

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

Postmaster General Retiring...sometime

Postmaster General Megan Brennan was set to retire on 1-31-2020 but delayed retirement "to facilitate the search and transition process for a new chief." According to "Daily Labor Report" "This may mean the service is considering an outsider to be the next PMG which alarms union leaders." The Postal Board of Governors (BOG) appoints the PMG and all five of the current members were appointed by President Trump. He has failed to fill four BOG vacancies. President Trump is pushing for privatization of the Postal Service so all the postal unions are concerned as to who the BOG will pick as PMG. "If they were searching inside the USPS, they would be done already, said Mailhandler President Paul Hogrogian, who states "the best case scenario is they pick someone like Megan who wants to keep the USPS a public service, including the continuation of 6 day delivery. The worst case would be a PMG from outside who wants to privatize.

House Passes USPS Fairness Act

On 2-5-2020 the House of Representative passed HR 2382, the USPS Fairness Act, calling for the repeal of the pre-funding mandate for retiree health care benefits passed at the end of the Bush term. The pre-funding mandate has cost the USPS over 5 billion yearly since then. The vote was 306 -106. In order for the USPS Fairness Act to become law it must be passed by the Senate and signed by the President. A similar bill was introduced in the Senate on 12-3-19, and we must now work to get the Senate to pass S2965. All postal unions ask their members to contact their two Senators to ask them to support S. 2965. APWU is calling for a national call-in day on 2-25-2020 for members to call their senators to ask them to co-sponsor of S. 2965. President Trump's panel appointed to study the USPS recommends that it be privatized, so he may not sign a law to help save USPS. USPS lost \$8.8 billion in Fiscal Year 2019 with total revenue of \$71.1 billion and total expenses of \$79.9 billion. -\$8.8.

Mailhandlers Contract

The Mailhandler Union is the only one of the four main labor unions to have negotiated a new contract. APWU had to go to arbitration because the Rank and File Committee did not agree to what had been negotiated, so we are still waiting for a new contract. The Mailhandlers have a three year contract ending on 9-20-2020 and giving them three 1% raises and a special .08 special pay adjustments and six cost of living adjustments or COLAs. The wage increases for a level 4 top step MH not including COLAs totals \$2,370, including \$668 retroactive pay from 11-2019. There will be one time conversion of MHAs with 2.5 years of service. Casuals were finally eliminated. The amount USPS pays for FEBH health insurance will reduce to 72% in 2020 and remain at 72%, the same as all other federal employees pay. All career MHs employed as of 9-20-2019 will be continue no layoff protection. The MOU on purging of Letters of Warning was obtained and will apply to all MHs and MHAs. It looks like they did ok. Hopefully, we will too.

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Special points of interest:

Search for new
Postmaster General
House Passes USPS
Fairness Act
Mailhandler Contract
8 More CS PSE Conversions
RJ-399 Confusion
Closed Door at Palatine ...
Associate Offices Reverting
NWIAL 2020 Election

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8 More CS PSE Conversions

601 CCD Calvin Taylor reports there are eight more PSEs being converted at Carol Stream. Most of them were hired as PSEs on or around 11-10-18 so it took them only 15 months to be converted. Meanwhile, at Palatine we have PSEs going back to 10-1-16 who are still waiting to be converted. We have filed on every reversion at Palatine because we know the jobs are needed but they revert to avoid creating residual vacancies. When a Clerk retires that should mean a PSE gets converted but not if they eliminate (revert) the job as Palatine has been doing. Palatine lost the PARS/FPARS to Carol Stream in 2019 and that was a lot of mail to be gained and lost. Palatine also received a Universal Sorter this year and assigned all work (manual distribution) to Mailhandlers instead of Clerks. This was done at the national level and a dispute was filed at the national level. It was supposed to be arbitrated within six months per the updated RI-399 MOU signed on 6-26-2018 but has not so I have asked our national officers why and am waiting for their response. RI-399 stands for Regional Instruction-399 and was created in 1989 to determine what work in the plants was assigned to Clerks and what work to Mailhandlers. Unfortunately, management in many plants did not follow the national RI-399 and assigned Clerk distribution to Mailhandlers. This happened at Palatine and Carol Stream when they assigned Mailhandlers to distribute Incoming Parcel Post and Priority mail. We got IPP back at Palatine in the 2000 Inventory and we got the CS Priority back a few years ago, but due to the 2018 RI-399 MOU we cannot pursue our local dispute on the CS IPP unit which they call the Outside Belt instead of IPP to hide the fact that its Clerk work.

RI-399 Confusion...

We know why management and the Mailhandler Union would call IPP the Outside Belt because they know the RI-399 says Incoming Parcel Post is Clerk work. Why would a Palatine Clerk want to confuse Clerks about RI-399? I am told a Clerk is asking Clerk to sign a petition that AFSM work is Clerk work. I will gladly sign but it won't change anything as the AFSM-AI and the FSS work was assigned at the national level and most of the work was assigned to the Mailhandlers, and APWU at the national level filed disputes on these but withdrew the disputes in 2018 in the new MOU. I don't like it and don't agree with it but I can read what it says. This Clerk is looking at the 2000 Palatine Inventory for the AFSM and stating this gives us the work on the AFSM-AI. USPS changed the craft jurisdiction when the Automatic Induction was added to the AFSM. The Palatine Inventory refers to the AFSM not the AI. If signing a petition would get the work back on the AFSM-AI, I would sign it, but I know better. I am not happy with the National union for withdrawing National disputes on the APPS, AFSM-AI, and the FSS and have told them so, but I have no control over that.

Closed Door at Palatine...

A/Plant Manager Allen Mitchell states he does not have an open door policy and wants employees to go through their supervisor, but you should be able to schedule a meeting with him by calling his Secretary at 847-590-6600. The APWU has had two meetings scheduled by Mr. Mitchell that were cancelled by Mr. Mitchell. He cancelled the RI-399 and the Labor-Management meetings, but did make the Safety meeting. I guess we will have to talk to him at the next Town Hall meeting. There is no follow up on issues.

Associate Offices Reverting...

As Clerks retire management is reverting their jobs and hiring a PSE to replace them. We have filed grievances recently at Northbrook, Buffalo Grove and Melrose Park on Clerk reversions. The Melrose Park Post Office just separated a PSE Clerk for lack of work while informing Clerks not on the ODL they have to work overtime. Does this make sense? A grievance was filed on the separation because there is no lack of work. The Postmaster states the District allows them 14 Clerks for the main office and two stations. It's about bare-bones staffing.

NWIAL 2020 Election

The Election Committee was appointed and approved by members at the January meeting. They are Arlene Thomas-Benford, Vivian Henderson, Ericka Williams, and Nigel Mayes. Three have served before so they know what needs to be done in a short amount of time. For the last few elections we have contracted with a company to print, mail, and count the ballots. The Constitution was changed 15 years ago to allow us to use an outside company to ensure a fair and honest election. Our Local has been investigated by the Department of Labor every election due to losing candidate complaints and every complaint dismissed. The Nominations meeting for the 2020 NWIAL election will be held at the March meeting on March 8, 2020 at 3pm. Every member should receive a mailing from the Election Committee regarding the Nominations meeting. Non-members are not able to vote. They don't pay dues and don't care about the good of the union. Every dues paying member should take their vote seriously and vote. The company selected to conduct the 2020 NWIAL election is the American Arbitration Association. We've used this company before.

