



16 January, 2009

Bankruptcy Update

It's not a done deal until the money is in your pocket, but, so far, Tribune seems to be making a sincere effort to keep its commitments to its employees. Regular pay and benefits – approved by the bankruptcy court as part of “first-day motions” – are coming on schedule. Some other types of payments are still going through court review, but Tribune is seeking to pay them and, so far, there haven't been objections. Payments will come after the judge signs off.

The Guild is continuing to monitor the process and take action as necessary, both directly in the court in Wilmington and through its seat on the creditors' committee.

Here's where things stand:

401(k) – Approved as part of first-day motions; regular payments have been made on schedule.

Pensions – Payments into the pension fund for Guild members get made as needed. The fund had more than enough money through the end of 2007, so Tribune wasn't required to make any payments in 2008 (and didn't). Once the 2008 fund levels are computed, Tribune may have to pay in 2009, and has indicated it intends to do so. For non-Guild pensions, such as for the Teamsters at The Sun, Tribune is required to make regular payments. On Tuesday, it received court permission to do so.

Commissions – We believe these were covered by the first-day motions, but Tribune believed it wasn't. Tribune filed a separate motion authorizing payment, and that was approved by the judge Thursday.

Advertising incentives – Tribune has filed a motion to be authorized to pay them. The hearing is in a few weeks.

For those who took buyouts – Tribune initially sought to cut off severance payments company-wide, but when a Guild lawyer objected at the first-day hearing, agreed to pay severance and continue promised medical benefits for people covered by the Guild contract. Since then, Tribune has filed a motion to pay severance more generally; it is to be heard in a few weeks.

Remember, all union contracts are still in effect and must, by law, be honored. If you didn't get something you think you should have gotten, or you know someone with a problem with pay or benefits, get in touch with a Guild officer or steward. Even if your boss tells you you can't get the payment because of the bankruptcy, don't take that as a final answer. We'll check it out.

Bankruptcy Update Meeting

We will hold meetings in the Sun cafeteria to answer questions on Thursday, January 29 at noon and 5:30. ALL are welcome.

Bill Salganik – Local President