



MAIL HANDLER UPDATE

NATIONAL POSTAL MAIL HANDLERS UNION

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Paul V. Hogrogian
National President

NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUE PAST DEADLINE



Michael J. Hora
Secretary-Treasurer

Since the beginning of June 2022, the NPMHU Negotiations Team has been working diligently to secure a new collective bargaining agreement with the U.S. Postal Service. For over three months, NPMHU representatives have spent countless hours analyzing and developing proposals and meeting with the USPS representatives.

Despite the concerted efforts of both parties, the NPMHU and USPS have so far been unable to reach a comprehensive, overall agreement on all the terms to be included in the 2022 National Agreement. Enough progress has been made over the negotiations period, however, to convince each side that an extension of the bargaining process might lead to a tentative agreement. Thus, an understanding has been reached between the NPMHU and the USPS to extend negotiations past midnight deadline on September 20, 2022, with the shared hope that further discussions could still lead to a negotiated agreement.

If the NPMHU and the Postal Service come to an agreement, it will be subject to a mail referendum ballot of the entire NPMHU membership. All regular, dues-paying members will have a chance to make their voices heard and give their assent to the new terms and conditions included in any final 2022 National Agreement.

In the meantime, the NPMHU Negotiations Team continues to work toward an overall agreement. President Hogrogian simultaneously has met with the National Executive Board for its direct input into whatever bargaining decisions need to be made. During this session, President Hogrogian and National Secretary-Treasurer Hora shared information with the five Regional Vice Presidents on the NEB to keep them updated.

In addition, the entire NPMHU Negotiations Team met with the Presidents and other representatives from all 36 Local Unions. During this critical meeting, President Hogrogian briefed the Local Presidents on the details of bargaining and the issues that remain important in the efforts to secure a contract. At the same time, the Local Presidents provided the NPMHU Negotiations Team with important feedback that will aid them in the final push for a completed 2022 National Agreement.

WHAT'S NEXT?

For the foreseeable future, the NPMHU's bargaining representatives will continue their work. In their efforts to reach a complete 2022 National Agreement, the NPMHU Negotiations Team will continue to meet with their counterparts at the Postal Service. Their priority will now be to finalize all the tentative agreements that have been reached with the Postal Service, including a careful review of every Memorandum of Understanding and Letter of Intent in the current agreement to determine which shall continue as is, which shall be amended to include an updated dates of coverage, which shall be substantively modified, and which shall be removed. In addition to solidifying the terms of non-economic agreements, both parties will labor to secure the key economic items included in the contract including general wage increases, cost-of-living adjustments, and night shift differentials.

If the parties find that, despite the deadline extension and the additional bargaining, they cannot agree on the contract's full terms, the parties will declare an impasse. This will begin the process of impasse resolution, which will eventually culminate in interest arbitration. The last

time the NPMHU and USPS entered into interest arbitration was over the terms of the 2011 National Agreement which culminated in the Fishgold Arbitration Award that was issued on February 15, 2013.

As always, the NPMHU would like to avoid possible interest arbitration—considered a last resort under the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970—with the sincere belief that the 2022 National Agreement can be resolved without the interference of a third-party arbitrator determining the contract's terms. Should the parties be forced into interest arbitration, however, the NPMHU Negotiations Team is ready and able to contest the matter.

In the meantime, both the Postal Service and the NPMHU understand that, if they end up in third-party interest arbitration, the tentative agreements that they have reached on individual proposals are not final, but rather are up for further discussion. They could be nullified by the arbitrators, they could be included in the arbitration award, or they could be ignored totally by the panel of arbitrators.

Regardless of the medium, or of the eventual end result, the NPMHU will continue to push for those items which are in the best interest of our membership. While the road to this point has been long and arduous, the NPMHU Negotiations Team remains determined as ever to secure a contract that is beneficial to the NPMHU and its members, the Mail Handler craft, the Postal Service, and the American mailing public.

For now, the NPMHU will continue meeting with its counterparts in the Postal Service—and will continue to consult with the Union's Local and Regional leaders—in its pressing goal to move closer and closer to a new National Agreement.

SAMLU APPROACHES

Your National Officers look forward to the assembly of Local Presidents and their delegations at the Semi-Annual Meeting of the Local Unions (SAMLU), starting at the end of October in Washington, DC. The three-day conference — to be held from October 31 to November 2 — will include speakers and discussions about the new

contract terms. We thank our attendees in advance for their active participation, as well as the perspectives and ideas they bring to us from the facilities and members that they represent. After all, it is the input, advice, and energy of all Local Union representatives and members that fuels our bargaining efforts.



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September 2022