

# The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the  
Northwest Illinois Area Local

**Update by: Jackie Engelhart**

Floor Edition

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## "The Hearing"

An arbitration hearing was held for the grievance filed because management failed to conduct an investigation of sexual harassment complaints against a supervisor at the Palatine P&DC sent to the plant manager in November of 2021. The hearing had to be rescheduled because management refused to sign revised schedules so the tour 1 employees could be present to testify and then refused to sign 3971s for them. When the Union brought this to the arbitrator the management Advocate said he was not aware. In the Union's opinion, management failed to do their job of investigating the sexual harassment claims and once they finally did conduct an investigation they did nothing more and did not share the results. The report was given to the Human Resource Manager for District 1 Illinois who states she put it in a drawer. The management labor guy said it was confidential. I guess this means no one would ever look at it or do anything about it.

## Sexual Harassment

*"The Postal Service is committed to providing a work environment free of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is improper and/or unlawful conduct that undermines employment relationships as well as employee morale, and the Postal Service will not tolerate its presence in the workplace. Employees who are found to have engaged in sexual harassment should expect serious disciplinary action, up to and including removal. Postal employees who believe that they are victims of sexual harassment may bring the situation to the attention of impartial supervisors or Human Resources managers at the appropriate organizational level. Any possible criminal conduct should be reported to the Postal Inspection Service, the Office of Inspector General, or both. Employees who believe that they are victims of sexual harassment but choose not to pursue a complaint through one of the above established procedures may seek relief through the EEO complaint process, grievances arbitration procedures for bargaining unit*

*employees under the collective bargaining agreements, or, where appropriate, the non-bargaining unit grievance and appeal procedures."*

This is section 673.222 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual, and is the official USPS policy. A complaint/grievance was filed in 2016 on the same supervisor and management moved the accused supervisor from one floor to the other just like they are doing today. The managers at Palatine have done nothing to stop this and look the other way. When the union scheduled the arbitration for the failure to conduct an investigation management tried to prevent the witnesses from being at the hearing. We are told that senior management instructed supervisors to refuse to sign 3189's or 3971's for the witnesses so the hearing had to be rescheduled after the union Advocate complained to the arbitrator who issued an order for these witnesses to appear. Management did nothing to stop the reported sexual harassment, they just tried to cover it up. Thanks to tour 1 Steward Patrick Thoele for helping the harassed employees.

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### Special points of interest:

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## **Management**

I could not be a manager because you have to do what your boss tells you even if you know it is wrong because they are the boss. Management waited months to conduct an investigation and when it was finally done refused to share results or take any action. Is this incompetence or they just don't care? I would say it's both. Once the hearing was scheduled they tried to cover themselves by not allowing witnesses to have revised schedules which is normally not a problem, and by placing the report in a drawer and not sharing the results with the union and or the affected employees. The Union had to file a grievance and take the case to arbitration to try and get management to do what they were supposed to do. The Sexual Harassment policy is just empty words for Palatine management and IL District 1.

### **Post Office Still a Good Job**

How many jobs are there with good salary and benefits and job security with no college degree? At the post office we have these things because we have a Union. If there is a problem you can come to the Union (once you pass your probationary period) and we can file a grievance for you, or discuss the problem with management. If you get discipline for attendance or other issues the Union can file a grievance for you if you let us know but the grievance has to be filed within 14 days of the date you received it or became aware. At most jobs you can be fired for any reason or for no reason. The State of Illinois is an "At Will" state meaning management can fire you for no reason at all. That is not the case at the Post Office where we have negotiated progressive discipline meaning you have to progress through several levels of discipline to be fired, except for more serious charges.

## **MOU Clerk Craft Residuals**

This MOU concerns reassignments and PTF/PSE conversions. A residual vacancy is a job posted within the installation that nobody bid on. If there are unencumbered Clerks within the installation who are able to do the job they will be placed in residual vacancies by seniority. If there are Clerks excessed out of the installation they can retreat by seniority. Then the residual is posted on e-reassign for Clerks impacted by excessing. Finally the job should serve to convert the senior PSE or PTF depending on the office. There is a ratio for transfers on e-reassign and PSE conversions of 1 in 4 at larger (100 work-year offices) and a ratio of 1 in 6 at smaller offices. There should be one reassignment for every 4 conversions in larger offices and 1 in 6 at smaller offices. The new contract makes this process continuous. We track the transfers and conversions to make sure PSEs are not improperly denied conversion. In regular e-reassign an employee is applying for a transfer to another installation (bid cluster), not a specific duty assignment. This application is active for 12 months from the date of submission or until reached for review. The employee can withdraw the application at any time in that 12 month period. When the employee is placed in review, a decision is made to accept or deny the transfer request. If the employee's transfer request is accepted and he or she reports to the new installation (bid cluster), all active transfer requests for that employee are closed. If the transfer request is denied, the application to the installation is closed. Applicants can extend their requests prior to the 12 month expiration in accordance with the instructions on the confirmation screen in e-reassign.

## **USPS Zero Tolerance Policy**

We have said it many times but we continue to see employees jeopardize their jobs because of "zero tolerance" incidents. If you are provoked by another employee at the workplace (craft employee or a supervisor) you should walk away and not allow them to provoke you into reacting to them. This could result in both of you being walked out and placed off of work without pay and or fired. Don't lose your job over nothing.

### **Call for a Steward...**

All employees should know to request a Steward if you are called in the office to meet with management. Ask if this could lead to discipline and if so request a Steward and wait for the Steward before talking to management. If you are called in they are most likely looking to issue discipline.

### **2022 NWIAL Scholarships**

Chief Trustee Ray Wience reminds us time is running out to fill out an application for the 2022 NWIAL Scholarship. There are four (4) \$1,000 scholarships. Applications are available at your union office. All applications must be received at the Union Hall by 8-14-2022 no later than 2:30 pm when the drawing will be held by Ray with the winners pulled from the "Bozo Drum".

### **NWIAL Retirement Seminar**

The NWIAL Human Relations Committee will be hosting a Retirement Seminar at the Union Hall on 9-17-2022 per Human Relations Director Vivian Henderson. The annual retirement seminar was cancelled the last two years due to COVID restrictions. We usually start two sessions at 9am and 1pm with lunch at 12. The APWU Retirees Department is sending Instructor Joe Gordon to teach our retirement seminar. Seminar Flyers and registration information will be forthcoming.

