



# The Four Winds

National Weather Service Employees Organization

## NWSEO Contract Connect

### Highlights

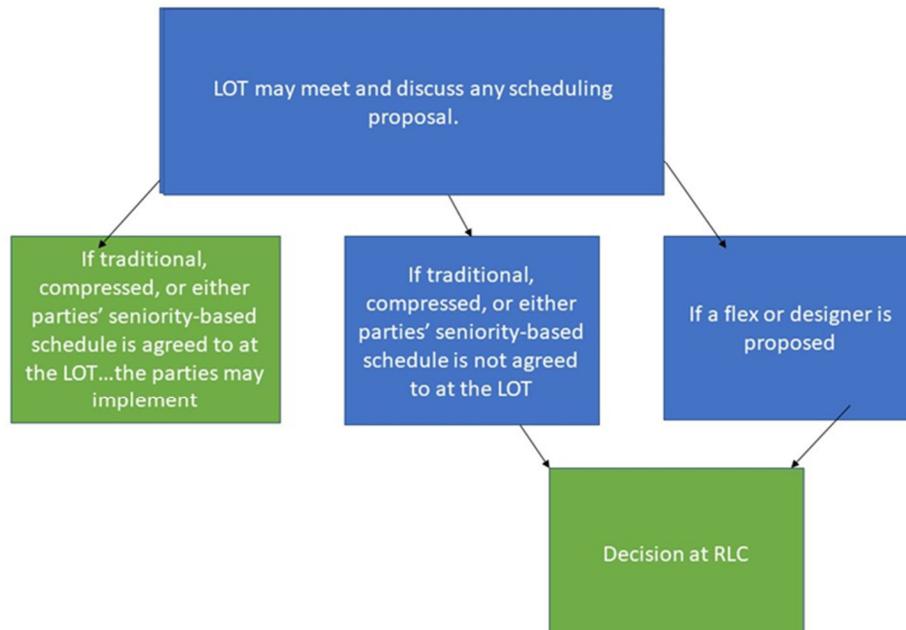
- No tentative agreements reached, but some progress to report from the CBA negotiation table.
- Agency Chief Negotiator (from NOAA) insists he is speaking for NWS Director Dr. Louis W. Uccellini at the bargaining table.
- Agency Chief Negotiator, representing the NWS Director, accuses employees of ***“Sleeping on their Mid Shifts.”***
- The Parties conceptually agree to expand the use of flexible work, traditional, compressed and/or seniority based shift schedules for employees that traditionally work rotating shifts, although more discussions are needed before any tentative agreement can be reached.

(January 25, 2018) Negotiations for the new NWS-NWSEO Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) continued in Silver Spring, MD at NWS Headquarters during a two-week session January 8 - 19, 2018. The session started with six NWSEO representatives and just three Management representatives during week one. By week two, the number of Management representatives was up to four, while the NWSEO contingent of five to six negotiators continued. The negotiation session ended a day early due to illness of negotiation team members.

This session focused on Article 20 (Work Schedules of Shift Workers (NWSEO) / Work Schedules of Rotating Shift Workers (NWS), with the exception of a few forays into Article 21 (Work Schedules for Employees Who Work on a Non-Rotating Shift Basis (NWSEO) / Work Schedules for People Who Do Not Work Rotating Shifts (NWS)), with some parts of Article 17 (Training and Career Development) also discussed during this session.

### **Article 20 – Work Schedules of Shift Workers (NWSEO) / Work Schedules of Rotating Shift Workers (NWS)**

In our Article 20 proposal, NWSEO uses some of the recommendations from a NWS Shift Work Team to allow more flexibility in local office work schedules and pushes to expand the use of flexible work, traditional, compressed and/or seniority based shift work schedules to be negotiated at the Local Office Team (LOT) level. Our proposal allows for the LOT to choose from a variety of different work schedules such as: Alternate Work Schedules (AWS) with no restrictions, including Compressed Work Schedules (CWS); flexible schedules (i.e. maxi-flex); and allows for schedules based on seniority. To help clarify what NWSEO envisions, the flow chart below was provided to management.



Management’s initial proposed Article 20 largely kept what is in the current Article 20, but made a distinction that flexible work schedules do not apply to rotating shift workers and largely scales back protections for IMETs. At the last negotiation session, Management provided several counter proposals which further limited the use of flexible schedules and gave Management the ability to change your fixed schedule in order to accommodate fair weather with no notice. These proposals were later withdrawn after NWSEO pushed back and said there is nothing in the NWS proposals that reflects what was disseminated via a NWS All-Hands message by the NWS Deputy Director on termination of the current CBA, which contained phrases such as - “enhancing the rights and opportunities that all of you deserve;” and “NWS is committed to ensuring a new CBA is put in place, one that reflects the needs of the National Weather Service today and going forward, and that considers all NWS employees.” During the first week of this session, there was a long discussion concerning moving people off of a midnight shift to a day shift, which would leave single coverage on the midnight shift. NWSEO asked about the additional workload which would be incurred by the remaining single person, and the Agency Chief negotiator said, “besides sleeping?” This outrageous response from the Chief Negotiator who works for NOAA disrespects the hard-working women and men who work shifts, and he is the person who speaks for Louis Uccellini at the table. What was even more disturbing was that not one manager sitting with the Chief negotiator spoke up and objected to his words and behavior. NWSEO stood up for NWS employees which solicited an apology from the chief negotiator. But, words have meaning. What he said, he meant.

The NWS management team softened their tone with regards to work schedules during the second week, and sent a series of counter proposals. One of them said, *“The LOT will meet to discuss any scheduling proposal. Traditional, compressed and/or seniority based fixed-start or rotating shift schedules shall be negotiated at the LOT in accordance with Article 8 of this Agreement.”*

*The LOT does not have authority to agree to any other type of schedule, e.g. flexible schedules, but may propose these types of schedules for consideration to the Regional Labor Council (RLC). For these schedules, the RLC will, if necessary, conduct negotiations in accordance with Article 8 of this Agreement.*

This proposal would have been acceptable, except management also included:

*“Notwithstanding any provisions of this Article 20, Management retains the right to lawfully re-assign employees for purposes including but not limited to evaluating performance or training.”*

Which, of course, is **unacceptable** as it **allows management not to follow Article 20** whenever they don't want to!

There were many other counter proposals offered by both Parties, and some progress was made. The NWS and NWSEO negotiation teams attempted to find areas of agreement and work to reach consensus where there are conflicts. Unfortunately, no tentative agreements were reached during this two-week session.

**The NWSEO Negotiation Team for this session included:**

1. Dan Sobien, NWSEO President & Chief Negotiator, Meteorologist, Tampa Bay Area, WFO (Ruskin), FL
2. JoAnn Becker, NWSEO NCEP Regional Chair, Senior Aviation Meteorologist, NCEP/Aviation Weather Center, Kansas City, MO
3. David Solano, NWSEO Secretary/Treasurer and Eastern Region Chair, Senior Hydro-Meteorologist, Middle Atlantic River Forecast Center, State College, PA (Absent week two)
4. Mike Dion, NWSEO Headquarters Chair, Digital and Graphical Information Support Branch, NWS Headquarters, Silver Spring, MD
5. DeLyne Kirkham, Hydrometeorological Technician (HMT), WFO Elko, NV
6. John Werner, NWSEO Southern Region Chair, Lead Forecaster, WFO Mobile, AL

**The Agency/NWS Negotiation Team for this session included:**

1. Kenneth Brown, J.D., National Weather Service Chief Negotiator
2. Michael Mercer, Chief, Environmental & Scientific Services Division, NWS/Alaska Region Headquarters, Anchorage, AK (present only during week two).
3. David Murray, NWS Labor-Management Relations (LMR) Liaison, Silver Spring, MD
4. Mike Vescio, Meteorologist in Charge, WFO Pendleton, OR
5. Sally Pavlow Johnson, Meteorologist in Charge, WFO St. Louis, MO (Absent)
6. Vacant Management Negotiator Position.

*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. The next CBA negotiation session is scheduled from February 5 - 16, 2018 in St. Petersburg, FL.

Note: NWSEO will not always go into specifics for every article as it may be to our disadvantage with ongoing negotiations.

**-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.***