

...Teachers file ULP

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said the 17 percent figure is “really misleading,” because it includes annual increases under the district’s step pay schedule, which incentivizes teachers to stay with the district. The majority of PPS teachers have at least 11 years of experience and are thus at the top of the pay scale. Those topped-out teachers would get annual raises of 2, 1.5, and 1.5 percent under the district’s proposal (5 percent in three years), plus another 1 percent bump for the two additional days a year the district wants teachers to work. The union is proposing across-the-board raises of 4.8 and 3.75 percent.

Sullivan said the wage discussion can’t be separated from the health insurance. The district is proposing to cap its contribution and have teachers pay any premium increase over that amount.

“When you bring those together it’s really a pay cut that they’re offering,” Sullivan said.

Likely the biggest disagreement is over class size limits. The current contract limits teacher workload to no more than 180 students for high school teachers. PPS wants to dump that limit, and instead form a committee to make non-binding recommendations about class size. In a Dec. 2 legal filing, PAT said the district’s refusal to negotiate over class size violates state collective bargaining law. A final mediation session was scheduled for Dec. 5, after this issue went to press.



PAT PRESIDENT GWEN SULLIVAN

...Machinists fight for middle class

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Charleston, S.C., and Everett. Boeing officials said proposals are due back in mid-December and the company expects to make a decision sometime early next year.

Production on the 777X is expected to begin in 2017, and the first test flight is scheduled for 2019, with delivery of the first airplane expected in 2020.

On Nov. 18, several hundred union and community members turned out in the pouring rain at Seattle’s Westlake Park to support and thank the Machin-

ists members, and to call on Boeing to make the smart, rational business decision of building the 777X in Washington.

Speaking on behalf of a group of Machinists attending the rally, IAM Lodge 751 Business Representative Jon Holden expressed gratitude for the community support. “Today we are all Machinists in this struggle,” Holden said. “We are proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with you to protect the things achieved (in previous contracts). Those who build the 777 today are the key to the 777X’s future success. Our quality, reliability and productivity are second to none. We are proud to stand with you because truly your fight is our fight, and our fight is your fight.”

WSLC President Johnson said, “No one should interpret this vote as an indication that Machinists don’t want Boeing to expand in Washington state by manufacturing the 777X and the new composite wing here at home. These Machinists are proud, highly skilled, dedicated workers who built Boeing’s reputation, profitability, and market share. They simply want a fair shake for the work that they do.”

On Nov. 22, the Coalition of Unions at Boeing (CLUB) penned an open letter stating they are ready to meet the challenge of designing and manufacturing the 777X on time, within budget and without growing pains.

“Every successful Boeing commercial aircraft was designed, engineered,

manufactured, protected and delivered by our members,” they wrote. “From the Teamsters who transport the parts, SPEEA members who design, engineer and deliver aircraft, Machinists who skillfully manufacture the planes, Operating Engineers who maintain our facilities, Industrial Fire Fighters who protect our plants and Security Guards who protect the people and our trade secrets, union-represented Boeing employees in Washington state and other legacy locations are the proven path to success.”

Industry analysts agree that Washington will be a tough competitor. The state has a large and experienced aerospace workforce and a favorable geographic location, as well as the tax incentive package already in place. [Boeing is still pressing the governor to call a second special session to pass a \$10 billion transportation package that the company favors.]

“From a strict industry/business/economics/common sense standpoint, the alternatives are seriously inferior. Washington State offers big advantages,” wrote aerospace analyst Richard Aboulafia in his monthly newsletter for the Teal Group Corp.

Aboulafia notes that final assembly labor costs are “a small fraction” of the total cost of building a jet.

“Giving workers some of what they want would have a negligible impact on competitiveness, particularly since it would reduce costs and mitigate risks associated with moving the line. If management won’t compromise, that has less to do with economics and more to do with personal distaste,” he wrote.

Aboulafia gives Everett an 89 percent chance of winning the 777X. He gives North Charleston, S. C. — “the only alternative site that makes any sense” — a 10 percent chance of landing the work.

(Editor’s Note: David Groves of the Washington State Labor Council’s *The Stand* contributed to this report.)

State senator proposes ‘right to work’ session

State Sen. Mike Baumgartner (R-Spokane) called on the Legislature Nov. 14 to make Washington a “right-to-work” state, the Spokesman-Review reported.

Baumgartner rolled out the plan following the Boeing Machinists’ contract vote. He wanted Gov. Jay Inslee to call a special session to vote on the right-to-work proposal, suggesting it would create a “welcoming overall environment” and reduce the possibility of labor strikes.

“That’s not going to happen,” Inslee spokesman David Postman said of Baumgartner’s call. Boeing never mentioned right-to-work legislation as something it was seeking to guarantee the 777X would be built in Washington, Postman said.

Teacher strike possible in Medford

MEDFORD — Medford School Board declared impasse Nov. 12 after Medford Education Association refused to accept its contract offer. The two sides exchanged final offers a week later, and are in a mandatory cooling-off period through Dec. 20, at which point the district can impose its terms, and the teachers can strike. About 600 teachers serve the district, which has about 12,000 students.

The district says it’s offering a 10 percent wage increase in the first year, followed by 1 percent raises the next two years. It sounds so generous, but that 10 percent is sleight of hand; what one hand giveth, the other taketh away. The district wants teachers to make the 6 percent of payroll contribution that it now makes into their Public Employ-

ees Retirement System pensions. And it wants to increase their work year from 186 days to 192 days, a 3.2 percent increase. When the school year was shortened several years ago, teacher pay was cut in proportion. Teachers want the school year restored, but want their pay restored too. Once the 6 percent pay reduction and the 3.2 percent work increase are considered, the 10 percent wage increase becomes less than 1 percent — less than inflation.

Meanwhile, the district also wants to eliminate retiree health insurance, and cap what it pays for health insurance, with teachers paying all of the premium above that cap.

A mediation session is scheduled for Dec. 12.

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