



MEMO To The Branch 2184 Leadership Council, November 14, 2023

Walt McGregory
Jackie McGregory
Darryl Clay
Mel MacDonald
Cathy Tondreau
Jim Powell
Phil Ashford
Tracy Mitchell
Erik Venzke
Felicia Davis
Leonard Zawisa
Dave Reise
Joe Golonka
Kris Shaw
Mark Owen
Scott Russell
Karen Russell
Tod Lilla
Ryan Zyngier
Byron Hendricks
Jillian Hudgins
Symone Coleman
Yvonne Jackson
Karl Tamburro
Shaun Fowlkes
Marwan Ghotimi
Chanel Harrison
Marquel Davis
Justin Leal
Lillian Bogosian
Rachel Stachulski
Scherrie Lacey
Kaliah Patrick
Scott Watts
Jonathon Strong
Courtney Duran
Valerie Watkins
Kristie Nelson
Diego Forshaw
Keith Benedict
Victor Siemiesz
William Douglas
Jeffrey Webb
Casey Pennington
Nakia Whittfield
Katrina Jones
Ananias Epps
Ramon Robinson
Shatyra Young
Paul Bordine
Mike Tredway
Danita Hill

This month's Leadership Council Memo will begin as usual with an update on current and forthcoming Branch administrative matters. Our next regular membership meeting will take place on Wednesday, December 6 beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the Branch 2184 office. At this meeting, the results of the current Branch 2184 election will be announced.

The final steward meeting of 2023 will take place on Tuesday, December 12 at 7:00 p.m. at the Branch 2184 office. This is the only steward meeting during December. A schedule of our Branch 2184 steward meetings for 2024 will be provided to stewards and officers as soon as it is ready. Please be sure that you receive a copy and note the dates and times on your calendars.

There is a schedule change for the forthcoming November executive board meeting, which is now scheduled for **Monday, November 20 at 7:30 p.m.** This meeting will be conducted online via WebEx. The meeting will take place a week earlier than usual so as not to conflict with the counting of Branch election ballots on Monday, November 27. The December executive board meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 18 at 7:30 p.m.

The annual Federal Employee Health Benefits open season (for the 2024 plan year) began on Monday, November 13 and it will end on Monday, December 11. During this period active and retired federal and postal employees can choose a plan from among those offered in the FEHB programs, or make changes within an existing chosen plan, or choose to do nothing and their current coverage will continue. As always, NALC members should look very closely at our union's very own excellent plan. Although premium increases did occur across all of the FEHB programs, the NALC's plan remains one of the most affordable and competitive by far for premium rates and benefit levels.

The current health benefits open season will be the last under the current FEHB programs, as USPS employees and retirees will transition to the Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) programs effective January 1, 2025. Additional information about the transition process and the PSHB health benefits programs will be provided throughout the next several months. It is expected that nearly all of the current FEHB participating plans will continue to be under the PSHB.

A final reminder to all station stewards that vacation selections for 2024 (February 2024 through January 2025) will begin on Friday, December 1. This should NOT be delayed for any reason. If you have not already done so, be sure to meet with management in your station and jointly determine the makeup of the vacation boards for 2024 by applying the specific provisions of Item #4, section 1 as well as Item #9 of our Branch 2184 Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU). **Be sure that you provide the agreed upon numbers for the choice and non-choice periods in your station and the methodology the Branch 2184 office for review and concurrence.**

Also pertaining to vacation selections and the station annual leave boards: ALL convention delegates that are active carriers and that are planning to attend the NALC National Convention in Boston August 5 – 9, 2024, **make sure that you notify management prior to the beginning of vacation selections on December 1.** This is to ensure that management is aware of your absence that week AND so that any additional delegates in our stations beyond those which are addressed in Item #8 of our Branch 2184 LMOU can be placed on the vacation boards PRIOR to the initial round of vacation selections.

The relevant language from Item #8 of our LMOU reads: **“Attendance at National and State Conventions will be charged to the choice vacation period with the exception of one delegate from each station leave board and one other at-large from installations with multiple stations.”** There are two Branch 2184 Installations with multiple stations, Dearborn, and Westland-Canton.

Also, Article 24, section 2.A of the National Agreement reads, in part...**“Full or part-time employees will be granted annual leave or leave without pay at the election of the employee to attend National, State, and Regional Union Conventions (Assemblies) provided that a request for leave has been submitted by the employee to the installation head as soon as practicable...”** Thus, it is **solely the choice of the delegate** to use either annual leave OR LWOP (or a combination thereof) for attending Union conventions.

The annual penalty overtime exclusion period for the 2023 “peak season” will begin on Saturday, December 2 – the first day of pay period 26, 2023 and will end on Friday, December 29 – the last day of period 1, 2024. Stewards, please be sure that both management as well as the letter carriers in your station do NOT misapply contractual provisions concerning work hours as well as the assignment of overtime work during the penalty overtime exclusion period. Article 8 remains fully applicable and enforceable in December. Additionally, all CCAs, PTFs, and all non-ODL fulltime regular carriers continue to be limited to no more than 11.5 work hours a day and 60 work hours in a week during the penalty overtime exclusion period.

Also, a reminder of the following dates: **USPS Pay year 2024** will begin on Saturday, December 16. **USPS Leave Year 2024** will begin on Saturday, January 13, 2024. The yearly annual leave allotment that is advanced to fulltime regular carriers will become available to use on that date. The updated leave balances will appear with pay information dated Friday, February 2, 2024. However, the “new” annual leave **can be used beginning on Saturday, January 13.**

On October 18, a bipartisan group of Congressional Representatives introduced the Federal Retirement Fairness Act, legislation that would allow certain federal employees to make catch-up retirement contributions for time spent as non-career employees after December 31, 1988, making it creditable service under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS).

The legislation would cover letter carriers who were employed by the Postal Service as casuals, transitional employees, or city carrier assistants, providing them with greater retirement security. A significant number of active city letter carriers have worked in a non-career position, and that time is not currently creditable for retirement. The bill would change that, allowing letter carriers and millions of other federal employees to buy back this time and better plan for a more secure retirement. All letter carriers are encouraged to contact their representatives and ask them to cosponsor the bill.

The NALC fully supports the work of the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), and our members should strongly be encouraged to consider contributing to worthy nonprofit organizations such as the MDA and many others. A listing of all participating organizations is available to all CFC contributors to review and use to make their choices. Open enrollment continues through January 15, 2024. Please see your local CFC station coordinators.

In light of a recent instance of serious steward misconduct, it is unfortunately necessary to remind ALL Branch 2184 representatives of their union-mandated and legal obligations to ALL of our members and to all letter carriers – even nonmembers. This begins but does not end with the most essential obligation of all – the DUTY of fair representation. Under NO circumstances may any steward or other Union representative ever discriminate, neglect, or otherwise fail to respond to any request for representation or union assistance from any letter carrier - period. Nor may any NALC representative ever use their elected or appointed position in ANY manner for the purpose of harming or attacking the contractual and/or legal rights of another letter carrier.

On a contractual level, Article 15 of the National Agreement provides for the right of any letter carrier to be present if they choose at the informal first step of an individual grievance that they have filed. They MUST be advised of and afforded this right, which cannot be denied by either management or union. Additionally, copies of grievance settlements must be distributed to ALL affected members – with no exceptions.

Finally, ALL letter carriers have the absolute right to hold and practice whatever diverse cultural, religious, racial, and ethnic traditions they may personally have. **This includes but is not limited to the absolute right to speak in whatever language or languages they choose when conversing with coworkers.** Any infringement of this right is a violation of federal law – Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If this bothers you, then the problem is clearly with you, not your coworkers. If you cannot or will not fully abide by these basic responsibilities to ALL letter carriers and to other USPS employees, **you simply do not belong in the union representation business.**

BRANCH 2184

MEETING NOTICE

Wednesday December 6, at 7:30 p.m.

**This meeting will be held at the Branch 2184 office, located
at 6969 Monroe, Taylor MI 48180**

MEETING AGENDA:

- **Branch Officer Reports**
- **Committee and Activities Reports**
- **Letter Carrier Contractual Information**
- **Legislative Updates**