



TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION OF AMERICA
AFL /CIO

153-33 Rockaway Blvd Jamaica, N.Y. 11434
PHONE# 718-978-5590 FAX 718-978-5651

LOCAL 562

www.twu562.org

Robert Owens
President
Chuck Schalk
Vice President
Angel Colon
Treasurer
Joe Urso
Recording-Secretary
Executive Board
Steve Gukelberger
Harry Charalambous
Angelo Ragucci

June 14,2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters;

Well I guess that most of you have received word about the outcome of the mediation session in Kansas City the week of June 8-12.

The week started off with a presentation given by the company that showed that they had an excess of work for the next two years, then a fall off indicated by "white spaces".

"White spaces" and "the sixth floor" became the catch phrases for the week. Two more additions to the "fear factor library". (The "sixth floor" is where Arpey's offices are.)

The presentation consisted of three pages covering line maintenance, a total of 38 words, including the title page, and 29 pages on overhaul.

Obviously some of us drew different conclusions from the presentations. From what I saw the fact that we had an excess of work for at least the next two years, with a falloff afterwards would indicate that we were in a good position to make gains on a short term contract. Others saw the opposite; some saw nothing but bankruptcy, I guess it's the \$3 billion in the bank, all the new airplanes coming in and full flights that have them worried, they wanted a long-term, end loaded, concessionary contract that still leaves us behind industry standards in many important aspects.

After the presentation, a motion was made to conduct an "exercise"(a la the 2003 concessionary deal) based upon the unions August proposal (when fuel was at \$150/barrel).The August proposal was merely a rework of the company's earlier proposal. The union took the company's dollar figure and moved it around. I argued that its absurd to use the dollar figure for an offer that was made when fuel was \$150/barrel, since its half that now. We were then told that we could modify the proposal and we started adding things from the current table position.

I either motioned or voted to add things because I felt they were the right things to do, some of them went through, such as;

- Correcting the injustice where when an AMT is forced to bump down to OSM they lose their license pay. The FAA doesn't look at an A&P any differently whether he is being paid as an A&P or as an OSM. He is still liable for his work as an A&P. This issue primarily affected the bases.
- Correcting the Title II Building/ Cabin Cleaner injustice. This is a small group of workers spread throughout the system who are the lowest paid workers in our book. They top out at \$8.25/hr.
- Adjusting the Vacation accrual chart so that everyone has at least two weeks of vacation. Non-union workers usually get at least two weeks of vacation, its shameful for union workers to get less.

I also felt very strongly that we as a union should finally recognize that those of us who live in the high cost areas need more to survive and should have a Geographic premium integrated into our contract. I was under the belief that the main drivers of the negotiations felt the same way and were committed to having Geographic Premiums in the contract.

Unfortunately that wasn't the case. One of the Committee members, who prides himself on his parliamentary skills apparently executed the gimmick of voting in favor of a motion so he can reopen the discussion at a later time and he did so, giving two others opponents of Geo Pay the opportunity to motion to remove it from the proposal. In the debate that followed Ruiz, Houseman, McMahon, Argentina and myself stood against removing Geo Pay and we brought up the struggles that our members face such as the extremely high housing costs in the Northeast and West Coast, to which one of those in favor of removing it callously replied "Well then, a buck twenty five wont make much of a difference". Which was countered with although \$1.25 wouldn't be a complete fix every little bit helps and it's better than nothing. Unfortunately most of our "brothers" were unmoved from their indifference-so much for unionism. AFW was supportive of Geo Pay,

Most of the other motions I favored such as Longevity, shift premiums, Holidays, adjusting system protection to include everybody, etc were shot down as soon as the motions were made.

Later that day Jim Weel and the company delegation were lead in. Weel had been in the Stores negotiations and indicated to them that his meeting with us would only take a few moments. Mr. Weel kept a straight face but his body language gave him away. He was like a kid sitting at his desk in the final moments before summer break. As they walked out I said to one of the company delegation "You must feel like Hank Aaron right now". He laughed and continued out the door. The Mediator, who comes from a management background, was very pleased with what he called "progress" and congratulated us for selling out the profession, once again.

Tensions were high, those of us on the losing side felt betrayed. A couple from the opposition came over to explain why they went the way they did. To me their explanation did little to change how I felt, if anything it made it worse. I got the sense they were playing Russian Roulette but after putting in the bullet and spinning the chamber, they were holding the gun to my head, not theirs. Their members aren't the ones working two jobs to just get by, their members weren't told that this time things were different, only to see GEO pay once again thrown off the table.

I can deal with the fact that we lost, but what added to my frustration was the manipulation of the process by the ATD. Members were directed to sub-committees and then votes were taken in their absence and lies about the parameters of the NMBs authority were told so that the offer was open ended, thus making the June 11 proposal our new table position.

Right now this is just a proposal, not a TA, the company indicated that they wanted more, the pension and benefits were brought up. In my opinion the chance of it becoming a TA is 50/50. They may come back and try for the Grand Slam but unlike our Fleet Service brothers who are at the top in the industry already as far as pay, thus giving the company good cause to stall endlessly, we are not. This proposal will leave us earning around \$400 a week less than our counterparts at SWA in 2011. Continental is currently in negotiations, I'm sure the company realizes that once the IBT releases the figures on what they would be seeking as far as wages the likelihood of them getting anything better than what's been put in front of them already diminishes greatly. Continental Mechanics currently earn more than us and with this proposal we would not receive a raise until 2010. We currently earn around \$10000/year less than them. While the IBT hasn't announced what they are seeking in wages they are seeking to extend the considerable lead they have as far as Holidays, Vacation and sick time. I believe that UAL is supposed to open up by years end.

Needless to say that if this proposal is accepted and becomes a TA my position will be "VOTE NO".

Bob Owens



President Local 562