



The Four Winds

National Weather Service Employees Organization

Contract Connect

Highlights

- Final Scheduled Face to Face Negotiation Session Yields Some Progress
- NWSEO Shocked as Management Proposes Not to Have a National Job-Sharing Program
- Negotiations now Shifting to Remote Means

(November 14, 2018) Negotiations for the new NWS-NWSEO Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) continued in St. Petersburg, Florida during a one-week session November 5th through 9th, 2018. The Parties covered several Articles with a little progress made. One Article which the Parties discussed was Article 37 titled Drug Testing Plan (NWS) and Drug and Alcohol Testing Plan (NWSEO). In general, Article 37 covers the general provisions of drug and alcohol testing of bargaining unit employees, reasonable suspicion testing, post-accident drug testing and drug testing program monitoring. NWSEO pointed out the Federal Court injunction which prevents random drug testing of NWSEO members but allows it for other bargaining unit members and management. Both Parties did reach tentative agreements on three of the four sections, but like many previous Articles, the Parties were unable to reach a tentative agreement on its entirety.

Discussions eventually shifted to Article 14, titled Merit Assignment and Placement Plan (NWSEO) and Merit Assignment Program (NWS). Much of the discussion centered around a NWSEO proposal on job-sharing. Job-sharing is a form of part-time employment in which one position is filled with two or more part-time employees. This proposal was developed based on utilizing feedback from NWSEO membership and recommendations from a national Shift Work Team. Both the NWS and NWSEO are keenly aware that job-sharing is happening in multiple regions and multiple offices across the NWS. Although a haphazard job-sharing program currently exists in the NWS, NWSEO was shocked that Management proposes not to have a national job-sharing program that would protect employee rights in the new CBA. In fact, the NWS Chief Negotiator went as far as saying current job-sharing in the NWS is due to a couple of “rogue” employees and managers. NWSEO wants to expand the job-sharing program within the NWS to give ALL employees the opportunity to participate in job-sharing as work-life needs evolve throughout your career. The job-sharing program also serves as an important job retention tool.

In fact, one of the NWSEO negotiators explained how his wife was part of such a program at his office. This program enabled her to stay proficient in operations and outreach activities while raising their young children. She has since returned to full time status now that the children are older. Not only did the negotiator and his wife benefit from this beneficial program, but so did the office. Having part-time, job-share employees, helped substantially in staffing situations related to prolonged sick leave of other employees, numerous IMET dispatches, outreach and IDSS activities, and other employee shortages due to promotions and retirements. But even this positive first-hand experience failed to sway Management into agreeing to a national job-sharing program.

There were a few other Articles which the parties gave a second review in an attempt to seek additional agreements. NWSEO made several counter proposals in several of these Articles and accepted Management's language in a few places and Management made one counter. A tentative agreement was reached for Article 1, Parties and Purposes of this Agreement.

This session was the final face-to-face session scheduled. Based on the agreed upon ground rules, negotiations will now shift to remote means. The first such remote session is scheduled for the week after Thanksgiving. NWSEO will continue to fight for the hard-earned rights of NWS bargaining unit employees and work to best position the NWS for the future.

The NWSEO Negotiation Team for this session included:

1. Dan Sobien, NWSEO President & Chief Negotiator, Meteorologist, Tampa Bay Area, WFO (Ruskin), FL.
2. Mike Dion, NWSEO Headquarters Region Chair, Digital and Graphical Information Support Branch, NWS Headquarters, Silver Spring, MD.
3. JoAnn Becker, NWSEO NCEP Region Chair, Senior Aviation Meteorologist, Lead Forecaster, NCEP/Aviation Weather Center, Kansas City, MO.
4. DeLyne Kirkham, Hydrometeorological Technician (HMT), Western Region, Persons with Disabilities Special Emphasis Program Manager, WFO Elko, NV.
5. Jon Fox, Lead Forecaster, WFO Spokane, WA.
6. David Solano NWSEO Secretary/Treasurer and Eastern Region Chair, Senior Hydro-Meteorologist, Middle Atlantic River Forecast Center, State College, PA.

The Agency/NWS Negotiation Team for this session included:

1. Kenneth Brown, J.D., NOAA Attorney, National Weather Service Chief Negotiator.
2. Mike Vescio, Meteorologist in Charge, WFO Pendleton, OR.
3. David Murray, NWS Labor-Management Relations (LMR) Liaison, Silver Spring, MD.
4. Sally Pavlow Johnson, Meteorologist in Charge, WFO St. Louis, MO (Day 1 only).
5. Ken Harding, Deputy Director (current acting Director), NWS Central Region Headquarters, Kansas City, MO.
6. Sam Albanese, Meteorologist in Charge, WFO Anchorage, AK.

Contract Connect, the negotiation newsletter for bargaining unit employees from bargaining unit employees, brings the latest news from the negotiations table to you. It is distributed as quickly as possible after each CBA negotiation session.

-NWSEO-

**No one cares more for National Weather Service employees than
National Weather Service employees.**

**No one works harder for National Weather Service employees than
National Weather Service employees.**

We are NWSEO.