

# Tentative 2-Year Agreement at Post

(June 3, 2015) We're pleased to announce that after eight grueling months of bargaining talks, the Washington Post and the Washington-Baltimore News Guild have reached a tentative agreement on a new two-year contract. The tentative agreement is still subject to a ratification vote by Guild members. **The ratification vote will be held Wednesday June 10.**

The highlights, in addition to other tentative agreements we have previously announced, include the following:

- All Guild-covered employees will receive a 2.5 percent pay increase in the first year of the contract and a 2 percent pay increase in the second year, effective upon the first pay period after the contract signing. This is conditional on the contract's ratification by June 19. This is the largest such general pay increase in at least a decade.
- In line with the above increases, The Post has agreed to boost the salaries of 46 employees who were previously considered exempt but, following this round of talks, will be joining the Guild's bargaining unit. This will allow them to enjoy the same 2.5/2.0 pay increase that other Guild members receive, as many had received smaller raises or none at all as exempt managers.
- The Post has agreed to leave unchanged the current language on severance pay. This means that employees are entitled to receive at least two weeks' salary for every year of service in the event of an involuntary layoff. The company had wanted to cut this in half.
- Full-time Post employees will receive a \$500 signing bonus; part-time employees will receive a \$350 signing bonus.
- The Post has agreed to continue providing health care insurance for part-time employees.

We are pleased that the Post has agreed to these terms. However, we regret to say that Post never budged from its demand to slash retirement benefits. The Post also declined to improve the pension formula for the less-generous Cash Balance pension plan and insisted on closing this plan to new employees.

We would like to emphasize, however, that without the Guild, the outcome for everyone would be much worse. The Guild has battled fiercely since talks began on Sept. 23, 2014 -- marching on picket lines, circulating a petition, participating in videos, and spreading the word through the news media -- and because of that, we have won many important concessions and blocked many bad management proposals. Among them:

- The union's fight effectively pushed back the pension freeze by one year for Guild-covered members. What that means is that people who are in the traditional pension plan have accrued one more year's retirement benefit. In addition, as part of the tentative agreement, the Post has offered to credit those employees' Cash Balance pensions for half a year retroactive to July 1. The traditional pension will now be frozen Aug. 31.
- The Post agreed to strike language from its telecommuting provision that would have forbidden work-at-home employees from assisting with child or elder care.
- The Post relented from a proposal to reduce the benefit for business travel accident insurance.
- The Post backed off a proposal to have the right to cease offering health care insurance for everyone.

- The Post agreed to honor the current compromise language on seniority.
- The Post backed away from a proposal to remove the recall provision for layoffs – a key article that has prompted the company to offer buyouts instead.
- The Post has agreed to provide reporters with access to story metrics – years after the Guild first requested this. This is an important concession because metrics are already showing up in performance reviews.
- The Post has agreed to ensure that managers follow existing guidelines when compiling performance evaluations – another key concession after instances in which some employees were targeted for dismissal although their immediate supervisors were not consulted about their performance.
- The Post has agreed to provide overall data on performance rankings given in each department so that employees can gauge how these grades are distributed.
- The Post agreed to add gender identity to the contract's nondiscrimination clause.
- The Post has agreed not to sell the pension plan's liabilities to an insurance company—a proposal that would have removed our pension benefits from federal insurance guarantees.
- The Post relented from a proposal to eliminate coverage for an annual eye exam and the cost of prescription lenses.
- The Post agreed to withdraw a poison pill provision that would have forced the union to collect dues by passing a hat following expiration of the contract.

***All Guild-covered employees are welcome to attend briefings on the tentative contract agreement prior to ratification voting on Wednesday June 10. There will be four briefings that day, at 12:30, 1:30, 3:30 and 7:00 p.m. The briefings and the balloting will be held in the Guild's offices, 1100 15th Street NW, Suite 350, at the corner of L and 15th. Please note that while all Guild-covered employees are welcome to attend the briefings, only dues-paying Guild members are permitted to vote on the contract.***

We would like to acknowledge the hard work by the Post's negotiators to close this deal. Above all, we are especially grateful to Guild professional staffers Rick Ehrmann and Bruce Nelson for their tireless effort and sound advice.

The Bargaining Committee

Rocky Richardson (Co-Chair, Commercial)    Freddy Kunkle (Co-Chair, News)  
 Patricia Jacobs                    Joel Achenbach                    Tim Smith