

UNION DEMOCRACY

ATU Local 757 members elect new VP

By Don McIntosh

Members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757 chose new officers in mail ballots counted June 16. Multiple candidates ran for the top positions. Local 757 represents about 5,700 bus drivers, mechanics and other workers at 28 public transit agencies and contractors in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

Incumbent president **Shirley Block** won reelection to a third three-year term, earning 45% of the vote and outpolling challenges from former president Bruce Hansen (19%) and from Henry Beasley, Nova Fortier, and Evan Hermanski.

For vice president, Local 757 executive board member **Fredrick Casey** got 32% of the vote, ousting longtime incumbent Jon Hunt (29%), and outpolling four other candidates: Ryan Viken, Anthony Forrester, Joseph Myung-Kyun Bae, and David Holland.

And **Mary Longoria**, incumbent financial secretary-treasurer and recording secretary, won a fourth term with 67% of the vote, overcoming a challenge from Elizabeth Buckwalter.

All three of those elected po-



FULL TIME ELECTED OFFICERS: From left, president Shirley Block, vice president Frederick Casey, and secretary-treasurer Mary Longoria.

sitions are also full-time jobs for the union. Altogether, 2,043 ballots were cast, 36% of the union's membership.

For Block, it was the third time facing Hansen and Beasley, and the third time running together with Longoria as a slate. Hunt, 50, was part of that slate in 2015 and 2018, but not this time. A full-time Local 757 officer since 2002, Hunt formerly served two terms as president.

Block, 68, is a 40-year TriMet employee who was working as a road supervisor when she was

elected president in 2015 and went full-time with the union. The daughter of migrant laborers, she grew up in Florida and Michigan and moved to Portland in 1974. At Local 757, president oversees a union staff of five. Block thinks the recent contract settlement with TriMet was a factor in her re-election. The Portland-area transit agency employs nearly half of Local 757's members, and in its new agreement reached in April, TriMet backed off its year-long effort to eliminate its apprentice-

ship program for bus mechanics, and agreed to raise wages 8% over three years.

Casey, 45, is a former bus operator and now station agent who was serving on the union executive board representing salaried TriMet employees. In his campaign for vice president, Casey called for adding a second full-time vice president position in order to increase the local's capacity to represent members. Prior to coming to work at TriMet seven years ago, Casey was a member of Teamsters in Salem, where he drove a truck for Sunshine Dairy. He grew up in a union household in Cornelius, Oregon, and walked picket lines as a kid; his father was a member of UA Local 290.

"The rights of the people in the working class was instilled in me from basically the day I was born," Casey said.

Longoria, 60, was born and raised in Portland and has been a TriMet employee since 1998. When she joined the union full-time in 2012 she'd been working in customer service as a fare revenue specialist. Over the course of her three terms as treasurer, Local 757's reserves have risen from \$28,000 to \$2.7 million— a "war chest" she says the union can draw on if it comes to a fight.

Also elected June 16:

Executive Board officers: James Bennett (C-TRAN); Anna Tompte (First Student Services-Portland); Bill Bradley (Lane Transit District); Jimmy Appelhanz (Portland Public Schools); Mikel Burke (Salem Area Mass Transit); Gladys Marie Melton (TriMet Center Transportation); Kevin Kinoshita (TriMet Center Maintenance); Mike McCurry (TriMet Merlo Transportation); Kerry Montgomery (TriMet Merlo Maintenance); Lil Lopez (TriMet Powell Transportation); Michael Francois (TriMet Powell Maintenance); Terrance Howard (TriMet Light Rail Transportation); Joe Ruffin (TriMet Light Rail Maintenance); Jason Bynon (TriMet Monthly Rated Employees).

Liaison officers: James Hutchings (Bend Area Paratransit); Kevin Hogan (C-TRAN); Gail Bennett (C-VAN); Jill Carrillo (C-TRAN represented staff); Thomas Tsuneta (Central Oregon Intergovernmental); Rolando Smith-Gloria (First Student Services - Corvallis); R. Alex Smith III (First Student Services-Portland); Warren Hoeft (TriMet Lift, MultCo Region 1); Kimberlea Podewitz (TriMet Lift, WashCo Region 2); Matt Leist (TriMet Lift, Region 3); John Gangl (Lane Transit District); Steve Hixon (Lane Transit District Extra Board); Jordan May (Lane Transit District Maintenance/Fleet Services); Melissa Murray (MV Transportation Services-Salem); Stephen Bishop (Rogue Valley Transportation District); Hallie Marler (Salem Area Mass Transit District maintenance); Bill Ray (Sunset Empire Transportation District); Rick Dietz (Tillamook County Transportation District); Timothy Maxcy (TriMet Center Extra Board); Adam Slater (TriMet Merlo Extra Board); Randy Whitehill (TriMet Powell Extra Board); Kimberlee Wiseman (TriMet Light Rail Transportation, Ruby); Jody Moulton (TriMet Light Rail Maintenance, Ruby); Tom Ruiz Jr. (TriMet Light Rail Transportation, Elmonica); Evette Farra (TriMet Portland Streetcar); Eder Alejandre (Valley Transit).

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Tough As Nails casting Season 4

The casting director for the CBS show *Tough as Nails*, which highlights remarkable tradespeople in the United States, has reached out to the *Northwest Labor Press* to spread the word that the show is launching another nationwide search for Season 4 contestants from various trades. It's a reality show in which individuals and teams compete for \$200,000 and more.

Season 2 of *Tough As Nails* featured Liz Nichols, a member of Portland-based Cement Masons Local 555.

Tough as Nails is billed as a celebration of hard-working men and women who aren't afraid to roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty to do a hard day's work. The show is co-hosted by Emmy Award-winning producer Phil Keoghan, best known for *Amazing Race*.

Season 4 is scheduled to film this fall over the course of approximately five weeks.

For more information on the show or to apply, visit the site ToughasNailsCBSCasting.com