little bit over that. Can you live on that? I couldn't put food on the table and put kids through college at that wage. We need to end these tiers. Even if they do get converted it takes eight years to get to a full wage! Is that fair? Absolutely Not! I am in favor of this resolution. We need to end this. We had a speaker Derrick Johnson talk about profit sharing for everyone. When you're a temp you get no profit sharing. You get no benefits. It needs to stop! We need an even playing field. We can't be labeled as the Wall Mart of the auto industry. (applause) We need to stop having full time part timers. We need to be all one. Cause as it's stated here "We Are One!" I'm fully in support of all this. Thank you."



UAW Local 551 Delegates Mike Marzillo, Kenya Townsend and Alternate Terri Houldieson who was filling in for Chris Pena.

I was recognized to speak against the resolution. Here's what happened:

"First of all, I want to take care of a little business. We have a lot of great topics that we are discussing but there are several that need to be discussed at this convention. If we need to extend the time period for the convention so be it."

"We've skipped over, under Economic Issues, Retirement Income. That's very important, not only to the folks sitting in the back of the room here who haven't had a raise or COLA increase on their pension in years, (applause especially by the retirees from Toledo) but also for those coming up who are under a defined contribution pension rather than a defined benefit pension. These are important issues that need to be discussed."

"Also healthcare. The brother earlier discussed the increases in their healthcare costs. We need to have a thorough discussion on healthcare. That's on page 18."

"Also Investment Commitments. In the current atmosphere with GM slating four of our plants for closure in the middle of a contract that includes a moratorium on plant closings. **We Need To Have A Discussion About That!** (applause) So I move that we bring all of those issues up for discussion in this convention." Several delegates seconded my motion.

Vice President Estrada, sensing a pause in my comments, said "thank you brother. Are you done?"

I replied "no I have a motion that I've put on the floor to bring these issues up for discussion."

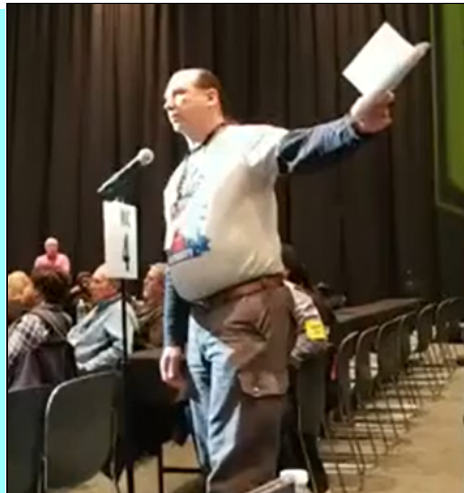
Vice President Estrada replied. "So we are talking on the resolution."

I said. "Yes we are talking on the resolution and not on the agenda is Retirement Income on page 16, Healthcare on page 18, and Investment Commitment on page 53. Those are not on the agenda. I'd like them to be added to the agenda. I'm making a motion to add them to the agenda."

Vice President Estrada said. "So brother you're out of order but we do have a comprehensive set of resolutions that we are still going to debate over the next day and a half."

To that I replied. "How am I out of order to ask to discuss these resolutions that are in this book? They are here!"

Vice President Estrada replied. "There's a comprehensive list that we are going over. There's also the resolutions that are going to the Bargaining Committees now, as we speak, that are coming up from the locals. So you're out of order."



Scott Houldieson making a case for further discussion on sections of the Bargaining Resolution on Retirement Income, Healthcare, and Investment Commitments.

I continued, "They are here and they're not on our agenda and they are very important issues. We really need to discuss these."

Vice President Estrada said. "We are speaking on a particular resolution and so you are out of order. We are going to continue to talk on this resolution."

I responded that "I'd like to challenge the decision of the chair to call me out of order and ask the delegates to vote on that decision." (applause)

Vice President Estrada then said "OK so we are going to need a two thirds vote. So it takes a two thirds vote to override the chair. So we are going to take a vote right now. All those in favor of the motion raise your hands. OK brother that's not two thirds of the Bargaining Convention Delegates. Thank you."

I responded "OK I understand. Do I still have time left to discuss this resolution?"

Vice President Estrada said "I don't think you do. I think you took your time with all of that."

I responded "Is there a timekeeper that's keeping time?"

Vice President Estrada asked the timekeeper who indicated that I still had time left. So I persisted. "OK on the current section of the resolution that we are talking about, I stand against it because it does not include COLA. I'll make this short and sweet and I'd like you all to help me out.

**NO COLA – NO CONTRACT!
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After discussion on Wages, Salaries and Profit Sharing ended Vice President Estrada introduced the FCA National Negotiating Team. These are the men and women who will be helping negotiate the contract between the UAW and FCA.

Vice President Terry Dittes chaired the discussion on the part of the resolution about Organizing. All the delegates were in favor of organizing to grow our union.

After debate on organizing ended Vice President Dittes talked about GM negotiations. "GM has been making the most profits and selling the most cars, trucks, vans and crossovers in the US for many years. GM, who sells the most cars, trucks, vans in the United States does not build the most cars, trucks, SUV's in the United States. That honor belongs to Ford Motor Company. GM builds one third of their cars in Mexico for the purpose of sending them to the United States for sale.

That's what we are up against as we open negotiations this summer. I can tell you we are ready for the fight. I know you are ready for the fight. I know our members are ready for the fight. It's time for us to stand up and it's time for us to take what belongs to us.

As we talk about General Motors, who builds over 700,000 vehicles in Mexico, on November 26, 2018 they came out with their announcement. It endangers four UAW locations in the United States, Baltimore, Maryland, Hamtramick, and Warren, Michigan, Lordstown, Ohio.

Through our negotiations GM agreed to keep product through the end of the year at Hamtramick. That doesn't mean we are forgetting about the other three locations. In our opinion based on the contract they violated the contract and there was an agreement to keep them operating through the life of the agreement. We are not quitting on that. We are not quitting on product. When they hurt one they hurt us all.

But don't kid yourself. There are more plants that may be in jeopardy as time goes on. I know this is not the good will speech you want to hear but you need to know the truth. You deserve to know what's going on. So we can come together as one body when we go into negotiations.

I know that this membership will not retreat. I know that this membership will not back off. This membership will support their leadership. I know that communities will be with us. I know America will be with us." (Applause) Then the National Negotiating for GM was introduced.

A part of the resolution deals with the **Opioid Crisis an Addiction in the Workplace**. Alternate Delegate Terri Houldieson was filling in for Chris Pena and was recognized to speak on this issue. Here's what Terri said: "This is a great resolution. It's definitely something we need. But I also want to bring awareness to the fact that the hours that we work forces a lot of our members to turn to opiates and other means of relieving pain. That a big part of the opiate addiction is from the hours that we work. With that being said, instead of forcing overtime and forcing us to work all these hours, why can't we fight for the eight hour work day back? That would reduce a lot of this."



Terri Houldieson speaking at the convention about the pain workers endure from excessive mandatory overtime and its relation to the opioid crisis.

The final topic for the second day of the convention was **Temporary Work**. I was recognized to speak against the resolution. Here are my comments: "I rise to speak against this resolution not because I don't want to see temporary workers lives improved. In fact, much to the contrary, I want to see vast improvements in the lives of temporary workers. In fact I think that's a term in the auto industry that ought to disappear.

Our Ford contract has two different types of temporary workers. We have Short Term Supplementals. Now by short term we mean a year. After a year you would automatically be put into the seniority category. We also have Temporary Part Time, which means you can work almost full time but you don't have the same wages or benefits.

None of the temporary workers, and we have hundreds of them, get the bonuses. None of them get the profit sharing bonuses yet they are a huge part of the profits that these companies make. So if we are going to continue having temporary workers we need to get them profit sharing and bonuses that other workers get because they con-

tribute just as much to the profits of these companies as we do.

Another problem with the temporary classification is that it's precarious. The just cause clause of the contract doesn't fully apply to temporary workers. The discrimination part of it does but they are considered as probationary employees for an extended period. Now the Temporary Part Time workers have a four year wage progression in our contract currently. Now I personally find it absolutely absurd that you would classify someone as temporary if they're working for you for four years! We need to get rid of the temporary language if at all possible, but we need to make vast improvements if we can't eliminate it.

So with that I'm going to say I stand against this resolution because it doesn't go far enough. When it comes time to vote on this omnibus resolution I'm going to recommend that we vote it down and make improvements because we can't make amendments from the floor. Thank you."

Delegate after delegate got up to speak about the abuse of temporary workers all throughout the convention.

Rory Gamble, Vice President over the Ford Department, introduced the Ford National Negotiating Team. UAW Local 551's very own Tommy Kottalis is part of the National Negotiating Team!

Vice President Gamble gave the Ford Sector Report. "As you know at Ford we have been experiencing about nine years of good times. We are anticipating and planning, as we should do, for any economic upsets that could face us. However, we are holding them to nine years of good economic times for our members.

We've had some great accomplishments in our facilities. We've got a lot of new launches coming on right now. The Ranger is proving that there's a market for small trucks and our members over at Local 900 are building a product that America can not get enough of. We have a brand new Aviator and a redesigned Explorer coming out of Chicago. The Escape and the Lincoln MKC are coming out of Louisville. We are proud of all of these accomplishments.

We also lost two shifts. We lost one at FRAP and one down at Louisville, but because of the great products we have we don't anticipate anybody hitting the streets. We normally would have been in a hiring mode but God Bless this great contract we have. We expect everyone to be gainfully employed.

2019 Ford Negotiators



- Bernie Ricke
(Chairperson)
- Tommy Kottalis
- Valerie Rogers
- Mike Beydoun
- Paul Lafave
- Larry Stewart
- Michael Donovan
- Tom Lane
- Greg Tyler
- Jason Germonprez
- Roger Magg
- Andy Weaktland
- Jon Jagger
- Frank Murray
- Pam Wilson
- Tim Kinney
- Tony Richard
- Dale Rogers

Since 2015 we had 3,451 temporary employees who've converted to full time. Our Skilled Trades apprenticeship program is running full. We've added 1,182 new apprentices have been put on the program in the past three and a half years. We're been getting calls throughout the industry asking about our apprenticeship program. You can get on the apprenticeship list now irregardless of seniority, race, sex or age. You go pick up three classes and you get on the list. I think that's wonderful.

Negotiations are going to be tough. We are preparing our members. My good friend Gary Walkowicz, who I've worked with for many years, made some great points about preparedness. Of course because of legalities there are some things I can't say about preparedness. But our members need to be prepared for the fight ahead. It's all of our responsibility to impart the importance of unity, standing together and defending this organization. I'm talking about the organization. I'm not talking about personalities. I'm talking about putting this organization first. Despite our political differences, despite our opinions there's one component that we all know and love. That's this organization.

We have faced some difficult challenges. Challenges from within. From people who quite frankly have betrayed the trust. The trust of you, the trust of all of us up here. That's a problem with the personality. Our leadership, our staff needs to recognize that the organization comes first. Irregardless of what I tell somebody on my team to do, they've got to love this organization first. If I tell them something that's wrong, I expect them to go see Gary Jones. The focus is protecting this great organization that means so much to all of us and all of our members and their families. So I'd like all of you to join with me in reaffirming our love and commitment not to self, not to idolize anyone but to idolize this organization first." (Applause)

I hope this report gives you a sense of how the Bargaining Convention was conducted. For more details much of the convention was posted on my Facebook.