



# 2021-2024 Tentative Collective Bargaining Agreement

December 11, 2021, APWU  
The American Postal Workers Union and the U.S. Postal Service have reached a tentative three-year Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) announced APWU President and Lead Negotiator Mark Dimondstein. The following is a summary of that tentative agreement. The APWU is preparing the complete Tentative Agreement to be sent to members with their ratification ballot. Detailed information on the ratification vote will be announced in the near future.

## Contract Time Period

- Three-year contract: September 21, 2021 through September 20, 2024

## General Annual Wage Increases and Cost of Living Allowances (COLA)

- 1.3% November 20, 2021 (Will be Retroactive)
- 1.3% November 19, 2022
- 1.3% November 18, 2023
- Six (6) Cost of Living Allowances (COLA) for career employees (March and September of each year) with no change to the current formula based on the July 2021 CPI-W. (After the fourth month of the six-month measuring period, the COLA increase is at \$0.39 per hour and will be based on the January 2022 CPI-W Index)
- PSEs receive the general wage increases and an additional 1% increase each year in lieu of COLA (i.e. 2.3% each November)
- \$0.50/hour additional increase for PSEs effective the first pay pe-

riod of the second full month after the Agreement is ratified

## Job Security

- No Lay-off protections for career employees with six years of service remain in full-force and effect.
- Any current career employee on the rolls as of September 20, 2021, with less than six years of service will be included in the no lay-off protections for the life of the National Agreement, providing an additional 72,000 career employees protection from lay-offs.
- 50-mile limit on excessing of employees
- The current moratorium on sub-contracting of Postal Vehicle Service

(PVS) work will continue in its present form during life of the Agreement

## Holiday Pay

- Juneteenth added to the holidays for career employees for a total of 11 paid holidays per year
- PTF pay rate will be increased to reflect a total of 11 holidays each year, increase will be effective on January 1, 2022

## Health Insurance

- No change to the Postal Service contribution to premiums for those participating in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program.
- 95% Postal Service contribution

to premiums of the APWU Consumer Driven Health Plan (CDHP)

- PSEs converted to career will receive credit for time they were enrolled in a FEHBP plan towards the 1-year qualifying period for the 95% Postal Service contribution to CDHP premiums

## Enhanced Level 8 & 11 Pay Scales

- Grade 8 Pay Scale:
- Bottom Steps FF-AA eliminated with Step A becoming the first Step.
- New top Step P added
- Employees currently in Grade 8 will move into new steps while retaining all credit toward next step

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by  
Michael  
Mize

Right at time to go press we get the news! We have a tentative agreement!! The agreement was taken to the Rank-and-File Committee and given unanimous approval. All of this is a great sign for us. An agreement that we will have the opportunity to review and decide for ourselves if it is good for us or not. An agreement that we will get to vote on.

Currently neither I nor the MPWU have an official position on the agreement. To have an official position we

## PRESIDENT

# Tentative Agreement

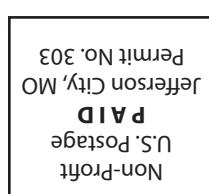
would need to have a meeting and that likely will not occur. At the time of this writing the only information available is the highlights as presented on the APWU National webpage. As leaders we will not form a position until we have had the ability and time to review the whole agreement. We need to know if there is something else not in the highlights. We need to know exactly what some of the highlights mean and how it will be applied to the membership.

I will suggest that everyone take



U.S. Representative Elissa Slotkin.

a close look at the whole agreement when it comes time to vote to ratify or  
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Return to APWU/MPWU  
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Change of Service Request





# — Straight Talk —



by John L.  
Marcotte

The *Michigan Messenger* is an award-winning union publication with a long history of informative thought-provoking articles that

are heavy on facts, light on cheer leading and where spin goes to die. So, I was honored to have been asked to write a guest column in this publication to give my opinion honestly and openly on the many issues that affect postal workers, retirees and their families.

I was asked to write about the state of our union, in particular the APWU as a national union, where it is now, issues

I feel are pressing and the direction we are headed. This is quite a mandate, one that I will not be able to give a complete answer in this edition but my goal is to stimulate thought provoking interaction with you my brothers and sisters that may cause you to contact editor John Greathouse with topics you would like me to comment on or those you wish for me to go into more detail about.

An important issue I believe affects our members is staffing. The lack of it on the workroom floor, the excess of it in the management ranks (there is more acting there than in Hollywood) and why it is the absolute last place the leadership of the postal service will add any is where it would increase the speed, service or accuracy of mail delivery. This has made

the working conditions postal workers have to endure simply unacceptable and undoing decades of struggle by our union to improve them. During the aggressive attack on postal worker staffing beginning about a decade ago the USPS went from the fastest, highest service, lowest cost postal service in the world to where most Americans cannot pay their bills on time using the US mail. This despite year after year of large rate increases for worse and worse service. How did we get here?

For the last 20 or more years the USPS decided it is "a business", not a

ing along with this attack on workers. You may hear some say that Congress and the mailers are to blame for passing the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA) of 2006 financially ruining the USPS. This is rightfully so, that the Act financially devastated the USPS and gave the excuse to drastically cut service and attack workers' wages and benefits. However, if you look back at the national magazine of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) immediately after its passing, the president of the NALC was singing the praises of PAEA saying

to process and deliver mail. Also, any drop in mail volume would immediately see the USPS not able to make the required payments to the treasury. It also maintained mailing rates for bulk mailers that do not fully cover the cost of delivery as detailed clearly by former president Bill Burris. What could go wrong? Everything.

This led to the APWU to negotiate a union contract when the USPS was literally down to days of cash on hand and the real threat of it not making payroll. Before 2010 we had a supplemental workforce prior to the PSE's, it was the "casual workforce". There were limits on the number of these employees, the work

they could perform and most importantly these employees could perform work "in lieu of" career employees. This ensured they were generally truly supplemental and did not eliminate or replace career jobs or prevent veterans from exercising their veteran rights to fill jobs reserved for them or to apply for all career openings. The APWU was highly successful in defeating the inevitable management violations of casual in lieu of contract language.

After the PAEA, it was an extremely difficult time for contract negotiations and I believe those negotiating did what they thought was best at that time. I simply did not agree with them in the creation of new categories of employees. We could have

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**... the USPS went from the fastest, highest service, lowest cost postal service in the world to where most Americans cannot pay their bills on time using the US mail.**

government service and as such adopted "business practices". Unfortunately, the business practices they have adopted are a rogue's gallery of bad practices and the exploitation of its workforce. While Upper management's pay and benefits were allowed to increase massively with a 2006 law change, the pay for postal workers after this law passed was slashed. How did they accomplish this? For career workers by issuing minuscule insulting raises and having workers paying a larger percentage of their health insurance premiums, larger copays and higher deductibles. The biggest savings was creating a new "supplemental workforce", the PSE that could work instead or in lieu of a career workforce . . .

Sadly, postal unions were guilty of go-

ing (the NALC) got everything we wanted. The APWU had opposed this legislation but I was told it removed its objection to the bill prior to it passing the House after personal lobbying by the committee chairman. So, to pretend the national postal unions were innocent victims of this bill are misleading and in the NALC's case simply not true.

What was clear to anyone reading this bill prior to its passing was that it would add 6 billion dollars a year in payments required of the USPS to the US Treasury while also capping the increase of stamp prices to the least generous cost of living calculator. This ensured that increases in stamp revenue would be less than the actual cost of increases of fuel, utilities, vehicles and other expenses necessary

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The Michigan Postal Workers Union proudly represents the Members at Large within the Great State of Michigan. The following locals have also affiliated with the MPWU for training, education and information sharing between their members, stewards and officers of their own local and others throughout the state and nation:

Battle Creek	Jackson
Central MI	Ludington
Cheboygan	Muskegon
Detroit District	Roger City
Farmington	Sault Ste Marie
Flint	Southwest MI
480-481	Stevensville
486-487	Traverse City
498-499	Troy Local
Gaylord	Western MI
Great Lakes Area	
Mail Haulers	

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Affiliated with: American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO; APWU National Postal Press Association, Michigan State AFL-CIO & Michigan Labor Press







by  
Roscoe  
Woods

## LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

# Postal Reform – Now More Than Ever

In our never-ending fight to assure we have a sustainable and viable US Postal Service for the next 200 years there is a group out there on the forefront of protecting this service and they are called the Rank-and-File Postal Organizers.

One of the leaders of this group Jamie Partridge wrote the following op-ed and I wanted to share it with all of you:

### Postal Reform – Now More Than Ever

*Who hasn't heard about mail delays, price hikes, cuts and closures of mail facilities? Who hasn't seen the mail carriers out after dark? Who hasn't experienced (or know someone who's experienced) late arrival of crucial medicines or late delivery of credit card or rent payment?*

*Official postal service reports show a yearly net loss. We are told that the slow mail and price rises are needed to stem the red ink. The shift of mail to the internet is blamed. And revenue from first class mail is certainly down. But revenue from package delivery is up. The internet giveth as well as taketh away.*

*The main culprit, the main driver of postal losses since 2006, has been a manufactured debt, created by Congress in the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA). Since that time, the USPS has been mandated to set aside \$5.5 Billion a year, nearly 10% of its budget, for retiree health benefits, seven-five years in advance, within ten years. In other words, setting aside funds for retirees who not only don't work for the post office yet . . . they're not even born yet.*

*No other agency and no corporation has such a pre-funding mandate. Most fund retiree benefits year by year.*

*As we near the end of the year, it is critical that Congress take up the Postal Service Reform Act of 2021 (H.R. 3076) before the end of session. This legislation, which has broad public support, will provide the Postal Service with much-needed financial relief by eliminating the 2006 pre-funding mandate for retiree health benefits. In addition, this bill maintains 6-day delivery, mandates more frequent reporting on service performance, and includes Medicare integration.*

*In May, the bill received bipartisan approval in the House of Representatives Oversight and Reform Committee, the primary committee that addresses postal issues. It was also introduced with bipartisan support in the Senate.*

*Now, we are waiting for it to advance through the Ways and Means*

*committee. Let's push our Congress people to speak out and move this legislation so the USPS can get back to its mission (Title 39 of the US Code) of providing "prompt, reliable, and efficient services to patrons in all areas."*

Jamie Partridge

*Communities and Postal Workers United*

Thank you Jamie for your hard work and leadership to protect the people's post office. We also want to thank all of you in the Rank-and-File Postal Organizers group for your hard work lobbying the Congress on behalf of us all.

Recently President Mark Dimondstein wrote the following over at **APWU.ORG**:

*As we near the end of the year, it*

*is critical that Congress take up the Postal Service Reform Act of 2021 (H.R. 3076) before the end of session. This legislation, which has broad public support, will provide the Postal Service with much-needed financial relief by eliminating the 2006 pre-funding mandate (PAEA) for retiree health benefits. In addition, this bill maintains 6-day delivery, mandates more frequent reporting on service performance, and includes Medicare integration.*

*In May, the bill received bipartisan approval in the House of Representatives Oversight and Reform Committee, the primary committee that addresses postal issues. It was also introduced with bipartisan support in the Senate.*

*Now, we are waiting for it to advance through the Ways and Means committee, chaired by Congressman Richard Neal. The APWU is closely monitoring any potential changes to the legislation and urges members to contact Congressman Neal and encourage him to act swiftly to pass this legislation by the end of the year.*

If you head on over to **apwu.org** there is a petition you can sign to get this bill moving as well you can call Congressman Richard Neal at: (202) 225-5601 and urge him to move this bill out of committee to the floor for a vote.

Let's all get involved and protect Americas Postal Service.

Stay tuned.

## Tentative Agreement

*continued from page 1*

not. Make an educated decision on the entire package not just one or two things.

Representing so many PTF's, PSE's and small offices there are a few things in the agreement that are very interesting and beneficial to our members. Some that I am very happy about. There are raises which we all like. We kept the COLA and the extra raise for PSE's since they do not receive the COLA which is great.

Tentative Agreement has the Juneteenth Holiday in it. The raise in wages for PTF's to reflect the new Holiday is on the list as well.

Work rules for PTF's has some enhancements that we are looking forward to. There will be a 24 hour per week guarantee and 4 hours if scheduled. Advanced Annual leave each year. A guarantee for one day off per week. I realize many already have that, but Sunday delivery has created some issues in the offices, so a contract guarantee is the way to go.

The one-time transfer opportunity is something that I must see to understand how it will be done. Certainly, our PTF's having any voluntary ability to make a move to larger offices and full-time hours is great, so I have no issues there. My issue would be knowing how this will be done to understand if the PTF's are getting real opportunities or not. There will be more to

come on this highlight for sure.

I have a few questions on the conversion of PSE's after 24 months that need to be answered. The answer to those questions will not change the fact that PSE's in the level 20 and up offices will have a light at the end of the tunnel. They would know they would be career at a specific date. For some places this is a big deal as some have been PSE's for several years.

PSE will get advanced annual leave and a guaranteed off day each week. More things to see exactly how it will work out. But a huge benefit for the PSE members.

Allowing new career members to use annual leave in the first 90 days if they already had 90 days of service. This would correct an issue we have seen far too often in the last

couple years. PSE having vacation gets converted and has vacation time planned in the first 90 days. They were unable to take annual leave under the rule.

There are several other things that deserve your time to look at. Go to the National webpage and look it all over.

The last important item to remember is this is tentative. Nothing mentioned above is in the contract yet. Nothing in the tentative agreement that we may not like is in the contract yet. We must ratify the proposed agreement first. Make sure you do the right thing for yourself and your Union. Review the tentative agreement and vote when the time comes. Your vote matters, which means your opinion or position on the tentative agreement matters.



President Mike Mize and U.S. Representative Elissa Slotkin.



## VETERANS' DIRECTOR



by  
John P.  
Smeekens

# Veterans' Affairs

## Exposure Filing

Were you exposed to hazardous materials while serving in the military, such as from **Agent Orange** or **burn pits**? Did you serve in Vietnam, Thailand or Southwest Asia? If so, you may be eligible to file for service-connected benefits based on presumptive exposure.

Over the course of the last six months, VA has begun processing service-connected disability claims for six new presumptive conditions related to exposure to hazardous materials.

In May 2021, VA started implementing provisions of the William M. Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (NDAA), adding bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinsonism to the list of medical conditions presumptively associated with exposure to Agent Orange. A few months later, VA added asthma, rhinitis and sinusitis (to include rhinosinusitis) on a presumptive basis based on particulate matter exposures during military service in Southwest Asia and certain other areas.

Any Veteran who was previously denied service-connection for any of these six conditions but had symptoms manifest within 10 years of military service would need to file another claim. Be sure to use **VA Form 20-0995, "Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim"** when filing. The claim form should include the name of the medical condition and also specify that the medical condition is being claimed due to in-service exposure to environmental hazards.

VA is committed to assisting Veterans who may have been exposed to hazardous materials during their military service. Be sure to stay plugged in to **www.va.gov** for the most recent developments around environmental hazards; VA is constantly conducting

research and surveillance, as well as reviewing scientific literature for conditions that may be related to exposure during military service. If you feel you have a chronic condition attributed to an in-service exposure, we highly encourage you to file a claim. For more information about VA benefits and eligibility, or how to file a claim, Veterans and survivors can visit VA's website at **www.va.gov** or call toll-free at 1-800-827-1000.

## Veterans' And Fraud

Veterans, military personnel and their families continue to be targeted by con artists significantly more than civilians outside the military community and often lose more money when hit by similar scams, a recent report says. Solicitations tied to tech support or repair were the most common; next were bogus travel deals, lottery winnings, special discounts and phishing for account information, according to the just-released report, "Scambush: Military Veterans Battle Surprise Attacks from Scams & Fraud." Thirty-five percent of service members and veterans lost money to a scam, compared to 25 percent of civilians surveyed. The largest number of military respondents fell victim to grandparent impostor scams, followed by tech support fraud, IRS impostors, fake offers to fix a low credit rating, credit card fraud and phishing emails seeking personal information.

## Travel And Airfare Deals

Veterans can now get exclusive travel deals and discounted rates through American Forces Travel. As of July 2021, all veterans with a discharge status of honorable or general under honorable conditions are eligible to shop for a wide selection of discounted rates on hotels, air fare, rental cars, vacation packages, cruises and more on **www.AmericanForcesTravel.com**.

American Forces Travel is the



Department of Defense's official Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) platform offering bookings for leisure travel. A portion of all bookings go back to support military quality of life programs. Members can feel confident knowing that their purchases are helping to fund events and activities made just for them.

## Eligible???

You may be eligible for newly enacted service-connected benefits.

Over the course of the last six months, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has begun processing service-connected disability claims for six new presumptive conditions related to environmental exposures during military service. **TALK TO YOUR V.S.O.**

## Awesome

That's about the only word I can use to describe my recent attendance at the VFW Post #5587 in Holly Michigan. I was there for the Dedication Ceremony of The Holly Veterans Memorial Post Office. I was there to take part, to witness the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 108 West Maple Street in Holly, Michigan, as the "HOLLY VETERANS MEMORIAL POST OFFICE." Along with Mike Mize and John Great-house of the M.P.W.U., and Roscoe Woods of the 480/481 Area Local of the A.P.W.U., I believe we were all in awe of the numerous speakers talking up the Postal Service and our Veterans'. The legislation was introduced in the U. S. House of Representatives by Representative Elissa Slotkin and signed into Law by President Trump.

## Support Our Veterans" Bills

On October 19, Representative Elissa Slotkin (MI) and Representative Brian Fitzpatrick (PA) introduced H.R. 5607, the Justice for ALS Veterans Act. This legislation would provide the survivors of veterans who die of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) the DIC (Dependency and Indemnity Compensation) "kicker" amount

without meeting the required eight-year total disability rating time period. Current law allows an additional DIC monthly payment of \$288.27 to survivors in the case of a veteran, who at the time of death was in receipt of or was entitled to receive compensation for a service-connected disability that was rated totally disabling for a continuous period of at least eight years immediately preceding death. This extra compensation installment is commonly referred to as the DIC "kicker." ALS is an aggressive disease that leaves many veterans totally incapacitated and reliant on family members and caregivers. VA already recognizes ALS as a presumptive service-connected disease and due to its progressive nature, automatically rates any diagnosed veteran at 100% once service connected. Individuals diagnosed with ALS only have an average lifespan of between two to five years meaning that, sadly, many veterans are unable to meet the existing eight-year total disability requirement to become eligible for the additional "kicker" compensation benefit. Please prepare your own message to request that your Representative support this important bill.

And THANK YOU for your support of America's disabled veterans and their families.

## Holiday's

To all my Brother and Sister Veterans' and each one's entire families may all of you have a very MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR and most of all may your Holidays be Safe and Healthy!!!



Roscoe Woods and John Smeekens



## RETIREE PRESIDENT



by  
Paul  
Browning

# Retirees Corner

## Medicare Punch

While FERS and CSRS Postal retirees experienced an almost 5 to 6% COLA increase for 2022, Medicare Part B premiums went up by almost 15%. And of course, there is usually an increase in FEHB plans also. In my own APWU HP, I guess I was fortunate that my premium increase was only about 2%. So, what's behind all this? Of course, there is always the ever-present factor of inflation. In 2020 and early 2021, when people pretty much gave up driving and building construction, prices for gas and materials bottomed out. Now with the at least perception or just plain tiredness of the pandemic, many have returned to driving to work again and there is a frenzy of new construction. Hence, the rising cost of gas and construction material which naturally filters down to health care costs.

But there's more factors. The treatment of COVID and related illnesses caused health care providers to spend a lot more money in the last couple of years. Also, what looks like a promising new drug for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease could very likely receive FDA approval in 2022. Alzheimer is horrific condition which currently affects almost six million (6,000,000) Americans a year. That number is predicted to double in the next five (5) years. There's not much that can be done about it except for family members to make sure Granddad or Grandma don't set the house on fire. If approved, the new drug would be a wonder treatment for millions of those afflicted and ease a tremendous burden on their families. Unfortunately, the projected cost for use of the drug-which would be covered by Medicare and for which money is being set aside for in advance-is \$56,000 a year. Do the math on that for 6,000,000 people and how much more it would cost the Medicare system.

The cost of prescription drugs (and we Americans use plenty of them) is a huge factor in the cost of Medicare. For example, over seven million Americans-almost half of them who are on Medicare-use insulin, the cost of which has more than tripled in the last ten years. And why is that? It's no secret that the top pharmaceutical companies in the United States made a 71% (8.6 TRILLION DOLLARS) profit from the years 2000 to 2018. It's also well documented that residents of our next-door neighbor Canada pay less than half of the price that Americans do for similar drugs. Back to insulin for an example-per unit in U.S. its costs \$98. In Canada with Government regulation, its \$12. Who would have thought that

Canadians were such radical left-wing socialists?

Presently under the 2003 Medicare Modernization Act passed by a Republican Congress and the George W. Bush administration, Medicare cannot negotiate drug prices with pharmaceutical companies. Medicare has to pay what Big Pharma dictates. The current BUILD BACK BETTER ACT passed by the U.S House of Representatives but not the Senate as of this writing, would allow the U.S Government to negotiate Medicare drug prices with pharmaceutical companies, something that private insurance companies already can do! Sounds to me like Medicare is getting ripped off. Certainly, some Drug company executive can rebut that last sentence but the fact remains Americans pay some of the highest prescription

cut passed for rich folks for all that helped the Country move forward. Speaking of taxes, does anyone doubt there isn't an awful of money out there buried in tax shelters, offshore accounts, laundered, hidden wherever, that really ought to be taxed? What about Climate Change and fossil fuels? Something like 97% of genuine scientists who know about stuff like this agree something must be done. The United States Constitution states that the purpose of the Federal Government is to "promote the general welfare".

Our Government exists to solve problems of people who live here because you certainly can't depend upon the top 1% or 10% to do it. Older folks can remember the river in Cleveland catching on fire and fish that one couldn't eat in the Great Lakes, the days before un-

deeply troubled-as many Americans are-by the earlier reporting on Postmaster General De Joy's potential financial conflicts of interest and take serious issues with the job he's doing running the Postal Service". Numerous Democrats in Congress expressed strong support for Biden's nominees and hope that the Post Office will return to timely delivery of the mail at affordable rates. With over 34,000 Post Offices in the United States, no other delivery service provides the accessibility like the U.S. Postal Service. And SERVICE is the key word. Mail delivery is a universal service provided for in the Constitution regardless of income or location.

Back in February at a Congressional Hearing, DeJoy arrogantly to lawmakers "Get used to me" that he wasn't going anywhere. Now after months of protest led by Union members in the field and related consumer groups, it appears the man who literally dismantled postal operations from machines to staffing to moving the mail, may finally be out the door. While Postal Unions leadership in D.C was strangely silent in calling for the ouster of DeJoy, our members on the ground raised the successful hue and cry for DeJoy's removal. Our sincere thanks for their ceaseless efforts. And in case your forgot, DeJoy, a mega donor to the former President and the Republican Party, was appointed by Donald Trump. Goes to show you who is not a friend of the Post Office if you didn't already know it.

For decades after the 1970 passage of the Postal Reorganization Act by Congress, USPS operated on the raise rates every three years cycle. It was making a profit the first year, break even the second year, lose money the third year for a zero-sum profit/loss. Then in 2006 Congress messed everything up with the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act and the now notorious much written about pre-funding of retiree health care benefits 75 years into the future. If you haven't already been following this debacle, I'm not going to rehash it for you at this point because

*continued on page 7*

***The cost of prescription drugs (and we Americans use plenty of them) is a huge factor in the cost of Medicare.***

drug prices in the world. And that is one LARGE factor in Medicare premiums.

## Culture Wars

Cancel culture is the Republican rallying cry in Washington these days. Whether it's a few little selling Dr. Seuss books, Sesame Street's Big Bird getting vaccinated, or some college course about the ugly history of U.S slavery, Republicans would have one think the fall of Democracy and even Civilization itself were imminent due to such "culture" Meanwhile, Democrats want to do some actual governing. There is a host of issues out there that need to be addressed for our country to continue to move into the 21st as opposed to some useless effort to return to an idealized problem free past that never actually existed.

There's all those post World War 11 highways and bridges that got built that desperately needed repair. Even Donald Trump recognized the problem and said he had an infrastructure plan. Of course, Trump never did anything about it despite a Republican controlled Congress for two years. Trump did get a tax

safe, even harmful products were government mandated to be recalled by the manufacturer, routine job discrimination because of race, sex, age, orientation, religion. Even further back in the "good old days", there was child labor, untold numbers of job-related deaths and injuries/illnesses with incredibly unsafe working conditions, industrial waste dumped into drinking water sources-all of it unrestrained by any type of government regulation. These problems weren't solved by private free enterprise. In fact, they were created by the private sector. It took Government to solve them.

## PMG DeJoy Gone??

President Joe Biden has nominated two new USPS Board of Governor members for 2022. They will replace the two whose terms expire at the end of 2021. One departing member is BOG Chairman Ron Bloom who is a firm supporter of USPS Postmaster DeJoy and DeJoy's "raise postage rates and slow service" plans. Concerning the two new nominees, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki stated "We are, of course

# Just In – MPWU Retirees Receive COPAmatic Award

by Jane Duggan

**MPWU Retiree Secretary-Treasurer**

In November, the MPWU RETIREE CHAPTER received a check for \$150 from national APWU. This COPAmatic award is in recognition of the work that our MPWU retiree officers and chapter leaders have done in get-

ting members to contribute to COPA. The award is given to locals, states and retiree chapters with at least 5% of members making recurring contributions. Retirees have always been major contributors to COPA and this check recognizes the collective contributions of MPWU retiree members.

With all the fights going on in Washington D.C. to protect Medicare, social security, our pensions and more, it's never been a more important time to contribute to COPA allowing our national to contribute to the campaigns of friends in the Congress who may need our support. Keep up the good work!

# — Straight Talk —

continued from page 2

simply increased the percentage and or number of allowable casual employees and kept the critical language that ensured career employees were not being replaced by the non-career workforce. But that did not happen and after the Rank-and-File Committee approved the 2010 contract the die was cast and the APWU helped create a huge expansion in numbers and usage of the non-career workforce (PSE) and worse subjected these new brothers and sisters to work side by side with us career employees but for far less money and greatly reduced benefits. The lesson of how corrosive this unfair difference in compensation for the same work is to the workroom floor and running a successful union was learned by the UAW with the creation of its Two-Tier Workforce. The UAW spoke openly how it nearly destroyed itself over this issue. The APWU just didn't listen.

Our union has doubled down since the 2010 contract created the PSE workforce by throwing crumbs at the PSE workforce in contract negotiations while not doing the hard work of negotiating for fewer PSE employees with more restrictions on their use, not expanding management's ability to use them in lieu of the career workforce. APWU should focus on creating career jobs at a living wage with benefits all families need and with a chance at a retirement with dignity. Not allow the USPS to copy the exploitative practices of Walmart and Amazon. Everyone knows PSE's are not supplemental workers but working in lieu of career employees and in lieu of career pay and benefits. PSE's need to be careers and then in time workers will be able to be hired as careers like many of us were hired before that first concessionary contract went into effect. All unions should be opposed to the use and or expansion of a two-tiered workforce and should be singularly focused on its elimination. USPS management has proven repeatedly and consistently it will not follow contractual language it agreed to and only by its elimination of a non-career workforce to replace career jobs can we ensure our union ensures equal pay for equal work for its members.

What does this have to do with today's staffing? You have to know where you came from to know where you are at. Because the USPS is now so dependent on its supplemental workforce it requires a poor economy for workers and a high employment rate for a non-career job at

substandard pay and shoddy benefits to be desirable. Even in bad economic times such as these, moving PSE's from facility to facility, constant turnover of PSE employees as they leave for other jobs has made staffing a nightmare for APWU members wanting to serve the American people at the same high level we have for generations. A bad job market is not the case now. I see ads on local television for non-career postal employees and every postal worker I talk to complains of critical staffing shortages. USPS management is in a disaster of its own creation but addicted and committed to exploiting its workforce.

If the APWU after the creation of the PSE in 2010 had negotiated consistently and aggressively to add limitations to PSE usage and therefore increase the career workforce, we would be in a much better position to push for their elimination. It is obvious cycling through non career employees is terrible for the employee and their wage and benefit savings for the USPS are wiped out by training, replacement costs and massive overtime as they leave for better opportunities. Without limitations on their usage to replace career workers management will be creative in violating the spirit of any agreement. Think about what Walmart did after the Affordable Care Act with it mandating coverage for all employees working 30 hours or more. They simply capped employees at 29 hours and did not provide health care.

All this could have been prevented if the rank-and-file committee (a group of union members not on the APWU national payroll to be a check and balance on the negotiating team to protect the membership) when reviewing the 2010 contract proposal had refused to approve the creation of the PSE and the elimination of the contract language that the non-career casual workforce could

not work in lieu of the career workforce. The vast majority of current PSE employees would be regular and non-career employees would be restricted to actual supplemental work.

This is a very important point now as the Rank-and-File Committee for our current contract did rise up and voted no to several key concessionary proposals that were included in that contract anyway. How was that possible when our APWU national constitution clearly states the Rank-and-File Committee must vote to approve the contract? Unfortunately, our president negotiating that contract agreed with management to those rejected proposals and signed them without the approval of the committee. He presented them to the committee afterwards and once rejected by the committee management was in an extremely commanding position. By signing those proposals, the APWU president was in agreement with management and only if the parties do not agree our contract goes to arbitration. An arbitrator only decides what the parties are NOT in agreement on. This was exactly what happened in the 2015 contract. The same arbitrator who awarded the current contract accepted those items that this same president and management agreed upon and only decided what was not in those agreements as stated in his written award deciding that contract. So, it was no surprise to anyone that once those rejected proposals were signed by the president, the APWU was reduced to effectively begging to get out of those signed agreements not in the contract. Begging is not a very effective negotiating tactic.

What can we do to encourage the Rank-and-File Committees reviewing our current negotiations and all future negotiations to be aggressively engaged and to prevent bypassing this critical commit-

tee? While I believe the APWU national constitutional language is clear that the rank-and-file committee must consent to a contract, it essential that language be added to the national constitution preventing any person, including the national president, from having the authority to agree to sign or initialing any agreement with management concerning contract negotiation without the written approval of the rank-and-file committee beforehand. Otherwise, the committee can be bypassed or be unduly pressured to agree as not agreeing could have undo negative consequences if agreements are already signed.

How can we do that? By submitting a resolution through your local union to our state and as many state conventions as possible via other local unions. Obtaining those states' support through our friends and colleges and ensuring your delegates to the APWU national convention are committed to this resolution passing with the required 2/3 vote. We must make it a requirement that the Rank-and-File Committee will be a key part of our negotiations and they are informed of any agreement prior to consent by the negotiating team if only for our own protection. Staffing will not improve until our contract improves. Our contract will not improve until negotiations improve. The APWU national officers work for the members; they are only as effective as you are. To be effective, get active, demand better and work together to make our union and our workplaces better. Together we cannot be defeated.

*John has held many union positions including local president, Michigan State President and at our national headquarters APWU Legislative and Political Director and APWU Health Plan Director.*



by  
John  
Greathouse

Brothers and Sisters, well, this article, and a few others needed a rewrite! Just after the articles were sent to the printer,

## EDITOR

# It's Important That You VOTE!!!

I found out that the Rank-and-File Committee had approved the Contract!

While this is good news, the proof is in the pudding so to speak . . . Is this contract a good one? A hood wink? Smoke and Mirrors? That is up to you to decide as you will be the folks voting in favor of this or not. As such, you need to do your due diligence and find out what is actually in this agreement and most importantly . . . **VOTE!!!**

## Holly Veterans Memorial Post Office

I was able to join Mike Mize, Roscoe Wood and John Smeekens at the Holly Veteran Memorial Post Office dedication on Veterans Day. There were numerous community, regional, and state leaders as well USPS District Manager and U.S. Elissa Slotkin who sponsored the renaming of the office to honor the

veterans in Holly and the surrounding communities. You will be able to see some of the photos in this edition in the Veterans report.

## Holidays

As we go through the holidays and overtime like crazy, I hope each and every one of you take a moment and try to enjoy the season along with friends and family.

With 2022 quickly approaching, we have a few things to look forward to starting with a new Board of Governors members being nominated, PMG DeJoy being sent packing and hopefully a new PMG who has the service best interest in mind and not on how they can make their own portfolio increase!

I hope everyone has a safe and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

In Solidarity!



**Michigan Messenger**  
Deadline for  
**Newsletter Submissions**  
  
**February 12, 2022**





# Info On How To Handle The OIG

by Roscoe Woods

Hello Sisters and Brothers!!

Since things are a bit light these days on Postal Legislation, I thought I would address an issue we have seen crop up lately.

The information below gives you information as to how you handle a variety of scenarios when dealing with the Inspection Service or the Office of Inspector General (OIG).

Since the Inspection Service and the OIG are arguably the more serious of the two entities you may find yourself in front of, I will address what you should do if you are approached by a postal inspection service officer or a member of the Office of Inspector General (OIG).

First, both an Inspection Service Agent as well as the Special Agent with the OIG will have badges, both may carry firearms regardless, you should speak to neither without your steward present. For your education I have copied from an APWU Handbook call *Surviving the Postal Inspection Service* written by Jeff Khehert a couple of scenarios to better guide you.

## Scenario 1

A window clerk is on duty at the window counter waiting on a line of customers. A person approaches from the work floor and identifies him/herself as a Postal Inspector and begins making some small talk.

## What To Do

The clerk immediately tells the Postal Inspector that he/she wants a Union Representative. The clerk answers no questions and responds with no comments to the Postal Inspector.

The Postal Inspector may insist this is not an investigation and that he/she is just being friendly. The clerk must neither accept nor believe that. Postal Inspectors often cover up their intentions with lies and half-truths.

If the Postal Inspector continues to persist, the clerk must ignore him/her and/or get the manager and tell the manager the Postal Inspector is disrupting and distracting the clerk from performing his/her duties carefully and exercising reasonable care.

\*Please note – the author writes that the clerk “immediately tells the Postal Inspector that he/she wants a Union Representative”

That is an important distinction in that the clerk did not say “Do I need a steward?” or something such as “Shouldn’t I have a steward?”

You must make your request clear and unambiguous. Something like: “I will not talk to you until I have my steward present.” It becomes even more important once you make your request you remain silent until you have a chance to speak to your union steward.

## Scenario 2

A manager or Postmaster approaches you on the workroom floor and orders you to report to the office because “someone wants to speak to you.”



## What To Do

A. The employee asks the manager/postmaster who it is that they are to speak with. If the answer is a Postal Inspector, then the employee must immediately request Union Representation. If the manager or postmaster refuses to tell the employee who is waiting to speak to them, then the employee requests a Union Representative.

The employee should not refuse to follow the manager/postmaster instructions, but should make it clear he/she is requesting the Union Representative. The employee should never attempt to have another craft employee witness the request.

B. Once the employee gets to the office, he/she finds the Postal Inspector waiting. Immediately, the employee requests Union Representation and remains absolutely silent until one is provided.

Note the similarity to the two scenarios – in both the employee asked for a steward, and they kept doing so. Far too often innocent employees believe they have no reason not to talk to these law enforcement personnel, it’s only after they find out there are jammed up that they call us and by then, well it’s too late.

When you ask for a steward, here is one of the more common situations we get confronted with these days:

## Scenario 3

Postal Inspectors tell an employee there is no Union representative available and that cooperation is required without delay.

## What To Do

The employee must tell the Postal Inspectors he/she will cooperate, but only with a Union Representative present. Often, Inspectors will attempt to coerce responses to questions when they allege no Union representative can be found. **The employee must stand fast**

**and assure the Postal Inspectors he/she will cooperate once the Union Representative becomes available. This is regardless of whether the availability occurs in hours, days or weeks.**

## Scenario 4

Employee receives a visit at home from Postal Inspectors.

*(This is a tactic used to catch you off guard in an attempt to get you to talk)*

## What To Do

When the employee answers the door and the Postal Inspectors identify themselves, the employee must not let them in his/her residence or speak to them. Postal Inspectors have ample opportunity to talk with employees at the Post Office, on the clock, with Union Representation.

Postal Employees must never speak

to Postal Inspectors off the clock at home or anywhere else. The employee must tell the Postal Inspectors he/she will not speak to them or see them off the clock, either at home or at any other location. The employee then must immediately contact a Union Representative or make it clear if the inspectors want to talk elsewhere, they need to be certain your steward is there.

The Inspection service isn’t there to make small talk, if they are talking to you then they are investigating some level of wrong doing. Make sure you are protected. **ASK FOR YOUR STEWARD!**

**Jeff Khehert adds and I agree with the following:**

Postal Inspectors are in the business of causing resignations and firings, arrests and convictions of Postal Workers. That is their function. Postal Inspectors are not in business to assist workers or protect workers’ rights.

Postal Inspectors will use any and every means at their disposal to justify their existence, their employment and the resources and monies expended in the course of their investigation. They will misrepresent, threaten, promise and outright lie to serve their purpose of obtaining a resignation, firing or conviction.

Postal Inspectors must never, never be trusted or relied upon by Postal Workers.

Wrapping this issue up I will leave you with Jeff’s Do’s and Don’ts when the OIG or Inspectors approach you:

**DO** always insist on Union Representation whenever anyone identifies him/herself as a Postal Inspector;

**DON’T** ever speak to Postal Inspectors without Union Representation;

**DON’T** ever take a lie-detector test (polygraph) under any circumstances;

**DON’T** ever give a written or oral statement when requested by Postal Inspectors.

In solidarity.

# Retirees Corner

*continued from page 5*

you obviously can’t see past the end of your nose.

The Post Office has been around for almost 250 years. It has changed with the times from delivery via horseback to airplanes—at least until DeJoy went back to surface transportation by trucking companies he is connected with. First Class letter mail has declined by a lot with the internet as package delivery has risen. Do Americans want to rely solely upon private package delivery services to get their parcels? (See the above regarding private enterprise) Automobile companies, banks, small businesses, etc. have all been helped out one way or the other by the Government in the name of promoting the general welfare. It’s time for the Feds to help out the Post Office and con-

tinue to provide affordable, accessible mail delivery everywhere along with decent paying jobs and benefits for Americans.

## Happy Holidays

In 1942, Bing Crosby sang the classic song called “Happy Holidays”. No one accused old Bing of a war on Christmas. So, if you hear from some Republicans the B.S. cry of the Democrats’ so-called war on Christmas, laugh it off as just another distraction from the real problems we face. Instead, try to follow through on the good will to all spirit that is trumpeted so loudly this time of year. And thank the men and women of the USPS who sort, move, and deliver those Christmas cards and parcels to your door through bad weather and 12-hour workdays.



## PRESIDENT



by  
Linda  
Turney

# Turney At The Table

**When you read, you empower yourself. When you write, you influence others.**

We have lost much and gained much these past 19 months. The Pandemic has created an awareness of a real need for paid family leave, better working conditions for all American workers, and securing voting rights. Presently, we are demanding

a top-notch contract because you have worked through it all making our workplace a revered and respected institution.

We are blessed because the USPS is an important institution. We are the government entity that still touches every American every day. In 2008, letters and packages were delivered to 149 million addresses each day. Although email and the Internet have changed the way people communi-

cate, Americans still expect — and receive — exceptional and secure mail service at affordable prices. The price of a First-Class postage stamp is one of the lowest among industrialized nations, and the Postal Service continues to enjoy strong brand recognition. It is regularly named the most trusted government agency.

Today, we struggle with supervisors doing our work and not enough clerks to do the work. We struggle

with keeping our work and working through changes in mail processing.

Our success will be certain, because:

We are the Union.

Brave we will remain.

We do not like the bosses from DeJoy to the supervisor they are all to blame.

Merry Christmas, Happy Chanukah and much good health and happiness in the coming New Year.

## 2021-2024 Tentative Collective Bargaining Agreement

*continued from page 1*

- Steps FF-BB moved to Step A
- Step AA moved to Step B
- Steps B-O moved up one Step
- Grade 11 Pay Scale increased by an average of 2.3% prior to any general increases or COLAs

### Part-Time Flexible (PTF) Work Rules

- Schedule guarantee of 24-hour per pay period, increased from 2 hours a pay period
- Guaranteed at least four hours of work or pay when scheduled
- Forty (40) hours of annual leave will be advanced at the start of each leave year for immediate use
- Guaranteed a minimum of one (1) non-scheduled day each service week except during the peak season exception period with notice Wednesday the week prior
- Within 90-days of ratification a One-time Voluntary Transfer Opportunity to residual full time regular vacancies in larger offices within a district.

### Automatic Conversion of PSEs in Level 20 offices and above

- PSEs will be converted to career status upon reaching 24-months of relative standing
- Clerk PSEs assigned to offices Grade 21 or higher will be converted to Full-Time Flexible with such assignments made in accordance with the Clerk Craft provisions of Art. 37.4
- Clerk PSEs assigned to Grade 20 offices will be converted to Part-Time Flexible

➤ MVS PSEs assigned in any size office will be converted to Part-Time Flexible

➤ PSEs converted under this provision start at a new Step GG in Grades 5-7 and Step A in Grade 8.

➤ Automatic Conversion does not apply to PSEs assigned to Grade-4 RMPOs

• Conversions will still occur prior to the 24-months

➤ The "Filling of Residual Vacancy MOU" and Article 37.5.D remains in full force and effect

➤ MVS Craft Conversions will be made in accordance with Article 39.2.A.11

➤ Conversion occurring earlier to 24-months start at Step FF for Grades 5-7 and Step-A for Grade 8

### Other PSE Provisions

• Forty (40) hours of advanced annual leave upon completion of an initial 360-day PSE appointment in Level 20 offices and above.

• PSEs assigned to Level 4 RMPOs receive an additional one (1) hour of paid annual leave per pay period upon completion of two (2) 360-day appointments

• PSEs assigned to Level 4 RMPOs upon completion of two 360-day appointments will receive 40 hours of advance leave.

• PSEs will be offered one (1) non-scheduled day each service week except during peak season with notice the Wednesday the week prior.

### PSE Staffing

• The 12 PSEs per District assigned to Level 4 RMPOs will no longer count against the 20% District cap

• 10 PSEs in the 46 Package Support Annexes (PSAs) will not count against the District cap (for a total maximum of 460 PSEs) and will be allowed to work in any facility in the installation the PSA is attached to

• A four (4) weeks "ramp-up" period prior to the start of accounting period 3, the 20% PSE District cap will be temporarily increased by 1% per week equating to no more than a 4% increase.

• New protections for the OTDL dur-

ing "ramp-up" whereby prior to utilizing a PSE more than 8 hours in a day or 40 hours in a service week, qualified and available employees on the appropriate OTDL will be utilized. No requirement to use an OTDL employee on the second non-scheduled at the penalty rate prior to using a PSE in excess of 40 hours.

### Uniform/Work Clothes Program Allowances

• 2.5% increase to the uniform/work clothes allowances in 2022, 2023, and 2024

• Delivery/Sales Service Distribution Associate (DSSDA) will receive Type 1 uniform allowance

• New "Rollover" program where unused funds can carry over to a successor allowance year

### Additional Work Rule Improvements

• Remote Encoding Center staffing ratio changed to 62% Full-time Regular and 38% PSE and all career duty assignments are Full-time Regular.

• 90-day waiting period to use annual leave eliminated for new career employees with 90-days continuous service prior to their conversion.

• Updated the Deaf and Hard of Hearing MOU

• Work Environment Improvement Task Force

• Work Place Free of Harassment

• Enhanced and Expanded Services

• Environmental/Sustainability issues, EAP, and Child and Elder care, included in the jurisdiction of the National Labor Management Committee

• District Safety Committees made permanent

• Right of Union Officials to Enter Postal Installations

• Regional Safety and Health Representative Training Opportunities

• Repromotion MOU

• Article 8 Task Force to address excessive overtime, particularly in relation to non-list employees

• Election Mail Task Force MOU

• Full per diem for employees traveling to NCED

### Additional Clerk Craft Provisions

• Window training starts within 10-days after posting of the senior bidder

• Updated NTFT duty assignments language

• Pilot program to test new pecking order for the assignment of PTF Hub Clerks

• Filling of Residual Vacancy MOU updated

### Additional Motor Vehicle Service Craft Provisions

• PTFs identified for conversion to FTR converted within 28-days

• APWU will have opportunity to submit recommendations on new vehicles prior to specifications being sent to contractors and before manufacturing and completion of new vehicles

• National committee established to address training initiative and opportunities

• HCR limitation on Subcontracting MOU remains in full force and effect.

### Additional Maintenance Craft Provisions

• No additional custodial staffing packages will change from MS-47 TL-3 to TL-5 for life of the contract

• Change the calculation method of PS Form 4852 for Juneteenth Holiday

• Annual cap on the number of times an employee can be involuntarily assigned to off-site training courses

• Career employee may request to be tested for maintenance craft positions and if rated eligible may request placement on the appropriate in-service register.

• Updates to the posting of relief assignments in the craft

• Agreement to consolidate and upgrade multiple legacy jobs.

• Employees traveling to NCED for training receive full per diem for length of stay

### Additional Support Services Craft Provisions

• In Material Distribution Centers Maintenance Mechanic General Grade 7 eliminated and Building Equipment Mechanic Grade 9 added.

• Penalty Overtime provisions applied to Operating Service employees

