

Meeting Minutes for NTEU 164 Union Meeting, 12/14/15

1 st Meeting called to order at 1336; 2nd Meeting called to order at 1705.

All in attendance were members of NTEU

Sean explained that having two meetings was tried previously and very few showed up. It has been a while since that happened (2007?) so we are trying to hold two meeting again, attempting to respond to the needs of employees who work the swing shift.

#1 Blaine management has indicated that they would like to start processing some referrals, at the Peace Arch, completely outside. I.E., some referrals would never come inside the customhouse, similar to how some inspections are handled in San Ysidro, and elsewhere on the Mexican border. Comments are sought, with a confirming vote yea or nay, regarding employee interest.

Discussion included:

This was an LMRC topic.

Safety is a big concern using cars as a weapon.

Weather is another concern.

How will the computer in secondary for the inspection be used?

Watching the inspection is a concern.

Prioritizing who gets inspected first: Compex vs Nexus how will the line be rearranged.

How does the Agency plan to address complaints? As opposed to the Southern border, the complaints tend to come much faster on the Northern border.

Will the parking lot be reconfigured?

A motion was made at the first meeting:

To table until we have more details. The motion carried

A motion was made at the second meeting, to vote between 3 alternatives:

1. *Not doing it at all:*

2. *Like the idea and will work with management to implement*
3. *Table until more details are provided from management:*

The first option carried. The bargaining unit has grave reservations as to whether this initiative could ever function properly in Blaine, given out staffing, infrastructure, weather, and clientele.

2. Blaine management has indicated the possible desire to move to scheduled “lunch” breaks for employees at the Peace Arch, on the day shift. These would be paid “lunch” periods, with the general idea that employees would take only very limited additional breaks. Comments are sought, with a confirming vote of yea or nay, regarding employee interest.

Discussion:

Scheduling breaks would be beneficial if you don't want the supervisors glaring or ordering everyone out of the break room.

People would be able to schedule fitness time in conjunction with the break time.

How would the Agency plan on assigning break and how many at any time?

Need a plan on how the breaks will be assigned.

Raymond Chapin read from the Contract regarding rest periods

W/C Dahm has recently mentioned that this might not be feasible in Blaine, with current staffing

A motion was made, and seconded, to take a vote on employee interest regarding the implementation of scheduled, paid breaks:

Is there employee interest to have scheduled ½ hr paid breaks? The motion failed unanimously

Second meeting

Is there employee interest to have schedule ½ hr paid breaks? Unanimous against.

#3. Blaine management has proposed to send some electronic case processing work to the “outports” with the Area Port. Travelers undergoing certain in-depth processing would interact, via video and other computer technology, with an officer at a remote site, for at least some of the case processing. Comments are sought, with a confirming vote of yea or nay, regarding employee interest.

Discussion:

Explained what was shared at the LMRC.

Plan to use this on compliant subjects.

Is there a right if you are too busy can you decline to do this?

Is there a BR&P violation?

Concern was expressed regarding safety, staffing, integrity of examination, etc.

Motion to vote, and seconded

First Meeting; *is anyone in favor of supporting this program?* 9 + 2 proxies against. The motion failed

Second Meeting; *is anyone in favor of supporting this program?* Unanimous against.

#4. CBP HQ has indicated that a large number of officers will be needed for TDYs to San Ysidro. Further developments in that case to pass along.

Albright mentioned that recent information indicates that Seattle Field Office personnel are not on the "donor pool." Albright will forward anyone's name who wants to go.

#5. Changes are coming in the way small vessel arrivals will be handled. These changes are being made to conform to law and regulation. Details to be provided. Comments will be sought.

Small Vessel Arrivals

Explained the process for documenting the arrival and departure of foreign vessels, including Canadian. The previous local policy of 40+ years (exempting Canadian yachts from entrance and clearance process, or having to obtain a cruising license) was contrary to the law. The laws are on the books, we need to enforce them to help maintain our need to staff the small ports, as CBP seems to be trying to automate our jobs out of existence.

#6. Some CBP Agriculture Specialists in Blaine have proposed a change in the way the ad hoc leave system works. Specifically, they have proposed that employees in one work unit (Flex) be allowed to use unused ad hoc leave slots from Cargo or Passengers. Comments are sought, with a confirming yeay or nay vote regarding employee interest.

Discussion;

Is the problem that we don't have enough leave slots?

The Flex work unit for Aggie is very large, resulting in employees in the Flex having fewer opportunities for leave, especially ad hoc leave, than the Aggies assigned permanently to Cargo/Pac Hwy/Peace Arch. The math of the 7.5% absentee rate is very harsh for large work units, less impact for small work units where there are fewer than 7 employees.

Suggestion to go back to the open leave draw where they get to pick what they actually want (only 2 days tied into my weekend) not two weeks.

Talked about how the Contract would change the leave draw if the agency wanted to dissolve the leave draw.

Staff should be requesting leave when they want it and have the Agency deny it and get a reason for the denial.

Sustained debate on whether Aggies assigned to the Flex should be able to take the unused ad hoc leave slots allocated to Cargo/Pac Hwy/Peace Arch. Most CBPOs were opposed to this concept being expanded to the CBPO work units, but most CBPSAs were in favor of this concept.

First meeting Motion to vote on "*Approach Management to discuss the issue with the FLEX work unit for ad hoc leave in Agriculture.*" 17 to approach; none against.

Second meeting Motion to vote on "*Approach Management to discuss the issue with the FLEX work unit for ad hoc leave in Agriculture.*" Unanimous vote to approach.

#7. Any other topics of concern for labor-management relations, or union matters.

No topics

#8 Explanation on how the criminal legal coverage has developed so far, regarding local vs. national efforts.

Albright recapped how the chapter had showed great interest in obtaining criminal and civil legal coverage, such as is offered already by some NTEU chapters, and by the BP union. Currently, NTEU counsel will not represent members involved in civil or criminal legal troubles. National NTEU took up the cause, but failed to get enough interest from the membership to continue to pursue the matter at the national level. The chapter leadership now comes back to the members to re-confirm that the members are interested in pursuing this coverage on a local (chapter) level. There will be financial and administrative challenges, concerning how dues are collected and how the cost of \$4 per member per month will be covered.

First Meeting: *Motion to vote to pursue the coverage.* Unanimous vote to continue to pursue this coverage.

Second meeting: *Motion to vote to pursue the coverage.* Unanimous vote to continue to pursue this coverage.