



NATIONAL POSTAL MAIL HANDLERS UNION

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2016 Contract Update #4

Proposals and Counterproposals

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You are reading the fourth Contract Update produced and distributed by the NPMHU during the course of 2016 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.

As bargaining moves forward, both sides continue to bring additional proposals to the table.

At the main table session on Tuesday, April 5, the parties reconvened after a brief hiatus to receive and discuss several counterproposals from the Postal Service. Each proposal was presented by a different member of the Postal Service’s bargaining team. At the end of each presentation, the Union had an opportunity to seek clarification and ask questions.

“Counterproposal” is the term used to describe any proposal brought forward by the Postal Service in direct response to an earlier NPMHU proposal. Most of the currently outstanding proposals have been introduced organically, however. They are issues that the Postal Service hopes to rectify in this round of bargaining, rather than counterproposals to what the Union has already presented. In this sense, “counterproposal” is not the best way to account for the past few weeks of bargaining.

In fact, the free-wheeling subcommittee sessions are when proposals are most directly countered and challenged. The parties have been meeting in subcommittee with some regularity, and the sessions have certainly

been full of open discussions, sometimes even contentious. It still is too early to tell whether these discussions will prove to be productive.

It is in the subcommittees that promises are made to draft counterproposals. Both sides have stated the intention to revise some of their more heavily discussed proposals.

The potential of counterproposals was demonstrated by the introduction of the Article 11 subcommittee. The committee met for the first time on April 6, and the session was constructive because both sides previously had submitted proposals on the same set of issues. In other words, neither the Union nor the Postal Service simply wants to continue the status quo. But it still is much too early to determine whether the parties can reach a common ground or will revert to the current rules and procedures.

We can expect to see some more counterproposals presented at the main table in the next few sessions to come. This will shed more light on what may actually make its way into the 2016 National Agreement.

In the meantime, the Union’s bargaining team continues to research and review the Postal Service’s proposals, all the while working on writing proposals of its own. We expect to have over 100 proposals on the record before bargaining ends – topping the count from the last few rounds of negotiations.

Watch your bulletin boards for more bargaining information throughout the coming weeks.

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