

Pavement Pounder

BRANCH 111 N.A.L.C. "THE WASATCH BRANCH"

Publication 2021.01

January 2021



Midvale - Millcreek - Murray - Northwest - Orem - Sandy - South Salt Lake - Sugarhouse - Tooele - West Jordan - West Valley

UNION MEETING February 11, 6:30

- Go to zoom.us on your computer or download the Zoom app on your phone
-
- Click Join a meeting and Enter Meeting ID 989 001 1306
-
- Change your screen name to your name
-
- Click "Join" and the Password: FEB111

Log on early to avoid any issues logging in.

NALC HEALTH BENEFITS Jimmy Kerekes

Hello to a New Year -let's keep our hopes up. Try to be grateful for what we have in our lives, friends and family.

Each year new members of the Health Plan will be getting a Medical Card. Sometimes it may take awhile to receive it. Use your Confirmation paper for medical visits when you go to a provider. That will be your proof of insurance coverage. Also with your medical card, there maybe a sticker attached to it that has the following information: Register at Caremark.com to stay up to date and find ways to save money.

For those who have Diabetes, on page 84 (for high option plan and page 155 for cdhp/value option plan) of the Plans official brochure (RI71-009), There is a paragraph titled: Diabetes Care Management Program- Transform Care. Going to type it here for those who don't have an official brochure.

Diabetes Care Management Program:

This program helps deliver better overall care and lower costs for members with diabetes. Your enrollment in this program includes a connected glucometer, unlimited test stripes and lancets, medication therapy counseling from a pharmacist, two annual diabetes screenings at a CVS mobile app, all at no cost. Please call CVS Caremark at 800-933-NALC (6252) for more information.

To reach me for help or questions please, identify yourself. My contact information is on the back of our union paper.

The President's Report

The New Contract and The Vaccine

Last night at the regular Branch 111 meeting, we were informed that the ballots for the New Contract were mailed out January 11th. I won't go into too much detail about the new contract (you will soon have it in your hands), but I will say that this is our chance to make our voices heard, and I will put down the highlights here:

Term of the contract: 44 months (3 years and 8 months)

For Regulars and CCAs: 4 wage increases totaling 4.8 percent during contract.

For Regulars: 7 Cost of living adjustments over during contract (first two are \$166, and \$188 annually).

For CCAs: 4 additional wage increases totaling 4 percent during contract.

For Regulars: A new highest Step (Step P) will be created 11-19-22 (\$444 annual increase)

For CCAs: Automatic conversion to PTF after 2 years, if they haven't already been converted.

Health insurance: Postal service will pay 1% less of the premiums for Regular Carriers beginning in 2022.

For CCAs the Postal service will pay \$125 for self-only coverage in 2020 and 2021, and 65% of premiums for self-plus one or family coverage in 2020 and 2021 (for the first year of coverage, rising to 75% in the second year of coverage), and in 2022 the Postal service will pay 75% of premiums regardless of years of coverage.

Uniform Allowance: Increased to \$487 on 5-21-21, and \$499 on 5-21-22.

Holiday Leave Option: Employees (Regular and CCA) who work their holiday may elect to have their annual leave balance credited with 8 hours of AL in lieu of receiving holiday pay.

Now on to the COVID Vaccine. NALC President Fred Rolando announced several weeks ago that the CDC had placed United States Postal Workers in the second phase of the COVID Vaccine disbursement schedule. This makes perfect sense as we are "Essential Workers", and we worked during the entire Pandemic, and we are considered "critical infrastructure" since we keep the supply lines open to the general public, delivering medicine, food, clothing, and countless other necessities (including toilette paper). Fred told us that since the CDC put us in the second phase, we would get our vaccinations in February. What could go wrong?

In the last several days, Utah Governor Spencer Cox decided to not follow the CDC distribution guidelines, and we have been taken completely off the list. This means that not only is the CDC being ignored and our vaccinations are now delayed, but far worse, we do not even show up on the State of Utah Schedule for vaccinations, implying that we will only get vaccinated by age.

On January 15th I sent Governor Spencer Cox the following letter:

Dear Governor Spencer Cox,

The State of Utah will benefit greatly by vaccinating United States Postal Service workers. Letter Carriers continue to work long hours delivering the necessities of life (medicine, food, clothing, etc...) to every residence and every business in Utah, every day of the week (Sunday is parcel delivery). For many who are "socially distancing", home-delivery has become a vital lifeline, and the USPS has seen the volume of packages increase exponentially during the Pandemic.

The United States Postal Service did not shut down during the pandemic because we are considered "essential workers", so the brave men and women of the Postal Service continued to deliver to every home and every business (at least the ones that did not shut down), from February of 2020 through the present day, despite shortages in personal protective equipment, anxiety, short-staffing, mandatory exposure quarantines, and long hours. I am sure that the stories I could tell you are synonymous with other "essential workers".

These heroes breathed a collective sigh of relief when the CDC issued the recommendation that United States Postal Service workers should be given the COVID vaccine in Phase 1b, right after healthcare personnel and long-term care facility residents. However, I find now that the State of Utah has decided to exempt United States Postal Service workers from the list of those who will receive the COVID vaccine during the second phase. I see that other essential workers are included, as well as educators, so that Utah can move forward. I propose that keeping the infrastructure of delivery is equally important (medicine, food, clothing, etc...), and inoculating United States Postal workers will keep the packages arriving to every home and every business as we overcome this Pandemic.

I thank you for your service to the people of the State of Utah and I hope that you will see fit to add the United States Postal workers back into the second phase of COVID vaccinations.

Respectfully,

Mike Wahlquist

President

Branch 111, National Association of Letter Carriers

I encourage all Letter Carriers and their families/friends to write Governor Spencer Cox a letter asking that he add the United States Postal workers back into the second phase of COVID vaccinations. Your letter might simply state:

Dear Governor Spencer Cox,

I need to continue to get mail and packages at my house, will you please add the United States Postal Workers to the list of essential workers who may get the COVID vaccine at this time?

Sincerely, _____

The address is:

The Office of Gov. Spencer J. Cox

350 N. State Street, Suite 200

P.O. Box 142220

Salt Lake City, UT 84114-2220

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Ethel Taylor 702-613-4472

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What A Year!

2020 was quite a year and I know we were all hoping that somehow 2021 would magically be the end to the difficulty that we all faced. We are not quite done yet but thankfully, things are looking up. 2020 will be a year that we talk about for the rest of our lives. Obviously the Covid-19 pandemic was hard to bear for all of us. Protests, rioting, a difficult election and an earthquake added to our plight. Hopefully with the election wrapped up and a vaccine on the horizon for all of us, we can get back to some semblance of life pre-pandemic.

Peak season in 2020 was also a very peculiar year compared to most. Experiences in my office and things I heard from other offices demonstrated an unusual peak season. December came and went in a flash and most carriers I talked to expressed that it was an easier season than they remember in the past. I don't really have an explanation for this. Did Amazon take more of their own parcels than years past? Was volume down? Did customers shop less due to economic reasons? I think all of these played a role in the way we felt about peak season in 2020. Nevertheless we made it through and I am proud of all of the work the carriers accomplished.

2020 was also a strange year for Branch 111. Meetings were disrupted, training has been limited and we have had to cancel all the events that keep us connected and unified. I promise 2021 will be a better year. I am excited for the future of Branch 111. I know the state of Branch 111 is strong. We have an amazing Executive Board top to bottom and I couldn't be happier with the team we have in place. I am excited to have a great balance of long time board members and a group of young up and comers that will lead the Branch into the future. Also a President that is 100% the right person for the job. We are all in this together and we MUST remember that we are all on the same team. I miss seeing all of your smiling faces and I know we will get back to normal soon.

In Solidarity
Mike Hansen
Executive Vice President
NALC Branch 111



Spring cleaning in January? Grab all that old postal stuff and recycle it
New Carriers need old coats or hats or any old thing you don't use anymore.

Amie B. Gallo, Vice President

I want to start out by saying how thankful and excited I am to have been elected Vice President. I am looking forward to working with the branch stewards to provide the training they want and need, as well as to reworking some of our training procedures. I am hoping this year provides us with the ability to conduct in person training, and with groups larger than 10 at a time. So far our zoom training has been working well enough to continue them, despite being a less than ideal means. That being said, we've all been required to adapt over the last year and must continue to until things return to "normal".

So, we survived another crazy peak season, during a pandemic none-the-less. Unfortunately while saying goodbye to 2020, we also said goodbye to the Covid emergency sick leave and the expanded FMLA provisions for those who had children affected by either closed schools or daycares. The most recent stimulus package did not extend these provisions, however we are still able to take covid related leave without worry of attendance related discipline. Additionally the following important MOU's have been extended until March 26, 2021 (the full language can be found at nalc.org)

- M-01910 which provides carriers with the ability to use their 80 hours of dependent care sick leave for daycare and/or school closures or when the primary caregiver is unavailable due to the pandemic.
- M-01911 which provides CCA with up to 80 hours paid leave for covid related absences and/or travel related quarantine.
- M-01915 which allows for changes to facilitate social distancing and letter carriers (including CCAs) being limited to work in their employing facility. [This is something we should be paying close attention to and grieving when necessary. To my knowledge only Murray Station and Sandy Installation have settlements regarding CCAs being sent to other stations. The NALC position on this is the CCA should remain in their station unless there is no other way the mail can be delivered, i.e. mail has been curtailed, carriers are maxed to their work hour limitations, etc.]

Despite the CDC recommending postal employees be considered as essential employees and receiving the covid vaccine sometime in the middle of February (group 1b of the timeline), Governor Spencer Cox has taken us completely out. This means we may not be getting the vaccine until the rest of the public does, which is anticipated to be months down the road. I encourage everyone who is interested in getting the vaccine to write a letter to Governor Cox requesting we be scheduled in group 1b again. In the meantime, please be careful of what you are doing outside of work for yourself, your family and the coworkers and members of the public you may potentially expose during work hours.

Happy 2021 !

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NALC BRANCH 111
Minutes of the Regular Union Meeting
January 14, 2021

The meeting was conducted remotely using Zoom software.

Convened at 6:30 pm

Pledge of Allegiance conducted by Mike Hansen

Moment of Silence for Merlin Stephenson and Jo An Eames who have passed away.

Roll Call by Steve McNees

Minutes of the December meeting were posted. Without objection, they will be filed for future reference.

Reading of the Communications by Steve McNees.

• From Fred Rolando: 12/10/20 Letter continuing the dispensation for branches and state association to make event schedule changes due to coronavirus. This includes the use of electronic meeting methods and modified voting procedures. Also, notice of a national conference for branch and state presidents to be held December 20, 2020 regarding the tentative agreement. It was held virtually. • Notice of the Safety & Health Committee Meeting for Jan. 14th was received. • Christmas cards were received from the Utah State AFL-CIO, NALC National Officers and Monarch Dental.

Application for Membership by Mike Hansen

Brandon Davis, Kaleb Van Arsdale, Zachary Carlson, John Hartzell, Calvin Ao

Nick Vafiades, National Business Agent - • New Branch Officers were sworn in by Nick.

• The Family First Act ended Dec. 31st (80 hours sick leave and FMLA). The Post Office will give you administrative leave if you are exposed to covid at work and forced to quarantine. The P.O. no longer will pay for quarantines other than caused at work. National is working to change this. • National Agreement ballots are in the mail. Under the circumstances he believes that we should vote for the new contract. • There are 365 grievances pending arbitration, for Branch 111, to resolve the monetary remedies only. • LMOU negotiations begin April 29th and end at the end of May.

Training for new stewards who need training will occur as needed, in small groups, with 2-day sessions. • There will not be a Rap Session this year. • Currently, carriers are not scheduled to get the Covid vaccine with essential workers. It is now up to the states to schedule.

LCPF by Josh Thibodeau – not present

ORGANIZER by Justin Lindquist

CCA training just started up again. 30 CCAs were in the last training class. Most signed up for the union. Greet the new CCAs in your office to see if they signed up and help them to be safe.

SAFETY AND HEALTH by Justin Lindquist

• Today was the quarterly SL safety meeting. Management only had 3 form 1767s filed for the last 3 months. Mostly for employees not wearing masks and management not enforcing it. Please wear your masks. • Management doesn't know when carriers are scheduled to receive the covid vaccines. • The next safety meeting is in April. He would like everyone's help to keep him informed about what is going on in your offices. • Accidents are down from last year. • New employees want/need to have the reflective vests for identification and safety. It would be great to hand them out at training. Will check on it. Use form 1767 to get the vests if necessary. • Don't forget to stay 6 feet away from people and wear your masks.

LEGISLATIVE by Chad Mortensen

He is optimistic about the House and Senate being more labor friendly. There are 2 new House Representatives we will have to reach out to and see if they will be supportive. • The coronavirus means that face to face meetings are limited. Retirees will be needed to write and phone our representatives to request their support. • The AFL-CIO has written to Governor Cox to express dismay that he has removed postal workers from the essential workers to receive the coronavirus vaccine.

TRUSTEES by Chad Mortensen

• Met last week and went over December's books. Missed November's. • The bank messed up the number on one check that they are trying to figure out what it is. • Joan Larsen's has been on the E-board for 30 years. We'll miss her.

MBA, COMPENSATION by Bob Jewell

• CCAs are getting hurt. Help them to be safe. • We work harder than other areas, but we also have more injuries. Take care of the new carriers coming into your office.

MDA COORDINATOR by Jeremy Bailey – not present

HEALTH BENEFITS by Jim Kerekes

We will have to pay more out of pocket this year, as usual. • There is a program for diabetics where you can sign up and get a glucometer, unlimited test strips and lancets, and digital resources that save you a lot of money. • Program booklet are available in the union office (<https://www.nalchbp.org/news/body/2021-HO-Booklet.pdf>).

DIRECTOR OF RETIREES by Jeff Asay

• No activities right now. • The program for diabetes is a really good program. • Jeff has gotten the first dose of the vaccine because he works with the school district. He had no issues other than a sore shoulder for an hour or so. If you are eligible for the vaccine, get it. • We have the plaques for the gold card holders in our branch now.

TREASURER by Mike Madsen

• A proposed budget will be posted on the branch111.com site. Next month we will vote on it. Last year we voted on a budget that spent more than \$60,000 more than we would take in. In the end, we spent \$35,000 less than we brought in (no training, conventions, etc.). This year's budget proposes a \$30,000 deficit.

VICE PRESIDENT by Amie Gallo

Excited to see the Orem members tonight. • Steward training this month will be a virtual meeting on the new tentative agreement. Anyone (non-steward) wanting to join the meeting can send an email or text message to Amie and she will send you a link.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT by Mike Hansen

This was the biggest turnout on a zoom meeting. We are at 152 grievances this year which is normal for January.

PRESIDENT by Mike Wahlquist

We have a great eboard, that is already getting a lot done. • He was been downtown the last two days with lots of training and standups. • There is an increased amount of covid going on in the state, more than ever, with increased deaths. There are multiple standups almost daily. Tomorrow, Tooele and Collections get covid standups. • It is unfortunate that Spencer Cox has taken us out of phase 2 (the CDC recommendation) for getting the covid vaccine. Hopefully, the AFL-CIO can change this for us. • The tentative agreement looks pretty good. CCA starting wage is still too low. They did get some raises. Now CCAs automatically convert to PTF after two years if not already a regular. Mike recommends voting to ratify the agreement. Ballots have gone out. Ballots must be returned (received) by Feb. 16th. Don't hesitate, make sure your ballot gets there in time.

SPECIAL ORDERS and UNFINISHED BUSINESS: none

NEW BUSINESS:

The Executive Board proposed raising the bounty on new members from \$25 to \$50. A motion will be made and discussed at our next meeting.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION and FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SERVICE: none

DRAW AND ADJOURN – 7:51 pm

- \$25 drawing winners: Casey Anderson, Justin Lindquist - checks to be mailed
- RETIREES – \$250 (Daryl Deuel was not present). Next month it will be \$275
- PROGRESSIVE A - \$350 (James MacFarlane was not present). Next month it will be \$375.
- PROGRESSIVE B - \$675 (Stormy Blood was the WINNER). Next month it will be \$25.

National Association of Letter Carriers
2261 South Redwood Road, Suite 14
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119

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The financial records of the Union are available to be looked at by any Branch 111 member, in the Union Office, by appointment.

PRESIDENT
Mike Wahlquist
**EXC. VICE-
PRESIDENT**
Mike Hansen
VICE-PRESIDENT
Amie B. Gallo
TREASURER
Mike Madsen
SECRETARY
Steve McNees
SGT-AT-ARMS
Mike Simonsen
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TRUSTEES
Chad Mortensen
Kirk McLaughlin
Destiney Carrillo

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