

Rank and File Committee Approves Contract Extension

Membership to Vote on Proposed Agreement

The APWU Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee voted to approve a tentative contract extension agreement between the union and USPS on July 7, clearing the way for a ratification vote by union members.

In accordance with Article 13.9.C of the APWU Constitution, the committee must approve a tentative agreement before members are given the opportunity to vote on it. The panel is also responsible for supervising the vote.

Ballots will be sent to members beginning on July 18, committee members said, along with the wording of each proposed contract change. Advance copies of the tentative agreement will be sent to state and local presidents.

“We gave careful consideration to every aspect of the agreement,” said Committee Chair Yolanda Elder. “We met with many officers, asked serious questions, and had in-depth discussions among ourselves,” she said. “We considered every opinion. In the end, we felt this was the best course of action.”

The full text of a statement by the committee explaining the reasons for its decision is printed in this bulletin.

The advisory panel appointed a subcommittee to supervise the mailing and monitor the vote count. The subcommittee consists of Elder, who is president of the Greater Los Angeles Area Local, Phil Thomas (committee secretary and

president of the Omaha Area Local), Gregory Dixon (MVS Director of the Tampa Area Local/APWU of Florida), Cindy Martinez (president of the Texas Postal Workers Union), and Princella Vogel (president of the Houston Area Local).

“The ballots will offer a choice of ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ on extending the Collective Bargaining Agreement – with the proposed modifications – until November 2006,” Elder said.

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– Committee Chair Yolanda Elder

The Rank and File Committee began its deliberations in Washington on July 6. APWU President William Burrus explained details of the agreement, responded to questions from committee members, and discussed the evolution of the tentative agreement. The panel also met with Vice President Cliff Guffey, Director of Industrial Relations Greg Bell, Clerk Craft Director Jim McCarthy, Maintenance Director Steve Raymer, and Motor Vehicle Director Robert Pritchard.

Ballots to Be Mailed July 18-20

The Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee has established the schedule for voting on the tentative agreement to extend the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Ballots will be mailed to members beginning Monday, July 18.

The returned ballots will be picked up by the outside mailing-house on Friday, Aug. 5. The counting of the ballots will take place the same day. The results will be announced on the APWU Web site, www.apwu.org, as soon as they are known. A local-by-local count is expected to take approximately a week to complete, and those results will be posted as well.

The ratification mailing will include the proposed con-

tract changes, a ballot, a return envelope, the Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee’s statement on the contract extension, a letter from APWU President William Burrus, and a summary of the agreement.

Members who do not receive a ballot by July 25 may request a duplicate by contacting APWU headquarters at 202-842-8505. Requests may also be faxed to 202-216-2650. Such requests should include the member’s name, address (including city, state and zip code), craft, and Social Security number or employee identification number.

A subcommittee of the Rank and File Committee will supervise the vote count in Washington on Aug. 5.

Statement of Rank & File Committee

Editor's Note: The following is the statement prepared by the APWU Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee after their vote on the contract extension proposal.

The Rank and File Committee, comprised of one appointee from each APWU National Executive Board member plus a representative from the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Task Force, was called to APWU Headquarters on June 21, 2005 to begin deliberations on a possible extension of the Collective Bargaining Agreement through November 20, 2006.

The committee received several presentations from President Burrus, National Craft Directors, other National Officers, and staff. After examination, consideration, and debate of all documents, issues, and responses to the committee's in-depth questions, the Rank and File committee has approved the contract extension to be released for a ratification vote by the members. The committee's rationale includes the following:

- Basic annual salaries will be increased by 1.6 percent effective March 18, 2006. This increase is based on the basic annual salary for the grade and step in effect on September of 2005. This fact was significant – the other postal Unions will receive a wage increase of 1.3 percent in November of 2005, but that increase will be calculated on either 2001 or 2004 wages. This negotiated wage increase allows for a greater monetary gain for the employee and improves on what the three other postal Unions have al-

ready agreed to in their contracts. The cost-of-living allowance (COLA) will continue under its current formula through the life of the contract extension. In past contracts, the APWU has lost COLA increases for an entire year due to the negotiation process. The committee recognizes that COLA increases are always at issue during contract negotiations. The committee feels the risk of compromising COLA increases as a result of negotiations should not be a deterrent to moving forward in negotiations, but also must be considered a benefit when considering a negotiated agreement or contract extension. The committee deemed significant the retention of two [2] uninterrupted COLA increases combined with the long-term impact of a 1.6 percent wage increase based on September 2005 wages.

- In reviewing the wage and benefit package proposed in the extension, the committee noted that the employer's contribution to the Federal Employee's Health Benefits program will remain the same. The committee believes that the employer portion of Health Benefit contributions will be a major issue in future negotiations. Similar to the issue of COLA increases, the committee feels that the risk of negotiating Health Benefits should not be a deterrent to moving forward in negotiations, but also must be considered a benefit when consider-

(Continued on next page)

Salary Adjustments Since 2000 (Including Projections for the Contract Extension)						
		Effective	Grade-Step			
		Date	5-O	Increase	6-O	Increase
1998-2000 Contract	Last Increase	Sept. 9, 2000	40,472		41,484	
2000-2003 Contract	First General Increase	Nov. 18, 2000	40,952	480	41,983	499
	Second General Increase	Nov. 17, 2001	41,679	727	42,725	742
	First COLA	March 9, 2002	41,679	0	42,725	0
	Second COLA	Sept. 7, 2002	41,991	312	43,037	312
	Third General Increase	Nov. 16, 2002	42,558	567	43,613	576
	Third COLA	March 8, 2003	42,808	250	43,863	250
	Fourth COLA	Sept. 6, 2003	43,099	291	44,154	291
2003-2005 Contract Extension	Fourth General Increase	Nov. 15, 2003	43,664	565	44,727	573
	Fifth COLA	March 6, 2004	43,872	208	44,935	208
	Sixth COLA	Sept. 4, 2004	44,496	624	45,559	624
	Fifth General Increase	Nov. 27, 2004	45,061	565	46,132	573
	Seventh COLA	March 19, 2005	45,269	208	46,340	208
	Eighth COLA *	Sept. 17, 2005	45,872	603	46,943	603
2005-2006 Contract Extension (If Approved)	Ninth COLA *	March 4, 2006	46,080	208	47,151	208
	Sixth General Increase **	March 18, 2006	46,808	728	47,907	756
	Tenth COLA *	Sept. 2, 2006	47,245	437	48,344	437

* These COLAs are estimated based on a forecast of the CPI-W index provided by Kathryn Kobe, Director of Price, Wage, and Productivity Analysis for Economic Consulting Services.

** This general increase is calculated on the estimated Sept. 17, 2005 wage.

Committee Statement...

ing the current proposed contract extension. The committee considered the retention of the current level of employer contributions for Health Benefits as an important factor.

■ The committee studied past national interest arbitration decisions. The committee considered the impact of these decisions, specifically related to wage increases and retention of COLA increases. The committee believes that the 1.6 percent wage increase combined with the retention of two [2] COLA increases is equal to and/or greater than recent awards from national interest arbitration.

■ The committee considered the upgrades of Clerk, Maintenance, and MVS craft positions as a positive addition to the negotiated wage and benefit package. On March 18, 2006, approximately 6,518 APWU-represented employees will receive wage level upgrades in 14 different occupational groups and positions. The committee studied the issue of upgrades at length, noting the absence of certain positions. The craft directors presented information related to these concerns. The committee believes that any opportunity to upgrade any position is important, even when the opportunities are limited. Upgrades amount to significant long-term wage increases for the positions and incumbents, as well as future opportunities for the relevant craft. **Noting that upgrades for other positions will continue to be an objective for the APWU, the current upgrades represent an improvement in all crafts.**

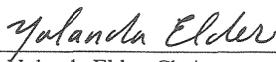
■ The committee recognizes the importance of extending the no-layoff provisions to November 20, 2006. Other benefits contained in the package that were given favorable consideration were resolution of the VER dispute, employees being allowed to become a successful bidder an additional

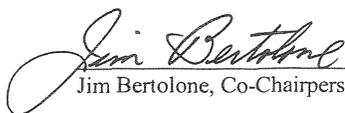
time, the allowance of an additional payroll deduction/allotment, the Modified Work Week pilot program which mandates a minimum of 18 sites, an increase in work-clothes allowances, and the ability to negotiate changes in Local Agreements. In addition, it is important to note that the TE Agreement for non-REC site TE's will not be extended beyond 12/31/05. All non-REC site TE's employed until 12/31/05 and those TE's in REC sites employed beyond 12/31/05 will have career opportunities extended.

■ Employee rights under Article 12 are expanded as part of this extension. APWU-represented employees in installations where excessing occurs will have priority consideration in transferring to other installations.

■ The extension provides the union with the opportunity to advance two cases to the top of the national arbitration docket during the period of the extension. In addition, the National union will be provided all current handbooks, manuals, and published regulations that are on the USPS intranet in an electronic format on a semi-annual basis; reports that are currently provided to the union in hard copy will be transmitted electronically when possible.

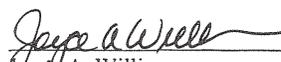
In conclusion, the Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee believes that the proposed contract extension provides wage increases, stability in secured benefits, and gains in members' and Union rights. The decision was not easy and all views were considered and debated. The objective of the Union is to advance the wages, benefits, and rights of the membership. Therefore, by majority vote, the committee endorses the contract extension and recommends it be sent to the Union's highest governing body, the membership, for final decision.

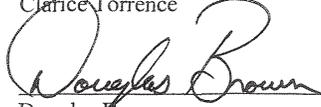

Yolanda Elder, Chairperson

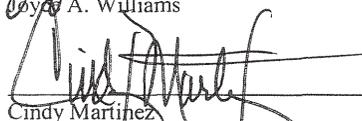

Jim Bertolone, Co-Chairperson


Philip Thomas, Secretary


Clarice Torrence

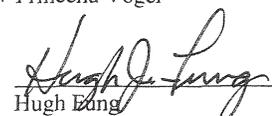

Joyce A. Williams

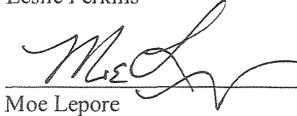

Douglas Brown

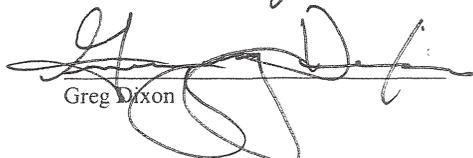

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