



NEWSLETTER

atu758.org

August 2021

President's/BA Report -

Isaac O. Tate

Union Meeting - Cancellation

It was the intent of your Union leadership to conduct in-person Union Membership meetings this month, however with the rather limited Union office meeting space and the uptick in positive COVID cases your Union leadership tried but was unable to reserve/rent the Clover Park Vocational College Rotunda, a large enough venue to adhere to CDC and Public Health Department guidelines and the comfort of you as attendees. We all will be happy when things can return to some sense of normality.

COVID Vaccinations

Of a great concern to many is the latest push by Colleges, Universities, Healthcare Authorities, Federal, State and Local government to mandate COVID vaccinations. In discussions with a State of Washington representative, they are mandated to have proof of said vaccination by September. The failure to as quoted at this time of an employee to be vaccinated - will result in the employee's termination.

As of the writing of this communique, your Union has not received any word from Pierce Transit regarding any changes to its current policies. I personally have been asked by members what would be my position, not so much what the Union would do. Personally, I would be against mandatory vaccinations because I realize there are many reasons besides medical or religious not to get vaccinated. There are some that have never received an immunization in their lives (which "doesn't" make an individual an antivaxxer), some have needle phobia (trypanophobia), some mistrust the government, some fear a non- FDA approved inoculation (all of our lives we have been told FDA approved is the gold standard), then there's the breakthrough cases though rare after immunizations. I had written earlier in the Union newsletters of my trepidation in getting immunized, but I did (my choice). Mainly because of underlying respiratory issues, but more importantly for the ability to be around my mom of whom I only have one, and limit the possible transmission of COVID to her, which she did in turn.

As the Union (I), (this is without consensus of your Executive Officers) would advocate voluntary immunizations and daily monitoring for those who choose not to be vaccinated and wear masks. If during this daily monitoring it was shown that a member/employee is displaying signs of covid said employees would be removed from service and directed to a testing facility. Result(s) of the test would determine said employee's work/attendance status.

One of the things I struggle with personally, and this is in regards to breakthrough cases. The largest percentage of members are Operators. There are instances of breakthrough cases and one would assume these breakthroughs come from contact with the unvaccinated and or individuals who refuse to wear PPE or masks. So as an Operator, why would or should I be exposed to individuals on a daily basis who refuse to wear masks because they know the buzz words, I have a "medical condition", which prohibits the Operator from requesting they wear a mask. Both pissing off the Operator and other passengers who are abiding by the "public transportation mask mandate". To weed out these individuals maybe they should have some type of medical (ORCA) card with an embedded chip that they have to swipe showing "medical exemption". COVID doesn't appear to be going anywhere soon, so there's time to figure it out.

Contract Negotiations

We are getting down to the meat and potatoes of the negotiations; wages and benefits. As CEO Mike Griffus wrote in his letter to all Pierce Transit employees, we as your Union negotiation team also wish to come to an amicable and mutually agreeable contract proposal to bring to you as members of ATU Local 758. A question asked of the leadership of your Local regarding several members who have chosen not to support their Union, said individuals "will not" be allowed to attend informational meetings wherein the contract proposal will be discussed and member feedback received, neither will these individuals be able to vote on the proposal.

Fleet Maintenance

There have been several min-shake ups on the Fleet side. Much the same as Operations/Service Delivery they too are suffering turnovers and shortages in some positions. I think there is a realization that things cannot continue as they have in the past. This pandemic has changed the mindsets of many. Things that used to seem important no longer seem applicable. What your Union has noticed and hopefully the Employer, is that there is now more of a mindset of not tolerating things that happened in the past. The world has changed. When the agency now hires new employees they must also factor in how do we keep them. First a competitive wage and secondly tolerable working conditions that take into consideration the employee's lives "outside" of the workplace. For the presently employed members due to the life changing effects of this pandemic, many have become and seen the benefit of having more time to spend with their families and loved ones. The realization that I may not want to spend every waking hour of everyday working and losing that connection has become a reality. Something as simple as being able to work 4/10 schedules or an alternative that gives the member more free time while still fulfilling the agency's mission, would be a start.

River Cities Fixed Route - Longview/ River Cities Lift (Paratransit) - Longview

Per our Executive Board Officer/Shop Steward Shawnda Hurley for the Fixed Route side in the City of Longview things are pretty quiet. They too are trying to attract new Operators as the City seeks to restore service that had been reduced. Their Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) will be expiring December 31, 2020, so we'll be going into negotiations with the City more likely than not in the next couple of months.

Executive Board Officer/Shop Steward Anthony "Tony" Harris for the Paratransit side reports their fulltime Operators are not receiving fulltime hours.

Partially it is because it is a "demand service", secondly this private Employer prides itself in treating the members/employees like crap. Minimum money for the worker, maximum for their pockets. However, the Employer is posting "now hiring" signage on the sides of their vehicles. It is par for the course for this employer (Paratransit Services Bremerton). Their Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) will be expiring December 31, 2020, so we'll be in negotiations with them at the same time as the city.

Long Term Care

There are many questions in regards to the LTC mandate. Who exactly is exempt? Servicemembers who have lifetime benefits through the Veterans Administration(VA), everyone over the age of (64), Medicare eligible employees age (65 or older) who are still working but not guaranteed coverage, or those (65 or older) who do find a plan but due to their age find it cost prohibitive? Maybe if you're working at that age you shouldn't be - just retire? But doesn't the same apply to anyone age (60 or over) with the Employer mandated (negotiable) deduction/contribution.

Bus/Coach Deep Cleanings

The Union has been contacted by interim Executive Director of Maintenance Adam Davis that he is working on a plan to improve and increase the frequency of deep cleaning the buses which has suffered as of late, and will continue to suffer until we can get said positions filled or refilled by bargaining unit members who are out on extended leave(s) and vacancies filled. His plan includes bringing in three (3) temporary individuals from the firm 22nd Century Technologies for an initial period of 90 days and assess the effectiveness of the work at that time. In addition, there will be an effort to provide OT for in-house personnel to assist in this activity. Your Union will also assess and monitor the effects these individuals will have on our bargaining unit member positions. The "deep" cleaning that will be done will include the following; wash interior walls, ceiling, windows, handrails, mirrors and seats of coaches. Clean the driver's compartment and area behind the doors in step wells. Remove gum, candy and other foreign materials from the seats, walls and floors. Clean and mop the floors and step wells and will report any damage to the interior of the vehicles. If you as an Operator or otherwise, note failings in these areas please document and forward to your Union leadership.

The work shift for these individuals will be from 6:00 pm to 2:30 am Monday through Friday. It is anticipated that this work will have commenced the week of August 9th.

Thank you

I want to thank Vice President (VP) Terry Leazer who is down in the trenches every day and is part of your Union negotiation team. Financial Secretary-Treasurer/Recording Secretary Vonda Marshall who has realized cost savings to the Local in the thousands of dollars, and who along with VP Leazer are part of your Union negotiation team. Russ Lowe Executive Board Office Fleet Maintenance Rep./Shop Steward who has pretty much on a weekly basis tried to juggle the many changes in Fleet Maintenance brought about by the many personnel shortages/changes and is also part of your Union negotiation team. Pattie Clark our office administrator performs many duties to include managing our Local web page, online newsletter, short-term disability program, membership and dues reconciliation for all four properties to name a few. Thank you to the unnamed Executive Board Officers and Shop Stewards who work on behalf of the membership day in and day out. Many of them who have on occasion felt attacked or put upon by certain members especially during this pandemic (which isn't over or controlled). If you read or listen to the media or are even aware of events that happen on the busses we operate, people are lashing out and attacking each other.

Nerves are frayed, we are living like we've never had to live before, but don't take it out on the people that have stepped up to help you. They too are human. Don't think that because they have stepped up to do something that few others are willing to do ensuring your rights, and trying to make the workplace better for you that they signed up for abuse, no they did not. Many of these folks take your problems home with them, you don't have to because it has now become theirs. But they still they do the job.

Thank you

Operator Shields

Your Union advocated for the installment of the Operator shields. Your Union advocated for those shields not only for the reduction of exposure to passengers during the pandemic (which hasn't ended), but to shield Operators from assaults and physical altercations as well. Your Union leadership has noticed the increase in violence occurring by the public at transit facilities, against the TSOs and on busses/coaches. We had two (2) assaults on Operators that thankfully had their shields closed because without them things could have been much, much worse. So, if your excuse for not using your shield is the glare or reflection write it up. If you write it up it is noted. If you feel unsafe because of the glare, state that as well. If you don't nothing will be done. The shields are for your safety, keep them closed.....please.

Ron Thornton Annual ATU golf Tournament

The Annual ATU Ron Thornton Golf Tournament will take place this Saturday August 14, 2021. This will be the 2nd tournament in his honor since he was taken from us with lung cancer. Hopefully this tradition will continue in honor of Ron who was the first two (2) term President/Business Agent of Local 758 (1996 - 2002) and I served as the Vice-President. Ron in his role as an Officer or Shop Steward was a relentless fighter for the rights of the membership and a staunch Union advocate. Ron during his presidency also served as the Financial Secretary-Treasurer of the Washington State Amalgamated Transit Union Legislative Council (ATULC) and was serving as my Vice president when he was stricken, forcing him to retire. Ron made many friends and I'm sure some enemies (kind of comes with the territory in leadership positions), put you keep plugging along.

Thanks to everyone that has signed up to play. We've even got some players coming up from Local 1433-Phoenix and Local 587-Seattle. We have a few teams with some pretty consistent golfers. However, you definitely do not have to possess an extraordinary skill set. Some are better than others. Me personally, I've scared squirrels in the trees, hit balls in trees that never came back down, lost balls in the water (for some reason I make excellent shots "into the water"), dug up more turf when hitting a ball than a landscaper (if I hit the ball), and have watched deer rolling around on the ground laughing at me. But undeterred I'm still out there. So, thanks everybody that is coming out. I hope your time will be enjoyable and if you didn't come out this year, come out the next.

.....

It appears there will still be some very warm days coming up in the near future. Make sure you, yours and anyone you may know that may need help during this extreme weather stays cool, hydrated, and most of all stay safe.



Artist's signature



Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 758

6923 Lakewood DR W B1 Tacoma, WA 98467-3221

(253)474-3123 atu758.org

This statement could save your job! "If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated I respectfully request that my shop steward be present at the meeting. Without Union representation present, I choose not to respond to any questions or statements."

UNION MEMBERSHIP MEETING NOTICE

Due to COVID-19 all Union meetings have been cancelled until further notice or direction from the International Offices.

Thursday, Union Office 6923 Lakewood Dr W Suite B-1

Friday, Union Office 6923 Lakewood Dr W Suite B-1

Longview, Wednesday, 254 Oregon Way Longview, WA 98632

Executive Board—(Executive Board Only)

EMAIL ADDRESSES AND CONTACT NUMBERS

Isaac Tate, President B.A: pres758@atu758.org (253)329-1655

Terry Leazer V. Pres A.B.A: vpres758@atu758.org (253) 686-1435

Vonda Marshall, Acting Fin-Sec/Trea: 758finsec@atu758.org (253)474-3123

Vonda Marshall, Rec. Sec.: recsec758@atu758.org (253)376-8854

Pattie Clark, Office/Web Admin: unionoffice@atu758.org (253)474-3123