

THE LOCAL LINE

January 10, 2026

President Dave Baskin Vice President Jackie Engelhart

“We have a plan.”

On January 2nd, 601 Clerk Craft Director, Elaine Bartlett Walker and I were in a meeting at Carol Stream to discuss the changes in starting times that George Kurian wants to make effective January 24, 2026. He said the changes were necessary so that mail would make the 5:00 dispatch time. The changes he wants to make to the starting times are; **Automation**

Tour 1 From 2000 to 2150

Tour 2 0700 to 0500

Tour 3 No change

APBS

Tour 1 From 2100 to 2150

Tour 2 (add) 0500

Tour 3 From 1300 to 1200

AFSM

Tour 1 From 2300 to 2030

Tour 2 from 0700 to 0500

Tour 3 From 1500 to 1200

Union pushed back against these changes.

Elaine started by informing management’s representative that Automation starting at 2150 was tried in the past and failed. Management’s response was he was unaware due to only being in his position a short time and “We have a plan.” We kept telling him his plan has failed in the past, but he was stuck

on _____. He kept insisting on making the change. We raised the point that he was inconveniencing the employees, including those who are single parents but “We have a plan.” was the response we kept getting.

We have a plan and we are going ahead with it.

We went back and forth with him over how changing to 1 starting time per tour, and the starting times he wants failed in the past. About 30 minutes into the meeting, he stated “We have a plan and we are going ahead with it.” We asked what the point of the meeting was if they didn’t want our input and didn’t care what we thought. His response was that he finally started to write down our objections. As we continued, we saw that he wrote down some of what we said, but that was all he was doing, He wasn’t considering what we said. He kept talking about his plan. He also asked if he was violating the contract with his plan. We said what our concern was, was to come to an agreement where both management and the employees needs were met. We asked how many Clerks would be staffed on T-2

APBS. At first, he did not give an answer but finally he said 10. 9 is the bare minimum, so we raised the fact that they needed to account for NS days and annual and sick leave. His response was they hadn’t taken that into account yet and again stated “We have a plan.” We stated they had a plan that didn’t consider staffing properly, that they were intentionally short staffing units. We said that they needed to hire more employees and that would help them meet their dispatch time. Again “We have a plan.” was the response. We asked how many PSEs there were. After prodding, we were told 40. We raised the point of adjusting the PSE times, but were told that was not a part of their plan. We informed him that if he was concerned about a grievance, the grievance would be they are treating PSEs like career employees and the career employees were being treated as if they were PSEs. We raised the fact that for years, management claimed they needed PSEs for flexibility. Now they don’t want to use that flexibility and screw the career employees.

New plan by PMG to privatize the Postal Service.

A December 24th CNN Business report reported about the new postal service plan to raise money. The new Postmaster General, David Steiner, who came from FEDEX, wants to “auction” off delivery of mail (last-mile service) to some parts of the country. The USPS claims this will stem billions in on-going losses. The USPS claims they lost 9 billion during the fiscal year ending September 30 2025. They also claimed, in a Reuters interview, the postal Service will run out of money “within probably 12 to 24 months”.

Amazon

According to the CNN article, The Amazon contract brings in about 6 billion a year to the USPS. The plan to auction off delivery has Amazon rethinking their contract. Amazon now says they might not use the Postal Service as much as they have been. An Amazon spokesperson said “We have been working for nearly a year to extend our partnership that started more than 30 years ago.” And “We were surprised to hear they want to run an auction

after nearly a year of negotiations, and, given the change of direction and the uncertainty it adds to our delivery network, we’re evaluating all of our options that would ensure we can continue to deliver for our customers.”

The article states that Elena Patel, Senior fellow in economic studies at the Brookings Institute, and an expert in Postal Service finances said “Trying to get more customers to deliver pre-sorted packages in bulk directly into the USPS system makes operational sense.” And “there is a risk if those negotiations with smaller shippers pushes Amazon to no longer use the USPS as much as it has in the past.” And “I don’t know the state of negotiations is, but it certainly would not be good for the financial situation at the Postal Service for the negotiations with Amazon to fall apart.”

According to Elena Patel, “it is in the national interest for the government to continue to provide universal service, even if it means between 6 billion to 10 billion in annual congressional appropriations to the USPS.”

An immediate test for

new National Union President Jonathan Smith

Our new National President has, in the past, been very vocal and very active in protesting the actions of the postal service. Former President Dimonstein successfully fought against the USPS use of Staples. I wonder how much of the USPS the new PMG plans on giving to FEDEX. Let’s hope President Smith gets us successfully through this attack from within.

Constitution Committee

With Erika Williams becoming a National Business Agent, we are 1 person short on the Constitution Committee. We are seeking a volunteer to fill this vacancy.

Legislative Director

Erika was also our Legislative Director. We need a volunteer to fill this vacancy as well. The Legislative director will keep in touch with legislators. **If interested in these vacancies contact me at**

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Thank you Palatine

I would like to take this time to thank all the Palatine members who welcomed me back to Palatine. You all helped make the change easier.

