



JUNE 26, 2019 NATIONAL BARGAINING KICK-OFF CEREMONY





FIRST MAIN TABLE BARGAINING SESSION AT NPMHU HQ



National CAD Representative and Asst to the Ntl. President—Bobby Blum



National President Paul Hogrogian



National Secretary-Treasurer Michael Hora



National CAD Representative Kevin Fletcher



National CAD Representative Charles Manago



PAUL V. HOGROGIAN

NATIONAL PRESIDENT

MICHAEL J. HORA

SECRETARY-TREASURER

2019 CONTRACT UPDATE #1

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING BEGINS

2019 NO. 1 — JUNE 27, 2019

You are reading the first Contract Update produced and distributed by the NPMHU during the course of 2019 negotiations. These updates, along with the Union's magazine and monthly bulletins, will keep mail handlers throughout the country informed and involved in the issues raised during this round of bargaining.

Bargaining has officially begun! By the time this is posted, representatives from the NPMHU Negotiations Team and the Postal Service will have met for the Opening Session of this round of bargaining taking place on Thursday, June 27.

February's Field Negotiating Committee and this month's convening of the

National Executive Board have produced a final series of proposals—the majority of which were submitted by members from across the country—to amend or create new provisions throughout the NPMHU National Agreement. It is our hope that these improvements will be considered, understood, accepted, and implemented by the USPS for the betterment of all mail handlers. Over the course of the next three months, our bargaining team will present each of these proposed changes during negotiations.

During Thursday's session which officially opened 2019 bargaining, National President Hogrogian and Postmaster General Megan Brennan gave opening statements creating the foundation for this year's bargaining process. Excerpts from these statements will be available on the NPMHU website, npmhu.org, in the coming days.

WHO'S AT THE TABLE?

This year's Negotiations Team will consist of President Hogrogian; Secretary-Treasurer Michael Hora; Manager of the Contract Administration Department Teresa Harmon; National CAD Representatives Kevin Fletcher, Charles Manago, and Bobby Blum; and our legal team from the NPMHU General Counsel's office. The USPS will be represented by Vice President of Labor Relations Doug Tulino, chief spokesperson Patrick Devine, and legal counsel.

BARGAINING OVERVIEW

Our current National Agreement is scheduled to expire on September 20, 2019. The goal is to obtain a tentative National Agreement, subject to membership ratification, by that date, but previous rounds of bargaining have often been extended to allow the parties to continue meeting to finalize their collaboration. However, if no final agreement is reached, there are alternative dispute resolution procedures that would determine the changes to

the National Agreement in final and binding interest arbitration.

Looking back on prior rounds of negotiations, the Union has presented its non-economic proposals first, followed by the Postal Service's non-economic proposals. That often leads to a series of reactions and counter-proposals that will be drafted during the bargaining process.

While those subjects are being fully discussed, the Union will then develop and present its economic proposals: those which directly impact wages, benefits, premiums, and differentials. More specifically, the parties will treat Articles 9 and 21 as the key economic provisions, but will also include parts of Article 26 (clothing allowance) and Article 8 (night differential and Sunday premium pay) in the focused economic discussion.

On-the-record labor-management bargaining sessions will be routinely scheduled throughout the summer. Behind the scenes, the NPMHU Negotiations Team will be meeting constantly to ensure that all of the issues and proposals being prioritized in this round are carefully considered. Future editions of this Contract Update will outline some of what's being discussed this year, highlighting developments of negotiations as they occur. Please check your bulletin boards for more bargaining information throughout the coming weeks and months.

PLEASE POST!

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2019 CONTRACT UPDATE #2

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING UNDER THE PRA

2019 NO. 2 — JULY 11, 2019

You are reading the second Contract Update produced and distributed by the NPMHU during the course of 2019 negotiations. These updates, along with the Union's magazine and monthly bulletins, will keep mail handlers throughout the country informed about the issues raised during this round of bargaining.

In its first Contract Update, the NPMHU provided a brief overview of the bargaining process, with a focus on the opening session of June 27, 2019. To keep mail handlers informed about the negotiation process, here are more details about the controlling procedures.

The Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 (PRA) continues to govern the way the U.S. Postal Service engages with the postal unions. Under the provisions of this law, bargaining generally progresses as follows:

Collective bargaining is initiated when one party to the contract serves the other a written notice of an attempt to modify the current agreement. Article 39 of our National Agreement requires this notice to be served “not less than 90 nor more than 120 days”

before contract expiration. Note that our current contract is scheduled to expire on September 20, 2019, and the NPMHU thus notified the USPS about our desire to modify the contract in early June. The goal of both parties will be to agree in a timely manner, through good-faith negotiations, to changes to the existing contract proposed by one or both sides.

Should a tentative agreement be reached between the parties, it will then be subject to ratification in a vote (through mail ballot) by the membership of the NPMHU. If a tentative agreement is reached in September, the mail ballots would likely be distributed in October 2019. In the words of President Hogrogian during the opening of bargaining: “If management makes reasonable proposals and counterproposals at the bargaining table, we certainly will recommend ratification to our membership. We also hope for and expect the same attitude from postal management—that reasonable proposals from the Union will be met with acceptance.”

However, if the parties are unable to reach a tentative agreement to amend their contract, the PRA provides the parties with several pathways for moving forward. The most common course of action taken by the parties is to adopt dispute resolution procedures on their own. In the ground rules for 2019 bargaining, both parties agreed to have their respective lawyers discuss the adoption of dispute resolution procedures. If the parties cannot agree on these, then they must defer to the provisions in the PRA.

The PRA procedure contains several steps, summarized here:

1. The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) will establish a 3-person fact-finding panel. The NPMHU and USPS will each select a member from a list of 15 names provided by the FMCS. The third person will be jointly selected, or, if an



agreement cannot be reached, by the Director of the FMCS. The fact-finding panel has 45 days in which to investigate the disputes of bargaining and issue a report of its findings.

2. Should an agreement not be reached after fact-finding, the PRA requires that an arbitration board be established within 90 days of the contract's expiration. This board also typically consists of 3 members—one appointed by the Union, one by the Postal Service, and a neutral member. The neutral member is appointed either by agreement of the two other members, or by the Director of the FMCS in the case of disagreement.

3. The arbitration board holds a hearing in which both parties present evidence. It must make a decision 45 days after its appointment, unless mutually extended. So, a final arbitration award would not be issued until at least 135 days after the contract expires—no earlier than February 2020. Arbitration decisions are “binding” and “conclusive,” meaning that both parties must accept them. This is why the NPMHU's National President convenes a meeting of the Local Unions before even agreeing to enter the arbitration process.

[Continue to watch your bulletin boards and National website for the latest information.](#)

2019 CONTRACT UPDATE #3

BARGAINING'S FIRST TWO WEEKS

2019 NO. 3 — JULY 19, 2019

You are reading the third Contract Update produced and distributed by the NPMHU during the course of 2019 negotiations. These updates, along with the Union's magazine and monthly bulletins, will keep mail handlers throughout the country informed about the issues raised during this round of bargaining.

Bargaining is underway—at the time of this writing, the NPMHU has presented about half of its proposals, covering more than 40 pages of new or revised contract language, during Main Table meetings with the Postal Service. The Postal Service has stated they do not expect to introduce proposals of their own until later.

During July and August, the Union will continue meeting with postal management representatives several days per week. Some of these meetings are on-the-record, called “main Table” meetings, while others take place off the record in the form of smaller, informal subcommittees where focused discussions can be held at length. Subcommittees which have formed thus far focus on expanding coverage under Article 2, making adjustments

to Article 8 on overtime, dealing with various issues concerning Mail Handler Assistants, and subcontracting as authorized under Article 32. Articles 12 and 15 also have warranted early-formed subcommittees, especially as Article 12 outlines the complexities of seniority, bidding, and reassignments, and Article 15 forms the foundation of our grievance and arbitration rights. Our intention in forming these subcommittees is to allow for open and frank discussions while upholding those aspects of the National Agreement that the NPMHU believes are most critical. There will certainly be other subcommittees formed as we progress through the remainder of both parties' proposed changes.

Throughout this round's on-the-record meetings, President Hogrogian has outlined the non-economic demands of the unit clearly and repeatedly. The NPMHU proposals this year relate to most of the Articles and Memoranda contained throughout the National Agreement. Piece-by-piece, the Union aims to improve protection for all our current members and the fruits of their labor. In the last round of bargaining in 2016, the Union presented over 100 proposals. This round, the National Office is honing its efforts on a smaller number of total proposals so that we can perfect those which are most urgent. Many things have changed in three years, and we are both reflecting and looking ahead in our decision-making to protect and enhance the benefits that the Mail Handler workforce needs.

Ultimately, the NPMHU cannot know with precise certainty what will happen before the next round of contract renewal that is years away. The amendments we seek would increase the Union's flexibility to weather any change.

BARGAINING: WHAT HAPPENS IN A WEEK?

The bargaining schedule is made up of formal, on-the-record meetings and

less formal, off-the-record meetings. Main Table sessions are where all proposals are officially introduced by each party—under the ground rules for negotiations, no proposal can be considered until it has been presented to both sides in this formal setting. Meanwhile, subcommittees have been created—by mutual agreement—to address specific concerns more extensively.

In every round of bargaining, the smallest subcommittee group is focused on editing any cosmetic issues in the contract, such as amending typographical errors and ensuring that dates are updated to reflect the new contract cycle. The goal is to ensure that our National Agreement is as clear as possible for years to come. We will update you on subcommittee developments as bargaining progresses.

Altogether, even when meetings are scheduled two-to-four days a week, the negotiations schedule becomes a full-time endeavor. In addition to Main Tables and subcommittees, members of the NPMHU's Contract Administration Department and legal team are collaborating and meeting continuously to draft and revise proposals, to research facts and arguments, and to ensure an efficient and productive bargaining process.

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2019 CONTRACT UPDATE #4

NPMHU CONTINUES TO SUBMIT NON-ECONOMIC PROPOSALS

2019 NO. 4 — AUGUST 1, 2019

You are reading the fourth Contract Update produced and distributed by the NPMHU during the course of 2019 negotiations. These updates, along with the Union's website, magazine and monthly bulletins, will keep mail handlers informed about the issues raised during this round of bargaining.

The NPMHU and the U.S. Postal Service have now been engaged in collective bargaining for almost a full month. Here is a summary of what has transpired during this time, and an update on how negotiations are proceeding.

At this writing, the NPMHU has introduced the vast majority of its noneconomic bargaining proposals. This past week, for example, the Union presented more than thirty pages of proposals falling within the scope of Article 12 governing seniority, posting, and reassignments and Article 15 governing the grievance-arbitration procedure for handling disputes between the parties. Earlier, the Union had submitted all of its noneconomic proposals for Articles 1 through 14, and soon the Union will

hand over its suggestions for Articles 16 through 39. Even after these submissions are complete, that does not mean that the NPMHU will not be creating more proposals and counterproposals before bargaining is complete, both as adjustments to prior proposals and reactions to USPS-generated amendments for the National Agreement.

As is common, the Postal Service is delaying introduction of its own proposals, which normally are smaller in number but larger in impact. These likely will not be shared until August, although USPS counterproposals to the Union's proposals may come earlier. (The term "counterproposal" is used to describe any proposal brought forward by the Postal Service that is in direct response to an earlier NPMHU proposal. Likewise, a new proposal from the Union in response to a management proposal also is referred to as a counterproposal.)

The parties also have created a host of subcommittees. Each party's appointees to each subcommittee has been set, and the schedule for meetings of each subcommittee also is being drafted. To this point, the parties have agreed on subcommittees to deal with Article 2, Article 7 (employee classifications), Article 8 (overtime), Article 12, Article 15, Mail Handler Assistant issues, Article 32 (subcontracting), and MOUs and LOIs.

The key to success for many of these subcommittees will be for the Union, through its Local Unions or through the Regional or National Contract Administration Department, to develop facts and arguments from our firsthand knowledge of whatever flaws exist in current contract language, in implementation of the current contract language, or in the real-life situations and impact that the National Agreement has on the mail handler workforce. The National Office thanks the Locals and the various CAD representatives for their expected and now-routine cooperation in putting together these facts and arguments.

LOOKING FORWARD: FINANCIAL PRESENTATIONS

With the nearing submission of a complete package of non-economic proposals into the official record of bargaining, the parties will thereafter turn their attention to the major financial issues. The Postal Service is planning to provide the NPMHU with its official, on-the-record financial presentation toward the end of August. If past rounds of bargaining are any indication, the data to be presented will center on the Postal Service's dire predictions about its financial viability, with a particular emphasis on the continuing decline in mail volume and the continuing need to control or reduce labor costs. Potential legislative or regulatory action to eliminate the economic burden of the pre-funding mandate for the Retiree Health Benefits Fund, to authorize larger-than-inflation rate increases, or to remove other restrictions on the USPS business model will likely go unmentioned by the Postal Service, even though both parties fully recognize that such changes are needed if the Postal Service is going to be able to deal with its long-term financial challenges. It also is likely that the USPS will be discussing its oft-mentioned but seldom-seen Ten-Year Plan, which the Postal Service has been forced to put together by certain Members of Congress. That Plan is scheduled for public release in the near future, and may cause a disruption to the usual flow of national negotiations.

Future issues of these Contract Updates will report on the information that is exchanged during the various subcommittee meetings, as well as during the Main Table discussions of finances and other policy issues facing the parties.

As always, continue to watch your bulletin boards and the National website for the latest information.