

MEMBER-AT-LARGE ATTENDS STATE CONVENTION AS DELEGATE

This spring, the WVPWU was pleased to invite our first MAL delegate to be involved what shapes your future with the WVPWU.

Joe Freno, a PSE under the Ridgeley bid cluster, answered the call and stepped up to be more involved in his local. The Board and all delegates at the convention appreciate his participation!

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

Between
American
Postal Workers
Union, AFL-CIO

And
U.S. Postal Service

September 21, 2018
September 20, 2021



WVPWU 2021 2ND QUARTER UPDATE

Volume 2 / Issue 1

FROM THE DESK OF PRESIDENT SINIKKA MELVIN

This April, thanks to the generosity and hard work of our brothers and sisters from the Beckley Area Local and their President, Stan Morgan, we were able to come together as delegates, rejuvenate the energy needed for the upcoming battle against consolidation and cutbacks with the USPS, and learn more about your rights as the members represented by the APWU.

Two important resolutions were passed by the delegates at the 2021 convention this year with unanimous concurrence:

Whereas WV, like many rural states, is comprised of a majority of smaller offices, the National APWU shall strive to convert PSEs not just in plants, but in Level 20-22s and RMPOs. Too long have PSEs sat stagnant for numerous years waiting for their turn to convert.

Whereas WV, like many rural states, is comprised with a majority of smaller offices, the National APWU will make every effort to gain more rights and guarantees for PTFs including hours guarantees and paid holidays.

“it is solidly our commitment to fight for not just PSEs, but PTFs as well”

While simply reaffirming this does not necessarily change the course of action in our upcoming negotiations, it is solidly our commitment to fight for not just PSEs, but PTFs as well. Where do most PTFs begin? PSEs. The end game is that each and every single clerk be a career employee. But what good is this if we are not taking care of our PTFs. At our convention, the National APWU President, Mark Dimondstein, stated PTFs make up 17% of the clerk body.

WHAT ABOUT WEST VIRGINIA

The members at large represented by the WVPWU is comprised of 34% PTFs and 36% PSEs. Collectively that is over 2/3's of a workforce full of parttime employees who need to be given more guarantees and rights so they can earn an honest, reliable living, and receive a just retirement after their dedicated years of service. With the training our stewards received this spring, we intend to fight just for that.



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DO NOT FORGOT ABOUT WHAT RIGHTS YOU DO HAVE

For our PTFs, I'd like to remind you of some rights you might not be aware of:

Bargaining Unit Work performed by postmasters in Level 18 post offices should be consecutive hours to the practicable extent as to minimize the necessity of split shifts.

Clearing carriers in the afternoon is clerk work.

Daily cleaning and COVID cleaning time is NOT to be performed during your clerk hours and should be in addition to and separate from your clerk hours. There is no running to the mop in between customers.

The delivery of express mail is bargaining unit work and should not be performed by supervisors or postmasters.

Carriers should not be performing distribution (scanning packages, sorting letters and flats, passing out mail).

Help us help you. We want to fight for your hours in the clerk craft and make more permanent full-time jobs, but if these violations go on unchecked, it hurts not just you, but the next clerk that comes along. We need to fight together to ensure all our rights are being upheld according to our contract and there are no injustices for our PSEs and PTFs. Do not hesitate to contact your steward if this happens. Let us help you.

FROM EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, AMY HAGA

The Union currently offers dues paying members disability benefits through the American Postal Workers Accident Benefit Association. This pays benefits for disabilities resulting directly and exclusively from a covered accident. Loss of Time must begin within 60 days after the date of the accident that caused the disability, unless otherwise justified by medical evidence. The continuation of this plan was discussed at this 2021 WVPWU State Convention.

The WVPWU is looking at a comparable plan to give their members an option. We are wanting input as to what Plan, you the Members, would want and ask that you take some time go over both plans as will be outlined in this article. Please email me at AMYHAGA@WVPWU.ORG with your preferred option. We are taking a poll.

The Value Plan that members are currently under is \$0.75 a pay period with the following benefits:

Disability Provision* Loss of time \$12 per day (for which you are totally disabled and unable to work any type of duty, not exceeding 52 weeks/365 days, including recurrence within 52 weeks after the date of a previously compensated accident)

Dismemberment Provisions

Loss of 1 finger (at least to first joint) \$500
Loss of a thumb (at least to first joint) \$750

Loss of 1 thumb and 1 or more fingers (at least to first joint) \$1,500
Loss of 1 arm (at or above wrist) \$1,500
Loss of 1 leg (at or above ankle) \$2,000
Loss of 1 arm and 1 leg (at or above wrist/ankle) \$6,000

Loss of 2 or more fingers (at least to first joint) \$1,000
Loss of sight of 1 eye (to at least industrial blindness level) \$3,000
Loss of sight of both eyes (to at least industrial blindness level) \$6,000
Loss of both arms (at or above wrist) \$6,000
Loss of both legs (at or above ankle) \$6,000

Accidental Death Provision

Death due to an accident \$6,000

Death of spouse (provided spouse is not covered as an ABA Member) \$2,000

Death of unmarried dependent child (up to and including age 26) \$2,000

More information can be found about our current plan offered to members at APW-ABA.ORG

THE VOLUNTEER BENEFITS PLAN

This plan comparably has a group accidentally death and dismember at a cost for the Family Plan at \$0.75 coverage of \$30,000.

Family Plan

Covering your eligible spouse and/or Domestic Partner (under age 80) and/or dependent child/ren (under age 26) under the Family Plan, has the current Schedule of Covered Losses for specific details.

1. At time of loss the family consists of Member & Spouse AND Dependent Child/ren
 - o Member...100%
 - o Spouse...40%
 - o Each Child...10%
2. At time of loss the family consists of Member and Spouse but NO Dependent Child/ren
 - o Member...100%
 - o Spouse...50%
3. At time of loss the family consists of Member and Dependent Child/ren but NO Spouse
 - o Member...100%
 - o Each Child...15%

The Coverage

The Plan offers 24-hour insurance protection against covered accidents anywhere in the world, on or off the job, on business-vacation-at home. While covered, bodily injuries suffered by the insured must be as a direct result and from no other cause than from the covered accidental loss. Please be sure to review the Exclusions Section enclosed materials for more information on what is and is not covered. If injuries result in death or dismemberment, within 365 days from the date of a covered accident, which occurs while you are insured, the plan will pay up to 100% for loss of life, loss of 2 limbs or more, loss of sight in both eyes, loss of speech and hearing in both ears, and quadriplegia. Additional coverage varies from 25-75% coverage.

Additional Benefits at No Additional Cost:

Periodic Increase: 2% of the Principal Sum - Child Education Benefit (Insured Child(ren) Only) -Seat Belt Benefit (All Covered Persons) - Spouse Retraining Benefit (Insured Spouse Only)

More information can be found concerning the Voluntary Benefits Plan at voluntarybenefitsplan.com

Are you a member and still reading? Text RAGU to 304-276-5364 by 6/30/21 for a chance to win a \$25 gift card.

Not a member yet? Text a picture of your application to 304-276-5364 and received a \$25 gift card. Members who helps a non-member join receive a \$25 card as well!

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April 30, 2021, newly elected Legislative Director Chris Black was sworn in via Zoom by Eastern Regional Coordinator AJ Jones

FROM LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR, CHRIS BLACK

Redistricting and the Loss of a Congressional Seat

The 2020 Census reports confirmed West Virginia lost 3.2 percent of their population since the 2010 Census. Due to the population loss, West Virginia will lose one of its seats in the House of Representatives. This will take place in the 2022 election next year. It is believed that the two districts will be divided into a northern district and a southern district. West Virginia lawmakers will wait until the fall to draw the lines for the new districts. All three current House members plan on running for the two seats in the 2022 primary. Currently, Representative McKinley has been the only Representative of the three to vocally support and pass legislation in support of the USPS. We hope to see his continued support in the upcoming years.

H.R. 3076 Postal Reform Act of 2021

On May 11, the bipartisan bill (H.R. 3076) was introduced as the Postal Reform Act of 2021. This bill put the postal service on track for financial stability. The bill includes many different topics relating to the postal service. It includes health care for employees and how to handle price increases. It calls for transparency and performance targets. This bill would also repeal the prefunding mandate that requires the postal service to profundity retiree benefits 75 years in advance.

STAN MORGAN – DIRECTOR OF UNION SERVICES

Hello, Sisters and Brothers. I would like to give you some information about COVID-19 Emergency Paid Leave of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. These guidelines were recently released by the OPM. There are (8) eight qualifying circumstances causing the employee to be unable to work, such as quarantine, COVID-19 symptoms, childcare due to COVID-19, vaccine, etc. This applies to qualifying leave taken during the period from March 11 through September 30, 2021. This ending date is based on availability of funds to the postal service for use of the leave. You will be required to submit supporting documentation, such as your 3971, quarantine order, vaccination or similar documents. You may have already submitted a 3971, but if not, for "Type of Absence", check "other", and in Remarks, write EFEL, and your qualifying reason, (1-8). You will submit an Employee Agreement in Connection with Emergency Federal Employee Leave (EFEL). I just received my packet a few days ago from National Human Resources in Washington. You have 10 days to return this to your Postmaster or Supervisor. Signing these forms DO NOT waive your grievance rights if you are issued a letter of demand for the leave.

There are up to 600 hours available depending on your position, whether you are a FTR, or PTF, or non-career. As a PTF and non-career, you are entitled to EFEL based on the average of hours you worked per week over the 13 pay periods prior to using the EFEL. By using this leave, you still accrue your annual/sick leave. However these hours will be excluded from your total service used to determine your annuity for retirement.

I really hope you don't have to use this leave, but it's here for you if you need it. If you have any questions just contact one of your Union officers. We have several pieces of information that can help you. We've listed the 8 qualifying reasons at the end of the newsletter.

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APWU PREPARING FOR OPENING OF CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

Chris Smith, Editor

In June, formal negotiations for a new collective bargaining agreement between the American Postal Workers Union and the United States Postal Service will begin. The APWU started preparations last year by gathering large amounts of data and information, as well as consulting with economists, labor experts and our attorneys. As an important part of preparations, APWU National sent a wide-ranging survey to members to gather information on what your priorities are. The surveys were included with 2021 membership cards, as well as reprinted in the January- February 2021 issue of The American Postal Worker. The survey was also emailed and texted out to members. Thousands of surveys were returned or filled out digitally, providing the National Negotiations Committee with invaluable information. The Clerk Craft National officers have begun preparing for negotiations on issues related to the craft. Officers are currently reviewing all resolutions that were adopted by the delegates at past National Conventions applying to Article 37. These resolutions involve issues such as bidding, assignment of unencumbered regulars, 204-B restrictions, higher-level pay, PTF workhour guarantees and conversions to full-time regular status, and additional rights for PSE clerks.

2021 NEGOTIATIONS TIMELINE

October 2020 – Preparations Began

May 23, 2021 – 120 Days from Contract Expiration, window to request negotiations opens.

June 22, 2021 – 90 Days from Contract Expiration, tentative formal start date of negotiations.

September 7, 2021 – Final two weeks of negotiations begin.

September 20, 2021, 11:59 pm – Contract Expires

IMPORTANT CONSTITUTION CHANGES THAT AFFECT ALL MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Renee Steele, Secretary Treasurer

This year at our 2021 State Convention, we made a few constitution changes that were passed unanimously. Here is a summary of the changes.

Article 4: Convention and State meetings

The state shall contribute up to \$5000 annually to the host local after the host local submits receipts for reimbursement to the State Secretary-Treasurer.

Article 7: Organization-Elections

Any challenges to the Election must be submitted to the Election Chairperson in writing or email for consideration by the Election Committee. This must be done within 48 hours of the close of the State Convention and the Committee shall respond within 14 days of the receipt.

Article 8: Revenue Fiscal Year

The revenue of the WV Postal Workers Union shall be derived from per capita tax paid by Local Unions and Members-at-Large. Per capita for MAL PSE is \$10 per member per pay period plus the per capita tax set by the National APWU Constitution and By-Laws. Per capita for Careers is \$17 per member per pay period plus the per capita tax set by the National APWU Constitution and By-Laws.

Article 10: Dorothy Meadows and Cecil F Romine Scholarships

The WVPWU shall provide at least one scholarship to the Postal Labor Unions Summer School. This includes tuition, mileage, and 40 hours of LWOP.

A COPY OF OUR CURRENT, UPDATED CONSTITUTION IS AVAILABLE AT WWW.WVPWU.ORG.

EFEL is available if an employee is unable to work (including telework) because the employee:

1. is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19. (Note: The Postal Service provides an essential federal government service as part of the nation's critical infrastructure. Therefore, postal employees are generally not subject to general Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation orders related to COVID-19, except for the specific circumstances related to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) noted below.)

Documentations required: A copy of the relevant COVID-19 quarantine or isolation order or a web address for it.

2. has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19. **Documentations required:** The name of the healthcare provider who advised you to self-quarantine due to COVID-19.

3. is caring for an individual who is subject to such an order as in (1) or has been so advised as in (2). **Documentations required:** A copy of the relevant COVID-19 quarantine or isolation order or a web address for it; or the name of the healthcare provider who advised the individual to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.

4. is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis. **Documentations required:** None. By submitting your request under this reason, you are certifying that you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and taking immediate steps to obtain a medical diagnosis.

5. is caring for the employee's son or daughter if the school or place of care of the son or daughter has been closed, requires or makes optional a virtual learning instruction model, requires or makes optional a hybrid of in-person and virtual learning instruction models, or if the child care provider of the son or daughter is unavailable, due to COVID-19 precautions. **Documentations required:** The name of the son or daughter being cared for; the name of the school, place of care, or childcare provider that meets the required conditions; a written description of the situation (i.e., closure, use of on-line instruction, unavailability of the childcare provider); and a written explanation regarding why your circumstances (e.g., ages of children, number of children, special needs of children, lack of other adults in the home) make you unable to work (including telework) during the requested hours of leave.

6. is experiencing any other substantially similar condition. (Note: OPM must identify a condition as substantially similar for it to qualify under this reason. No condition has been identified as substantially similar at this time, so employees are currently not able to use EFEL for qualifying reason 6.)

7. is caring for a family member with a mental or physical disability or who is 55 years of age or older and incapable of self-care, without regard to whether another individual other than the employee is available to care for such family member, if the place of care for such family member is closed or the direct care provider is unavailable due to COVID-19. **Documentations required:** The name of the family member with a mental or physical disability, if applicable; the name and age of the family member that is 55 years old or older, if applicable; the name of the place of care that is closed or the direct care provider that is unavailable due to COVID-19; and a written explanation regarding why your care responsibilities make you unable to work (including telework) during the requested hours of leave.

8. is obtaining immunization (vaccination) related to COVID-19 or is recovering from any injury, disability, illness, or condition related to such immunization. **Documentations required:** None. By submitting your request for leave with this qualifying reason, you are certifying that the leave is necessary to obtain immunization related to COVID-19 or to recover from any injury, disability, illness, or condition related to such immunization.