

Minutes for Union Meeting of 11/2/2017

1. 4-hours of leave for Ad Hoc. For Blaine, management and the union previously reached a temporary agreement whereby an extra leave slot was added to each work unit, in exchange for employees having to commit to a minimum of 4-hours of leave if invoking an Ad Hoc leave slot, (except for good cause shown). Do we want to continue with this experiment? This has allowed us to return to a near 10% leave absentee rate in Blaine, not seen since 2011.

A healthy discussion was held, not only addressing the issue of requiring 4 hours of leave to use an ad hoc slot, but also the challenge of forcing someone to take leave who cancels a previously booked leave slot. Although there were some reservations expressed regarding the requirement to demand a minimum of 4 hours of A/L when less might be needed, the consensus was that it was worth the trade-off to get us back to something approaching a 10% Leave absentee rate. The history of how we got to this point was also discussed.

A motion was made and seconded at the afternoon meeting to continue to use the policy of requiring 4 hours of leave, when using ad hoc, in exchange for management providing an extra leave slot for "each" work unit. AYE: 27 Nay: 0

A motion was made at the evening meeting to match the afternoon meeting. AYE: 29 NAY: 0

Member Hicks requested that the union approach management about allowing the unused portion of any partially used Ad Hoc A/L slot to be used by another person. Management was approached, and refused "at this time."

2. AWS for Aggies. Blaine management and the union could not come to terms on several proposed AWS schedules for CBP Agriculture Specialists. CBPAS Mike Hicks has some new proposals. Do we want to pursue those new proposals?

The difficulty of negotiating an AWS for the Aggies was explained. Because of the relatively small employee numbers in the CBPAs work units, the addition or removal of even one employee makes large AWS schedules problematic. At a previous union meeting, the Aggie members approved a specific schedule to propose. This was done, but we could not get management buy-in on a large AWS, partially because of staffing changes throughout the year. Albright went on to explain, per Hicks, that what was needed by the union was more flexibility to negotiate something that works at the time, rather than having to get explicit prior approval on what schedule would be proposed. This was proving to be unwieldy.

A motion was made and seconded at the afternoon meeting to: "Empower the union to negotiate an AWS, but to take a poll of the member Aggies before final agreement is made to ensure majority approval." (A preliminary motion was made and seconded, and unanimously approved, to limit the vote to the Aggies.) AYE: 2 NAY: 0 In the evening session, a motion

was made and seconded to adopt the same proposal as the afternoon meeting. (a similar motion to restrict the vote to Aggies was passed unanimously). AYE: 6 NAY: 0

3. Live Bid for the Leave Draw. For Blaine, the union and management wish to conduct a Live Bid for the Leave Draw, similar to the Live Bid for the Bid and Rotation that went so well last year. A proposal has been made to reduce the number of rounds to 3, from the current 4 (for Blaine), with the resultant unused slots placed into the Ad Hoc leave pool. In essence, the last round of the Leave Draw would be captured by the first week of the Ad Hoc process – no actual slots would be lost. It was mentioned how this would reduce the amount of time necessary to conduct the Leave Draw, so employees could start making vacation plans as much as a week earlier. It would also make the smooth functioning of the live Leave Draw more attainable. Do we want to do this?

A good discussion was held, with the pros and cons of the proposed change debated. Ultimately a motion was made at the afternoon meeting, and seconded, to transition the Leave Draw in Blaine to 3 rounds, with any remaining unclaimed leave slots put into the Ad Hoc process. AYE: 26 Nay: 0

At the evening session, a motion was made, and seconded, to make the same change as was suggested at the afternoon session. AYE: 28 Nay: 0

4. Leave Draw. A procedural objection was raised to the June meeting regarding the vote taken to change the order of the Leave Draw picks. Specifically, the objection, raised by several members, was that the same issues were not voted on at the evening meeting as at the afternoon meeting. This changed the nature of the debate, and what was being voted on. Please see the notes to the previous union meeting, posted to the Chapter's website. The Executive Board agreed that the procedural issue rendered the previous advisory vote as unenforceable. Do we want to revisit this issue? (This is the problem inherent in having more than one meeting time.)

The afternoon session discussed possible changes, but ultimately held that the changes imposed by the new contract are significant, and the results of these changes should be observed before the chapter decides to make substantive changes to the Leave Draw process. Eventually, a motion was made, and seconded, to table the issue until the impact of the Flex Capable and other contractual changes can be observed. AYE: 27 NAY: 0

The evening session spent little time discussing the matter, as a vote that was to change the substantive process of the Leave Draw would be different from what was discussed and voted on at the afternoon session, and another procedural objection would likely be lodged. Instead,

Member Abram proposed to take a binding vote on the following topic at the next union meeting:

Shall we change the order of picks in the Leave Draw to be 1. Seniority, 2. Reverse Seniority, 3. Seniority?

Accordingly, the chapter will now follow the processes associated with the taking of a binding vote at the next meeting. Those processes can be found in the Chapter Bylaws.

5. Major remodel of the Pacific Highway. Management has given the union its preliminary plans and drawings for a major remodel of the Pacific Highway. Copies of the plans will be distributed, and comments sought. We are still in the pre-negotiations phase.

Because of technological difficulties, we were unable to show a large image of the proposed changes at the afternoon session. Paper copies were distributed. Members were urged to send any suggestions to Sean Albright or James Pettaway.

At the evening session, a large overhead image of the building plans was shown to the members. There was concern that the lobby did not appear big enough, and concern about the public going behind the officers to access the cashier, or the bathrooms that will be located in the hallway where the old Customs holding cells are now located. Also, concern over shared fingerprint machines.

6. New Contract. The new Collective Bargaining Agreement has gone into effect. Does anyone have any questions?

There were questions raised about the Flex and Flex Capable work units, and questions about what is meant by "fair and equitable" regarding the rotation of employees to other work units. Chapter leadership commented that this is still a work in progress and we were unsure how management was going to interpret this language. There will likely be grievances concerning differences of opinion between management and the union regarding the meaning of certain contractual passages.

7. Port Improvement Committee. A work group has been formed, comprised of employees and managers, with the goal of improving port processes. This committee was previously the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Improvement Committee. The name, and focus, was recently changed to the Port Improvement Committee. Does anyone have any suggestions of topics for the group to pursue?

A suggestion was made to reserve one position on the Committee for an Agriculture Specialist.

A suggestion was made to approach management about making our PIV cards also function as Prox cards

A suggestion was made to make all the icons on the computers the same, port-wide

More lockers are needed, including at Point Roberts

A suggestion was made to send Aggies to Point Roberts.

A comment was made regarding the waste of funds to maintain and service the passport scanners in pre-primary in buses, when in reality they are never used.

Complaints about the radios being unable to be rekeyed this past month.

Complaints about all the junk equipment and office furniture laying around the port.

8. Other topics. This is the union of the employees. What topics does the membership wish the union to pursue? In general, any topic of interest to management-employee and management-union interaction can be considered.
 - A. A discussion was held about the merits of changing the Rail work unit to 1 year, from the current 2 years. Two-year work units, especially with non-staggered start dates, can lead to employees being trapped in a work unit, or schedule, for two years. 2-year bids also interfere with seniority rights. After discussion, a motion was made, and seconded, to transition the Rail work unit to one year. AYE:19 NAY:0 (evening session discussion only)
(note: Management was approached, and refused to transition the Rail work unit to one year. However, management did agree to temporarily make one of the two Rail slots a year bid, for this year only, while the other Rail position will remain as 2 years. The person bidding to the Rail will bid to a 2-year slot. If someone is forced to remain in Rail, he will take the 1-year slot. Next October, both slots will return to 2-years, but they will then be staggered. This will reduce the likelihood of someone being forced to remain in Rail in the future. A similar arrangement was made for the Ag Coordinator position. Management will waive the 50% retention requirement for the position this year, which will allow a volunteer (instead of a draftee) to go to Mids this year.
 - B. A discussion was held at the afternoon session regarding the possibility of Aggies rotating through Mids Cargo (if no one bids for it) instead of forcing one Aggie to do it for the whole year. Such a rotation would also likely require a Title 5 waiver. A motion was made, and seconded, to pursue such an option. AYE: 2 NAY:0
(note: the agreement of management to waive the 50% retention rate for Ag Coordinator, and thus allow a current Ag Coordinator to transition to permanent Mids renders this issue moot for this year. The evening session did not discuss this issue.
 - C. At the afternoon session, the group discussed the Flex Group, and whether it was a good idea to have one or not. The consensus seemed to be that we should wait a year and observe the impact of the Flex Group, before we should discuss voting it away. A motion was eventually made, and seconded, to have a Flex Group this year. AYE: 12 NAY:0

D. Complaint made that the pre-academy time for officers is too long, and leads to financial hardship.