

# HEARING NOTES

**Resolution: 21-0050R**

**Informational Hearing – Museum Workers’ Right to Organize**

**Committee:** Education, Workforce, and Youth

**Chaired by:** Robert Stokes, Sr.

**Hearing Date:** Thursday, October 14, 2021

**Time (Beginning):** 10:00 AM

**Time (Ending):** 12:05 PM

**Location: Virtual “WebEx” Meeting**

**Total Attendance:** Approximately 90

**Committee Members in Attendance:**

Robert Stokes, Sr. James Torrence

John Bullock Sharon Green Middleton

Antonio Glover Zeke Cohen

Phylicia Porter

**Bill Synopsis in the file?** **[x]  yes** **[ ]  no** **[ ]  n/a**

**Attendance sheet in the file?** **[x]  yes [ ]  no [ ]  n/a**

**Agency reports read? [ ]  yes [x] no [ ]  n/a**

**Video or audio-digitally recorded? [x]  yes [ ]  no [ ]  n/a**

**Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file?** **[ ]  yes [ ]  no [x]  n/a**

**Evidence of notification to property owners?** **[ ]  yes [ ]  no [x]  n/a**

**Final vote taken at this hearing? [x]  yes [ ]  no [ ]  n/a**

**Motioned by: Councilmember Porter**

**Seconded by: Councilmember Cohen**

**Final Vote: Favorable**

**Major Speakers**

*(This is not an attendance record.)*

* Hilary Ruley, Law Department
* Yvette Brown, Labor Commission
* Glenn Middleton, Executive Director, AFSMCE 67 Union
* Teague Paterson, AFSMCE Union
* Ruby Waldo, Employee, Walters Art Museum
* Dr. Julia Marciari-Alexander, Director, Walters Art Museum
* Gregory Bailey, Walters Workers United
* Ashley Dimmig, Walters Workers United
* William Murray, Walters Art Museum Employee
* Garrett Stralnic, Walters Art Museum Employee
* Greg Hatem, Walters Art Museum Employee
* Jordan Robinson, Walters Art Museum Employee
* Margaret Palmquist, City Resident/Public Speaker
* Sam Mera-Candedo, Walters Art Museum Employee
* Max Fischer, Public Speaker

## Major Issues Discussed

1. Councilman Torrence, primary sponsor of the Resolution gave opening remarks, “This hearing will allow us to better understand the labor unionization process, he said.”
2. The representative from the Law Department discussed their agency report. She talked about some of the Federal labor laws and stated, Walters Art Museum employees are not city employees therefore the Resolution is not within the Law Department’s expertise; the City does not have the authority to assist in their unionization efforts.”
3. The Executive Director for AFSMCE 67 Union testified. Some highlights from his conversation were:
	* The Union represents over 6,000 members
	* Need to extend collective bargaining rights to the Walters Art Museum’s employee
	* How can we right this wrong! Need to negotiate positive change
4. Two (2) employees from the museum gave PowerPoint Presentations. Copies are in the bill file. Both supported the Resolution and felt management for the museum refuses to unionize the employees
5. The Director of the museum testified. Some highlights from her conversation were:
	* There are no institutional impediment stopping employees from unionizing
	* There is a process available for employees to move forward to unionize; however, at this point in the process, management have no role in unionizing
	* She is supportive of employees’ rights to unionize and believes it is feasible for them to do so, but at this point she has no role in their efforts to unionize
	* As Director of the museum her role is to represent all employees of the museum
6. Two (2) speakers on behalf of Walter Workers United testified. Some highlights from their conversation(s) were:
	* Talked about the challenges associated with unionizing and/or collective bargaining
	* Believes workers are not supported as they should be
	* Wants more transparency and less re-organization
	* Want the Council to support their right to collective bargaining
7. The committee/council members asked questions, made comments and/or asked for clarifications. Some highlights of same were:
* Question to Mr. Paterson, Walters Workers United
	+ You mentioned in your testimony that the Council have the authority to introduce an Ordinance for collective bargaining – Can you talk more about this?
* Question: Is and/or what other recourse do the workers have to unionize?
* Comment/Question: We understand that there is an impasse between management and the workers; can’t management meet with the workers to discuss unionization? Answer: Per the Director of Walters Art Museum, “She can’t meet with them because she represents all employees and must stay neutral at this point of the process.”
* Question: Have any other unions expressed interest in this matter? Answer: No
* Comment/Question: Some clarification is needed for ‘what are your challenges for unionization; it appears to be a gap in communication and hope they can come together.
* Question: What constitutes interference in the process?
* Question: What jobs are being pushed to be unionized? Answer: Mostly all of the workers
* Question: Are there any full-time temporary employee workers there now?
* Questions to Labor Commission:
	+ Can the Commission oversee a third-party election? Answer: No, but can validate the election results
	+ Can we receive authorization to count the votes? Answer: Yes, but would use an outside party to do same
* Question to Walters Workers United representative:
	+ Have you gone to the NNRB for a ruling? Answer: No
1. Approximately eight (8) other speakers gave public testimony. Some highlights of same were:
	* Talked about work environment
		+ The last exodus/firing/layout that occurred over the past year
		+ How staff are treated
		+ Ineffective communication
		+ Long workdays/overworked
		+ No bargaining rights
		+ Toxic work environment
		+ Safety & Qualify of Life concerns
		+ Undervalued
		+ Hostile Work environment
		+ Some employees fired for no reason
		+ Workers deserves request
	* Felt management should take a more aggressive approach towards employees’ unionizing
	* All were in support of the Resolution
		+ Supports workers to become unionized
2. The chairman, the primary sponsor of the Resolution and one other committee member gave closing remarks. Some of those remarks included:
	* There is clearly a difference of opinions, legal consultation is the next step
	* Clearly see a difference from both sides on the issue
	* These workers are citizens of Baltimore City who work and worship here
* Applauded workers for bring the matter to the Council’s attention and look forward to working with management.
1. Vote taken.

## Further Study

**Was further study requested? [ ]  Yes [x]  No**

**If yes, describe.**

**Committee Vote:**

R. Stokes, Sr. **Yea**

J. Bullock **Yea**

Z. Cohen **Yea**

A. Glover **Yea**

S. Green Middleton **Abstain**

P. Porter **Yea**

J. Torrence **Yea**



Marguerite Murray Currin, Committee Staff Date: October 18, 2021

cc: Bill File

 OCS Electronic File