

Arbitration Hearings and Testimony Conclude *APWU Makes Powerful Final Case for a Good Contract*

The American Postal Workers Union and United States Postal Service management conducted a final three-day session of interest arbitration Nov. 13-15. The week's proceedings saw the conclusion of evidence submission and witness testimony in the interest arbitration hearings for a new collective bargaining agreement (CBA).

With the hearings complete, the Arbitration Panel will now begin its deliberations.

APWU Responds to Management

The majority of the final three-day session was spent on APWU's rebuttal of management's attacks in earlier hearings.

The APWU presented testimony from Motor Vehicle Service Craft Director Michael Foster, Clerk Craft Director Lamont Brooks and Maintenance Craft Director Idowu Balogun.

The national craft directors refuted management's efforts to reinstate PSEs into Maintenance and MVS, subcontract out more work and add more management "flexibility" that would undermine seniority bidding rights, hours of work and set schedules.

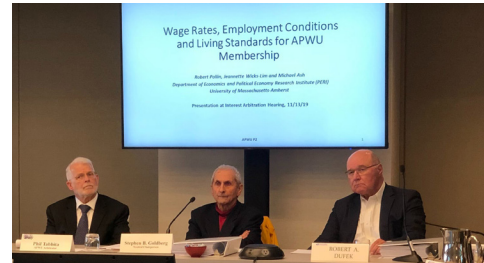
Motor Vehicle Service Director Michael Foster responded to management's regressive proposals for PVS operators. Among those proposals was a management attempt to do away with bidding on specific schedules when bidding on duty assignments, and allow supervisors to substantially modify duty assignments on a weekly basis.

Clerk Craft Director Lamont Brooks addressed USPS management's attacks on clerks' work and our demand for better staffing in the Clerk Craft. Director Balogun rebutted Postal Management's attempts to carve out exceptions to Line H.

"APWU members are rightly outraged at postal management's attacks on them," said Industrial Relations Director, Vance Zimmerman. "In these final interest arbitration sessions, we showed exactly how highly skilled and dedicated our members are."



(l-r) Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman, APWU attorney Jason Veny and APWU General Counsel Mindy Holmes



(l-r) APWU Arbitrator Phil Tabbita, Neutral Arbitrator Stephen B. Goldberg, USPS Arbitrator Robert Dufek

APWU Members Deserve Raises

Our main witness was a renowned economist who not only strongly rebutted management's argument that APWU members are overpaid but also provided powerful justification that we are deserving of good solid wage increases based on our skills, jobs and general wage trends.

While management focused on comparing postal wages with the private sector, our economist went back to the 1970 Postal Reorganization Act, which mandated collective bargaining for postal workers. He showed that the law created a duty for USPS to be a good employer, as well as to maintain wage increases comparable to the private sector.

He also highlighted the serious flaws in the data that management relied on to calculate its comparison with private sector wages. He presented statistics which showed that, across the board, APWU members deserve a solid and substantial wage increase and that they are not overpaid and under-skilled, as management had argued.

A Huge Effort All Round

The close of the hearings represented the culmination of a huge effort by members at every level of the union.

"I thank our team, our witnesses, and all those who did so much work in preparation under the guidance of our Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman," said President Dimondstein. "While there is no guarantee of victory in interest arbitration, we delivered a well-prepared and argued case that APWU members of all crafts have earned and deserve a good new union contract that protects job security and rewards dedicated postal workers."

The Arbitration Panel is expected to issue a final and binding award early in the new year.

Postmaster General to Retire, Postal Board of Governors to Appoint Successor

In mid-October, the Postal Service announced the upcoming retirement of Postmaster General Megan Brennan, after serving in the position for five years. Her retirement will be effective Jan. 31, 2020.

The task of appointing the next Postmaster General now falls to the Postal Service's Board of Governors. In a climate of increased financial and political pressure on the USPS, the selection of the next PMG will be essential to the Postal Service's future as a public institution.

One of the key goals of postal reorganization in 1971 was removing political influence from the Post Office. Since then members of the Postal Board of Governors are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate; the Board in turn selects the Postmaster General.

In August of this year, the Senate confirmed three nominees appointed by President Trump to the Board of Governors and the Board reached a quorum for the first time since 2014. Now with a quorum, the Board is in a position to hire Brennan's replacement and set the course for the Postal Service's future.

There's real concern that the Trump Administration will pressure the Postal Board of Governors to appoint a Postmaster General who shares the White House's desire to sell off the Postal Service to private corporations, undermine the universal service obligation, and cut collective bargaining rights for postal workers.

"We must ensure that Postmaster General Brennan's successor shares postal workers' vision for a vibrant Postal Service that continues to belong to the people of the country," said APWU President Mark Dimondstein.

Sign the Petition to Appoint a Postmaster General Who Supports a PUBLIC Postal Service

Signatory Organizations of "A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service" are rallying their members onto a petition demanding that the Postal Board of Governors appoint a new PMG who is committed to continuing public ownership of the Postal Service and to providing quality postal services to everyone – no matter who they are or where they live – at reasonable and uniform rates.

"Postal workers! Now is the time to rally the people in support of our national treasure, the public United States Postal Service," said President Dimondstein. "Talk to your co-workers, neighbors and friends, and ask them to sign the petition. Meet outside of post offices and talk to customers about the importance of a public Postal Service. Let's send a clear message to the Postal Board of Governors that the people demand a public Postal Service – our jobs depend on it!"



The petition to the Board of Governors states:

We, the undersigned, believe in a public Postal Service committed to providing quality service to everyone, no matter who they are or where they live, at reasonable and uniform rates. Our United States Postal Service is an essential part of the fabric of the country and a source of good, living wage jobs for our communities. We call on you to appoint a Postmaster General who is fully committed to universal service and the public ownership of the Postal Service.

Sign and Share Online and in Print

Go to usmailnotforsale.org or apwu.org/petition to sign the petition today! Get a link sent to you by texting PETITION to 91990.



You can also scan the QR code. Make sure to send the link to your coworkers, friends, and family and have them sign as well!

You can download a PDF of the petition to print at apwu.org/pmg.