



Contract Connect

Highlights

- Management Rejects and Does Not Believe there is a Demonstrated Need for a "Quality of Work-Life" Article
- NWSEO Continues to Provide Numerous Counter Proposals to move Closer to Agreement while Management Offers Fewer Counter Proposals
- First Remote Negotiations Session Brings Some Progress

(December 12, 2018) Negotiations for the new NWS-NWSEO Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) continued during a two-week session November 26th through December 7th, 2018. After months of face to face negotiations, this session was the first to be conducted via remote means using GoToMeeting/GoToWebinar, which led to technical challenges, including audio difficulties and people talking over one another.

Sadly, as has been the case during most of these negotiations, there was very slow progress made during this session. On several occasions, the NWS Chief Negotiator made it very clear that Management was satisfied with its proposals. On the other hand, NWSEO made numerous counter proposals to move forward and reach agreement on a new CBA which ensures bargaining unit employees maintain the rights they currently have, while providing the additional rights that all employees deserve.

During this session, NWSEO made a flurry of counter proposals on Articles 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, new NWSEO Article 9 (Quality of Work-Life and Family Friendly Policies), which a lot of the discussions centered upon, and briefly touched upon Article 10.

Management does not have a "Quality of Work-Life and Family Friendly Policies" article in their CBA proposal. NWSEO, on the other hand, feel very strongly that such an article showing both Parties' commitment to improving the work environment within the NWS and the work-life balance of its employees is needed. As shown in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) and in the recommendations of the Quality of Work-Life Team, these are areas that are the most important to our employees and which they feel need improvement.

The "Quality of Work-Life and Family Friendly Policies" article was built by the bargaining unit employees of the NWS using many of the recommendations of the Quality of Work-Life Team which was comprised of management and bargaining unit employees.

NWSEO used the results from a survey of NWS employees which garnered 1200 responses (78% of current rotating shift-workers) on issues related to families, relationships, personal lives, employee health needs and work-life balance.

The NWS has repeatedly said the main driver for the Operational Workforce Analysis (OWA) process has been to increase the quality of work-life. Then when the NWS announced that Management wanted to open and negotiate a new Collective Bargaining Agreement the NWS Deputy Director wrote, *“The agency and the union will negotiate a superior agreement that aligns with modern needs and operations of our agency and employees. Renegotiating the agreement with NWSEO is about enhancing the rights and opportunities that all of you deserve.”* NWSEO stands by and supports these strong and powerful words by the NWS Deputy Director; however, the Agency’s representatives negotiating the new CBA have brought little or nothing to the table. What was most striking was *the silence exhibited from the field Managers representing the NWS at CBA negotiations. Not a single word, idea, suggestion, opinion or proposal with regards to Quality of Work-Life and Family Friendly Policies was uttered or presented.* More importantly, the NWS Chief negotiator who is representing NWS Leadership at the table said, *“Let me reiterate that management does not believe that there is a demonstrated need for a separate “Quality of Work-Life” article. Absent some change to your proposal subsequent to this December 5, 2018 iteration, management is ready to move on to your next Agenda item”.* Doesn’t this appear as if Management is just “checking off the box”? Who is looking out for the work-life needs of employees: Management or NWSEO? You decide.

Finally, the Parties began to work through Article 10, “Grievance Procedure.” There were constructive discussions and understanding within the first few sections and counter proposals were presented from both NWSEO and Management. Some progress was made and NWSEO is hopeful this positive progress will continue at the next negotiation session.

The only tentative agreements made during this session were to a few sections and subsections of two articles. Remote negotiations are scheduled to resume January 7th through January 18th, 2019.

On behalf of the NWSEO leadership and the NWSEO CBA Negotiation Team, we wish our members and all employees Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year! Thank you for your service of providing 24X365 weather, hydrologic, and climate forecasts and warnings for the United States, its territories, adjacent waters and ocean areas, for the protection of life and property and the enhancement of the national economy.

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, NCEP/Aviation Weather Center, Kansas City, MO.
4. Karleisa Rogacheski, Journey Forecaster, WFO Sacramento, CA.

5. Robert Ruehl, NWSEO Western Region Vice Chair, Hydrometeorological Technician, WFO Eureka, CA. ***Bob is retiring at the end of December, and NWSEO would like to thank him for his many contributions, including his work on this NWSEO CBA Negotiation Team. All the best Bob!!***
6. Jon Fox, Lead Forecaster, WFO Spokane, WA (Week 1 only).
7. David Solano, NWSEO Secretary/Treasurer and Eastern Region Chair, Senior Hydro-Meteorologist, Middle Atlantic River Forecast Center, State College, PA (Week 2 only).

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 (Week 2 only).
5. Ken Harding, Deputy Director (current acting Director), NWS Central Region Headquarters, Kansas City, MO (Week 1 only).
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.