

System Council U-4 Negotiation News



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Brothers and Sisters, on June 23rd, 2017 the System Committee and the Company broke from negotiations for the weekend with nine (9) items still remaining active in discussions. The Company is still proposing to increase the cost share mixture to the Bargaining Unit health care expenses.

The Joint Health Care Committee has throughout the life of its charter managed to maintain a constant level of annual cost to the plan with little volatility. The premiums were decreased by 10% overall shortly after the inception of the Committee and the monthly premiums in existence now has had a constant unchanging value since that reduction. The Union is committed to the continued Joint Health Care Committee meetings and reviews but the System Committee has no interest in an increase to the percentages.

The proposal to enhance Autism Spectrum Disorder Services as a covered service remains active in discussions. The Company is currently continuing the process of analyzing the cost of implementation of the additional coverage for these services.

The proposed paid sick leave presented by the Company is still being discussed to gather all information possible to assist in making a determination if this expanded criterion for sickness and family leave will be beneficial to the Membership. The proposal will allow an employee to use more time off than the current SIF paragraph when a family member is ill or in need of care. The time used will be subtracted from the employee's sick bank.

The Company wage compensation proposal is being presented based on the wages of the Southeast Region and the level of those comparisons fall short of the national average of the Investor Owned Utilities. The System Committee will continue to maintain the position that we are to be paid (at a minimum) the equivalent to the national average of Investor Owned Utilities across the United States especially with Florida being the 3rd largest state in the Union with a cost of living that exceeds the other states in the Southeast Region.

The lodging and travel expenses proposed by the Union were rejected by the Company because the company felt the use of the GSA rates established too costly of a benefit to reach agreement. The System Committee removed the GSA formula from the proposal and submitted a revised proposal using the current format with appropriate increases at a level to carry the Itinerant workforce through a four (4) year term. The Company is calculating the expense to deliver a response. The Company pulled from the table the proposal to require a craft designation as part of the Production Specialist classification job-posting.

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The System Committee has presented the Company with a revised proposal to the accrual of vacation time off to be realized at an earlier time in an employee's continuous years of service. The enhancements are minimal but for those who will benefit from these advancements it will be welcomed. A tentative agreement has been reached to reduce the amount of vacation carry-over to eighty (80) hours and the vacation remaining at the end of the year in excess of eighty (80) hours will be paid out.

The System Committee has reached a tentative agreement to return to the previous contractual language concerning FMLA qualifying employee illness replenishment by reinstating the function and responsibilities of the Employee Benefit Plans Administrative Committee (EBPAC). Employees will have the ability to approach the committee for additional sick time when the situation requires.

The Company has pulled from the table the modifications proposed to Long Term Disability and Short Term Disability plans. The Union also pulled the Short Term Disability proposal for an additional 3rd tier of benefit.

The Company remained unchanged in their position to make no changes to the Retiree Savings 401k Plans and Retiree Pension Benefits. There was no movement to advance the inclusion of overtime earnings as part of the benefit calculations and the Company continued to express the cost of the benefit was beyond a level they could agree to payout. The Union withdrew the proposals from the table.

Only a few items remain active in discussions and the System Committee will continue to supply updates as negotiations closeout. The Membership needs to remain focused on safety and avoid the distractions by news that is released to the field.

“Committed to the IBEW Utility Code of Excellence”

“Yes I Am My Brothers Keeper”

“United we Bargain, Divided we Beg”

