



## LOCAL 2-21 C.A.T. Letter

Check out all the C.A.T. Letters at [www.usw2-21.com/updates.htm](http://www.usw2-21.com/updates.htm)

Distribution: # 35

Date: October 25, 2009

**As you all know by now, November's union meeting will include the nominating of officers for the bargaining committee representing USW Local 2-21. All positions will be expiring at the end of the year so nominations will be for every position on the committee. I'm putting this information out in a CAT letter to ensure everyone gets the appropriate 2 week notice. I will also remind you in the November newsletter.**

For those of you that may be confused as to why the terms of the entire committee are expiring all at the same time, let me explain how we got to the point. In the past, the length of the term for each officer was 2 years. Our committee was positioned (honoring our by-laws) so 5 people (1/2 of the committee) would expire each year thus never allowing for the possibility of a complete change on the committee at one time. When we merged with the USW, we agreed to adhere to their constitution's by-laws by the year 2011. Slowly but surely we have been adopting these policies as the need arises. An example of this was last fall when we asked for a 1 year extension for the 5 committee members that were expiring. That was voted on, and passed, by the entire membership, thus putting us in compliance that we will all expire together.

Now remember what I said earlier, we must be in complete compliance by the year 2011 which means whoever runs for these offices will be in office until May of 2012. The reason for that is because the USW has 3 year terms with elections preset for years 2012, 2015, 2018, 2021, etc. Unlike what we have been used to, the USW holds nominations in March, voting in April, and exchange officers in May. Being we are just now getting on board with this by-law, this upcoming term will actually be 2 years and 5 months which will put us in compliance for the next election of committee officers in 2012. I'm probably making this more confusing than it actually is but I'm trying to explain how we are going from the old PACE by-laws to the new USW by-laws and all the while trying to do it within the guidelines I am obligated to live under.

As if this isn't all complicated enough, I need to explain one more thing. At the union meetings over the past 3 months I have explained that there are many on the committee that do not want to stay for another full term but they would like to stay on until a contract is ratified. With that in mind there has been a lot of brainstorming at the hall (with the members in attendance) sharing their thoughts about how this can be done. We threw around ideas like asking for another extension, we talked about holding nominations for officers but not having the election until the contract has been ratified, and we discussed holding the election as scheduled but not having the new committee take over until things were settled with this contract. The problem with all of this is none of it follows the existing by-laws. After a lengthy debate we decided that anyone wishing to remain on the committee needs to run for another term. If elected, they could stay on the committee until the contract is ratified and then step down (when they feel the timing is right). The constitution clearly defines how this procedure is handled so we felt this is the best route to go. I'm not necessarily in favor of appointing a replacement as a committee person steps down because it doesn't enable the entire membership to be involved in the selection process but unfortunately it is the process clearly defined in the constitution and I feel we need to adhere to the parameters that are laid out for us.

Hopefully I haven't totally confused everyone. Just remember that anyone wishing to run for a position on the bargaining committee must be nominated at the November union meeting. You do not have to be present to accept your nomination but you must provide me a letter of acceptance before the union meeting starts.

We will be at the negotiating table on Monday and Tuesday so you can expect another CAT letter in the near future explaining what went on. Hopefully we'll have good news to share but I wouldn't hold my breath if I were you.

Thank you for your support.

In Solidarity,

Bryon Branstrom